

SAFETY MARKING COLORS

In the Carpenter Book I have about 10 pages about Construction Colors. They are seldom used today except for vintage carpenters like me. Most people don't believe when I tell them that many times I have seen lives be saved simply by using these procedures that I wrote in the CB with absolute detail. I will give you an example.

We were digging a footing in Lubbock, Texas for the new Convention Center in 1975 and the backhoe operator hit some yellow tape. He kept on digging but our superintendent hollered at him to STOP. The operator kept on digging. The super got on the backhoe and the operator wished he had of stopped the first time he was told. He asked the "know it all operator" if he knew what that yellow tape meant. He had no idea, but we did. He told him the tape meant there could be a gas line below. There was. Some plumber had installed some copper flex to make an elbow (illegal). There were about 10 carpenters within 20' of the backhoe, if he had of hit that line we wouldn't be here today. That superintendent more than likely saved our lives and the operator's life, all because he knew his construction colors. If you have a Carpenter Book

read "Utility Colors" it is very interesting.

As I say in the book "Tape (12" above the wire/line/pipe) should be a code (it is not, I have never heard an inspector even mention it), it would keep a lot of backhoe operator's wives from having to wait tables for to feed their dead husband's children".

This is only one of the reasons I still use Construction Colors. One other is that I do a lot of layout at times for 25 or 30 other carpenters.

I will give you the colors, but it would take me at least 10 pages to tell you what all you can do with them.

The colors are black=1, white=2, green=3, yellow=4, red=5, blue=6, brown=7, black=8, white=9, green=10 and it keeps going on to 16. I know them through 32.

Excavation and Utilities: White means to dig-excavate; green is sewer; yellow is gas, oil; red is electric; blue is water; brown is for dirt and black is to mark an area where you are not to dig or do anything.

I will be using these colors a lot in the articles I write for you. You don't have to learn them but one day your life could be saved by seeing a strip of yellow tape.

When I am marking plates I use a red center mark to lay out the studs and door openings, I use blue for the windows and black to override both of these. I use red chalk to pop the lines and if I make a mistake or a change I use blue to override the red chalk. If

it changes again I can use black to change again and it overrides red and blue. If we get another change in the same area I paint OSB and plywood brown and use gray paint on concrete.



These are the five colors of pencil-markers I carry in my tool box, white-yellow-red-blue black. I use ½" id braided plastic tubing (available at any home center) cut 3" long so I can have a pencil and marker together. I like this tubing better than the holders you can buy for \$4.

When I am doing a lot of layout I take one of these plastic tubes and insert a half a piece of blue keel (carpenters chalk) in one end and a half a piece of red in the other, it's easier to carry.

I also have 5 chalk boxes with the same colors in them. When I am installing wainscot in a finished room I use the white or yellow and it will come off with water. Red-blue- black won't.

Here's another one for you. I paint the wide (white wire is attached to the wide prong) prong side of my extension cords and the ends of all my two wire tool cords white.



You don't have to look and see which way they go. White to white. If you cut off the little nibs that are on the wide prong whereas they will go in either way it could be the last thing you ever do on this earth. You have created reverse polarity in your tool. It will kill you dead, if you happen to be on wet ground, and you touch a metal part of your tool and there is a faulty part.

Paint is important part of construction. On a safe catwalk you will see a lot of red and yellow paint, yellow is for caution and red is for the old statement "red you're dead". Next time you run a red light think about me and this statement.

This article is a small portion of what you need to know about construction colors. There are four things in this article that could save your life, all because of a little bit of paint.

<http://carpenterbooks.com>

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