

The final word on Conrail locomotive walkway color: Black.

According to Don Oltman, (insert Don's title here), the official policy was that diesel locomotive walkways should be painted BLACK. Locomotive shops were instructed on this and it was included in the official paint diagram.

However, that leaves a big question mark in the head of many modelers and researchers because there are plenty of photos where the walkways appear blue, whole or in part. Many people often assumed that it was because they were blue and quickly collected dirt. This is not the case, however.

Don elaborated on this odd situation. It turns out that this is a combination of two factors: first, the locomotives were painted blue first and then the black was painted on, second, because of the way the paint was applied "with rollers", the black often quickly weathered and chipped off exposing the blue beneath it.

This is the reason that, in photos, the walkways often looked like a combination of blue and black: because they quickly were.

Don also elaborated on some additional variations: even though the specifications were provided similarly to both GE and EMD, GE interpreted them as not including the locomotive stepwells. As a result, and as confirmed by photos, the stepwells on GE units were blue while they were black on EMDs. Apparently, this inconsistency did not bother anyone in the mechanical or marketing departments enough to ever change it as the last C40-8W units purchased from GE (see <http://conrailphotos.thecrhs.org/Images/CR-6062-on-XWG-43-at-Altoona-PA-61596-0>). It is notable, however, that when C40-8Ws were repainted by Conrail into the "Conrail Quality" scheme, the stepwells were painted black, as per policy (see <http://conrailphotos.thecrhs.org/Images/CR-6060-on-PMT-11-at-Johnstown-PA-82098>).