

## NZR Colours

### Introduction

The question of “which colour should I use for.....” comes up frequently in discussion on modeling the railways of New Zealand. Colour being what it is, it is very difficult to get a definitive answer. Going back a few years, as a budding NZR modeler living in Australia, I found it very frustrating that there was little information available, so this is an attempt to provide a collection of suggested colours for various requirements.

It is intended as a useful starting point and it is not the definitive guide – there will doubtless be many out there who have specific experience of both the prototype practice and of model practice who can suggest better matches and sources. (Please feel free to provide your suggestion

back to me via mail or email at the guild address – the addresses are on the Journal title page - and I'll include a follow up article with the additions and corrections!).

In the tables below, I have tried to provide references to standard colours where possible. The first reference is a PMS (Pantone Matching System) reference. PMS is a readily accessible colour matching system intended for the printing and graphics industry. It is not an ideal standard against which to reference paint colours, but it is easy to find and so hopefully provides a starting point that can be referenced wherever the reader is. Do note that with the exception of the “Cato Blue” used on Tranzrail diesels, no

colour was originally specified using the PMS system.

The second references vary, but I've tried to include model paints where possible. If the reference is underlined this indicates that this is the standard by which the NZR defined the colour. For example, Midland Red is a recognized standard colour name, and the Humbrol #20 is matched to this colour. Similarly, the Fruit Salad colours are defined under British Standard, hence the BS4800 colour references.

I've also tried to include comments on the periods of usage of each colour – these comments will certainly be open to improvement and suggestion from readers!

### Passenger Stock

Era	Colour (NZR Naming)	Comments	PMS Close Match	Other Matches
1890s	Indian Red with Chocolate Ends		Indian Red – 7526C Chocolate – 4625C	
Prior to 1926	Pullman Green	Painted every five or so years, but varnished every other year. This led to a very dark 'brownish' green colour. Probably too dark to model effectively.		Scalecoat Pullman Green
1926 only	YellowGreen (also called Lighter Green)	Used only in 1926	5743U	Scalecoat “Coach Olive” or “GN Empire Builder Green”
1927-1954	Midland Red Black Roof	Introduced by G S Lynde who came to CME position from UK's Midland Rwy	209C	<u>Humbrol #20</u> RAL 3004
1954 onwards	Carnation Red (Also called Bright Red) Aluminium Roof	Change from Lamp Black Roof to Aluminium coincidentally. Roof colour only changed when repainting so many roofs remained as black for many years.	201C	Humbrol #19 RAL 3000
	Tranzrail Southern Blue		645C	
Railcars	Standard, Vulcan, 88 seater	Painted in Midland Red or Carnation Red		
	Blue Streak 88 Seaters			

## Freight Stock

Era	Colour (NZR Naming)	Comments	PMS Match	Other Matches
To early 1900s	Black	All freight stock originally black.		
From 1900s to present	Red Oxide	Except for Q wagons which have always been black. No standard colour exists. Wide variations.		
	“Aluminium”	Refrigerated cars		

## Buildings

Era	Colour (NZR Naming)	Comments	PMS Match	Other Matches
Up to 1950s	PWD OrangeYellow Ochre, Red Oxide or Brown	Stations, signal boxes and associated buildings: OrangeYellow Ochre as the main colour, with Red Oxide or Brown Facings.  Engine Sheds and Goods Sheds: Reversed colours (i.e. Red or Brown main colour with OrangeYellow Orche facings).  At small stations the railways house painted to match the station.  Water tanks always Brown or Red Oxide stands with OrangeYellow Ochre tanks Bridges: Wood typically unpainted and naturally aged. Metalwork in Red Oxide.	OrangeYel low Ochre – 145C	
1953	Royal Tour Pastels	At any station where the royal tour was to pass, NZR painted the buildings etc in the ‘current fashion’ pastel colours. Coastal stations got Cream with Green facings.		
1960/70	Creams	From 1960s, Railway houses moved to creams with contrasting trim. From 1970s onwards more white in use.		

