

Aluminum Frequently Asked Questions

Question		Answer
1	Do I need special sandpaper?	No. You don't need special sandpaper, but you do need dedicated sandpaper to avoid cross-contamination between steel and aluminum surfaces. Commonly accepted repair practices for steel repairs will translate to aluminum specific repairs. Traditional 3M Abrasives are well suited for aluminum repairs, but abrasives and tools previously used on steel must be kept away from aluminum repair areas and vice versa.
2	What adhesives do we use?	Commonly accepted repair practices and products for steel repairs will translate to aluminum specific repairs. 3M Adhesives will work on aluminum, but it's always a good idea to follow OEM repair recommendations for preferred products and processes.
3	What seam sealers are best?	Commonly accepted repair practices and products for steel repairs will translate to aluminum specific repairs.
4	Are the 3M body fillers and glazes going to stick?	Yes. 3M premium body fillers and glazes are applicable to aluminum repairs.
5	Do I need to take special care to help maintain proper air quality within the work area?	Yes. Follow all OSHA guidelines and use approved vacuum system for your specific requirements when repairing aluminum.
6	How long can bare aluminum be exposed before corrosion begins?	Oxidation will begin once aluminum is exposed to atmosphere. Oxidation should be removed throughout the repair by re-abrading and cleaning the surface after each hour of exposure.

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7	Do 3M panel bonding adhesives still retain lifetime warranties with aluminum?	Yes, provided all proper procedures are followed.
8	Do I need special air tools?	It is highly recommended to use separate air tools dedicated to aluminum repairs OR tools that have been thoroughly cleaned with compressed air to remove any steel particles. Use caution not to cross contaminate work surfaces.
9	Do I need special tools or clamps?	Yes. Use separate hand tools designed for aluminum repairs (e.g., hammers, dollies, clamps, files, drill bits, saw blades, etc.). These tools are usually either non-metallic, or have a highly polished surface to ensure that steel particles will not transfer while being used.
10	What aluminum welder do you recommend?	Welder technology has improved greatly in the last few years for aluminum. There are many great models, but it's best that you explore models that meet OEM recommendations for the types of vehicles that you work on.
11	Can 3M coatings be applied direct to aluminum (e.g., 3M™ No Cleanup Rocker Gard™ Coating, undercoating, etc.)?	Commonly accepted repair practices and products for steel repairs will translate to aluminum specific repairs. Direct to metal coatings may be applied as such.
12	Can I use the same piece of abrasive on steel and aluminum substrates?	No. It is very important to use a new piece of abrasive and thoroughly clean tools or use separate tools when going between work surfaces to avoid cross contamination of work surfaces. Contamination of one substrate from another causes galvanic corrosion and will eventually lead to paint failure.

For ordering information, contact your 3M Sales Representative