



DOES BATHTUB REFINISHING REALLY WORK?

By Tom Dewell, Commercial Bath Refinishing

Does bathtub refinishing really work? Anyone ever considering refinishing a bath fixture has asked themselves this question. Refinishing companies address this question on a regular basis but the truthful answer may surprise you. The answer is yes and no. Bathtub refinishing is not a mystery service and the procedure itself is not a secret. Refinishing is based on sound chemistry and meticulous preparation. The failure or success of every job is determined by the skill of the technician doing the refinishing and the quality of the products they use.

If you are familiar with bathtub and countertop refinishing, also known as resurfacing or reglazing, you may already know the many benefits refinishing can provide. If you are already using a reputable, professional refinishing company to update your units, you probably would agree the answer is generally YES it really works! Bathtub and countertop refinishing makes perfect sense when you need to update your fixtures but do not have the budget or the time for costly replacement. Refinishing when done right will typically reduce the cost of your project by at least two-thirds. An entire unit can be done in less than a day and is usually ready for use in 24 hours or less.

Refinishing is a “green” process:

The best part of refinishing is that because you are not replacing your existing fixtures, there is no messy demolition – which contributes to our local landfills. That's right, refinishing is considered a renewable and green service! Additionally, technology has come a long way in the last several years and many companies are now using safer, non-toxic, more environmentally friendly materials that are not only better for the earth but also safer for your residents.

When refinishing doesn't work:

So, when does refinishing not work and when should other alternatives be considered? It is generally agreed that very few fixtures should not be refinished. Kitchen sinks are a heavily used fixture and a refinished sink may have a hard time holding up to the demands placed on it. Unless set in a tile countertop, they are typically not expensive to replace and can generally be installed by a good maintenance engineer in just a few hours.

Rusted fixtures are also not recommended to be refinished as rust will typically return and may shorten the lifespan of the refinished surface. Toilets and flooring are considered less favorable refinishing surfaces as well, though they can be done with success under the right circumstances. However, the most common refinishing failure has nothing to do with the fixture itself but rather the preparation of the surface being refinished and the quality of the application.

**Refinishing is not a DIY project:**

Bathtub refinishing is not a good ‘do-it-yourself’ project. Many failures occur from inexperienced companies or a technician’s lack of preparation and spraying technique as well as the use of inferior materials. Hiring a well established, professional company that is licensed, insured and bonded can be the safest way to insure that your refinishing projects will be successful.

Who to call:

Find a company that has been in business at least twice as long as their written warranty. Warranties should typically be between three and five years and state clearly what is and what is not covered. Be sure to check references and make sure the company is in good standing with the California State License Board (CSLB.com). They should be able to provide you with information on the type of products they use and be able to provide MSDS sheets (Material Safety Data Sheets) as required by law. Ask if there is a website you can visit, and if they can provide brochures or marketing materials with photos of work they’ve done. Do they have clean company vehicles and workers with uniforms showing that they have made a commitment to being a professional refinishing company?

Finally, get involved with the process. The more you know about bathtub refinishing and the company you select to provide the work, the better your chances of insuring that your units will be refinished properly. Don’t pick your refinisher based on price alone; in the bathtub refinishing business you usually get what you pay for and choosing the wrong company could end up costing a lot more down the road.



About the author: Tom Dewell, President of Commercial Bath Refinishing, has a BS Degree in Business Management from San Diego State University and has been in the bathtub and counter top refinishing business for over twenty years.