## Diesel Locomotives

Class	Colour	Comments	PMS Match	Other Matches
English De, Dg	Carnation Red		201C	<u>Humbrol #19</u> <u>RAL 3000</u>
Da	Original GM Colour	Not Carnation Red (too bright), nor Midland Red (too Maroon).		Humbrol: 60% #19 and 40% #20 Floquil: a mix of 60% SP Daylight Red and 40% Socony Red or Signal Red.
Dj	Original Nippon Pink	4 in Greymouth were immediately repainted in Carnation Red		
Fruit Salad Scheme Da, Dc, Df, Dx	International Orange		173C is close but too brown	<u>BS381C Code 592</u> <u>“International Orange”</u> Humbrol #18 RAL 2004
	Yellow	Fruit Salad onwards	130C is close	<u>BS4800 code 08 E 51</u> Floquil Reefer Yellow
	Ext.Grey	Fruit Salad	425C is close, but cooler	<u>BS4800 code 10 A 11</u> <u>“Rhino”</u> Floquil SP Lark Grey
	Black	Fruit Salad		BS4800 code 00 E 53
	White	Off White		BS 4800 Code 00 E 55
New Zealand Rail/ Tranzrail	“New Zealand Rail Light Blue” also known as “Cato” blue.	Replaced the International Orange colour in the Fruit Salad scheme when NZR changed to “New Zealand Rail”, and retained for the Tranzrail era (to 2001). Specified as a Pantone colour, with local paint suppliers doing their own matching. Hence the variations.	<u>279C</u>	BSS 20E 51 (“Clipper”) is close to the right shade but paler than 279C. It is probably the best option, and likely to have been supplied to at least one NZR paintshop. <u>Resene 'Mariner' 3B20</u> specified for signs. <u>BSS 20 E 56</u> Specified for Trucks. Neither of these is correct for locomotives.
Dj	Middle Blue	Used in place of the International Orange on Dj class	316C	<u>BS381C Code 109</u>
Dx	“Popsicle” scheme –	From purchase to mid 1980s. Body painted in an Orange & Lemon scheme. Underframes and Bogies were black on first batch and Aluminium on second batch.		Orange – Floquil D&RGW Yellow. Modelflex D&RGW Gold.  Lemon – Floquil or Modelflex Erie Lackawanna Yellow.

## Obtaining Paint

### Automotive Paint Suppliers.

Armed with the British Standard (BS) colours above, a good paint shop will be able to mix for you the Fruit Salad Colours (Orange, Yellow, Grey, Middle Blue) plus white and black and Clipper for the Cato blue.

They can also match to the RAL colours for Midland Red, Carnation Red.

All of these are available in lacquers (Dulon), which need to be thinned 3 parts thinner to 2 parts colour before spraying. Again, the paint shop can do this for you. Also consider getting a smaller quantity of unthinned lacquer suitable for brush painting.

While there, pick up a spray can or two of Red Oxide (generally in the automotive primer section). Buy a couple of cans from different manufacturers to give you a range of oxide colours.

## Which Paint to Use?

Automotive Lacquer. Spray at 20psi.

Pros	Cons
Thinned lacquer sprays straight out of the tin, and any spare can be returned so there is no waste	Some people will tell you not to use lacquers, due to the danger. There is certainly a need to be careful when spraying lacquers as the volatile components are both highly volatile and poisonous. A very good GAS Cartridge respirator mask is required, in a well-ventilated area. Remember, if you can smell the paint while spraying, then the mask is not working effectively.
It dries to a semi-gloss finish that is suitable for decaling.	Clean up requires lacquer thinners.
There is no messing about mixing thinners and glaze as is required with Floquil (as long as you order it premixed in the correct ratio).	Not ideal for brushing – need to have non-thinned for brushing, and thinned for spraying. Spraying dilution ratios need to be carefully managed.
Cheap and still readily obtainable (at any good automotive paint supply shop).	
Many NZR colours are available under standard formulas.	

## Floquil

Pros	Cons
Wide range of colours	Colours not specifically matched to NZR usage (but many useful colours)
Sprays well, great coverage.	Availability can be a problem. Relying on the importer's buying cycle.
	For spraying each batch needs to be mixed (with thinner and glaze), and any spare is then wasted.

## Hobby Enamel ("Humbrol")

Wide range of colours	Most colours not specifically matched to NZR use. Exceptions are Midland Red and Carnation Red (being originally UK colours).
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## ModelFlex

Pros	Cons
Water Based – safe.	No standard NZR colours, although many of the US-related colours are useable.
Excellent spray coverage	Fully imported, so potential supply problems.

## Tamiya Acrylics

Pros	Cons
Water Based – safe.	No standard NZR colours, and the colour range is limited.
Excellent spray coverage.	Doesn't brush well.
Very readily available.	Needs thinning for spraying, which produce wastage.
Both gloss and flat available.	