Use dark coatings for bright-surface metals

MODEL-AIRPLANE DOPE is fine for scriber work. Ordinary lacquers tend to tear, producing ragged lines. If metal is to be painted, use some first as a marking base. It will usually take pencil lines readily.

MARKER INKS for labeling provide good base for scribing and come with built-in brush. Dab color on thin but evenly. For quick marking of small areas, rub on grease pencil and scribe it with a sharp lead pencil.

TOOLMAKER'S INKS, made especially for layout work, now come in spray cans. Usually blue, they dry quickly and have a good masking effect. You can remove most coatings from the metal with lacquer thinner.

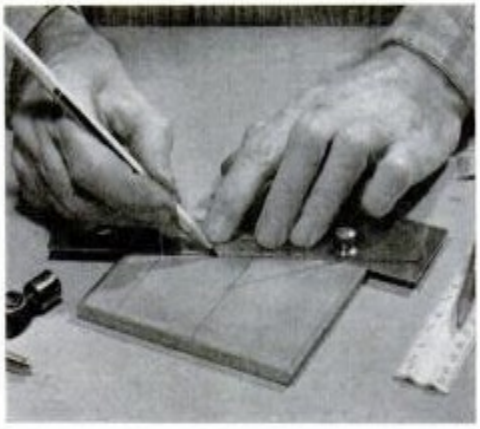
Marking Metal for Layouts

By Walter E. Burton

EVER try to make a mark on shiny metal? Indicating precisely where a hole is to be drilled or a cut made is often a problem. Most metals don't take a pencil mark, which often wouldn't be accurate enough anyway. Other metals either defy the sharp point of a scriber, or shouldn't be permanently marked.

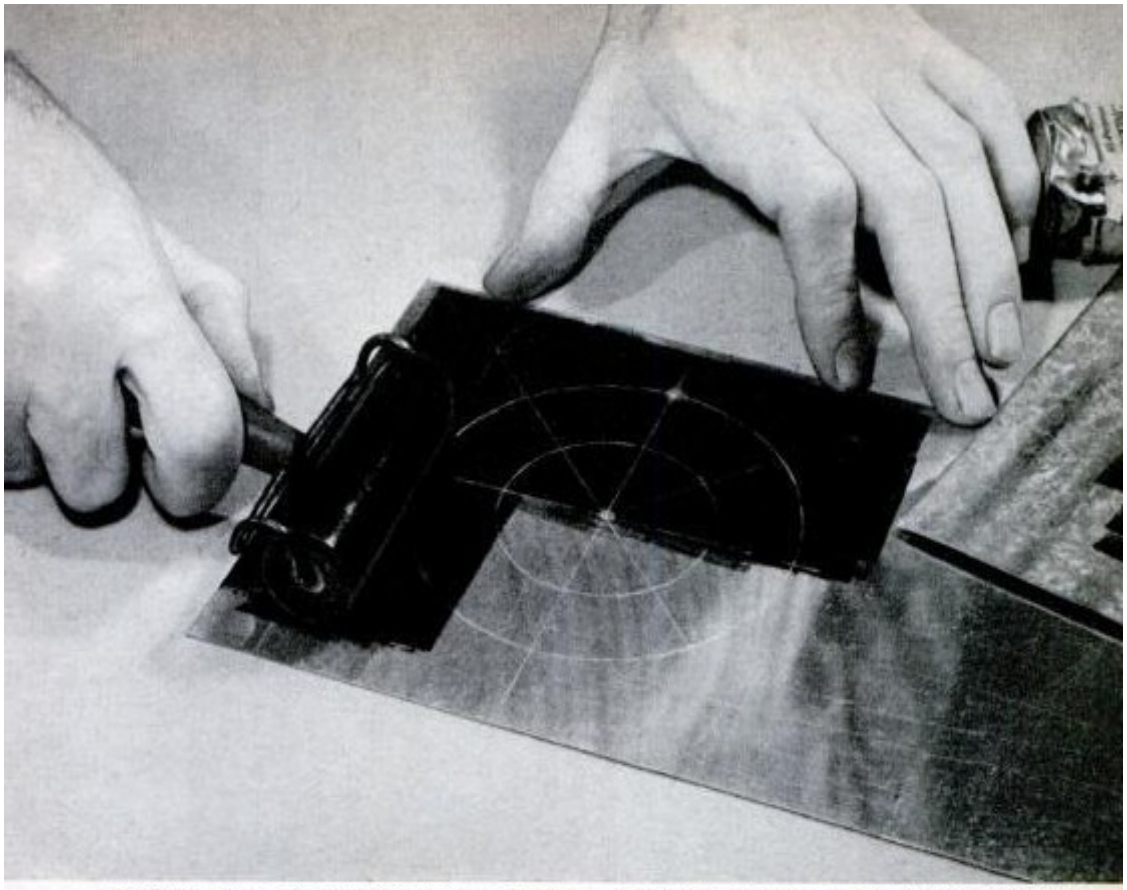
Plating a surface

OLD-TIME METHOD of making metal markable is to swab it with a solution of copper sulfate, which plates the surface. Since color is fairly permanent and messy to apply, method is giving way to more convenient modern markers.



Dulling a surface

SHINY METAL that will be finished dull or later painted can be made to take pencil lines by removing the sheen. A paste of fine silicon carbide rubbed on with a steel block is best for this, but fine abrasive paper can also be used.



TO BRING OUT FAINT LINES that have already been scribed on metal, printer's ink has a special virtue. Applied with a rubber roller, it will make the lines magically reappear. Don't use it, however, for general marking, as it dries slowly, is not as easy to clean off as other markers.

The solution? Take a tip from the pros and prepare your metal first with inks and colorings that make markings stand out clearly. These provide a coating on which a scriber can etch accurate lines.

Some markers are special preparations; some can be as common as shoe polish. Dark colors are naturally used for light metals and light colors for dark ones. Here's a run-down on some tricks.

Use light-colored coatings on dark-surface metals

NON-BRIGHT SURFACES, such as cast iron and age-darkened steel need light colors for contrast. Apply whiting (powdered chalk) mixed with alcohol. Or rub on blackboard chalk and blow off the excess.

WHITE SHOE POLISH is one of easiest materials to apply and can be used in place of chalk or whiting. Chinese white and tempera water-mixed paints, all easy to obtain, can be swabbed on in the same way.

TEST SURFACE with a compass or scriber. If coating is not even or dense enough, you may need a second application. For pencil marking, use a sharp point but soft lead. Water removes most of the white coatings.