



Cycletime Tips - Automotive

Volume 16: Quoting Automotive Plated Parts

This tech tip is dedicated to automotive suppliers of interior and exterior plated parts. I have been involved in assisting our customers in troubleshooting and optimizing processes of interior and exterior parts for the past 15 years. The primary materials are ABS and PC/ABS. While the processing and plating issues have not changed much over the years, the automotive quality levels have. The plating quality must now be perfect: free of any surface defects.

Our customers have observed samples of rejected plated interior and exterior door handles that have barely detectable defects. The automotive acceptable quality levels have surpassed, in my opinion, what the molding and plating process can achieve. The molder normally quotes between 5% to 8% scrap, including plating, and the actual scrap under the current quality level exceeds 20% to 30%.

The molders I have been involved with pay attention to the details of drying, processing and handling of parts prior to plating. The platers have gone to great expense to optimize their processes. The end result still has the molder eating the 20% to 30% scrap. I think the time has come for the OEM and the part suppliers to get together to resolve the stringent quality expectations of automotive interior and exterior plated parts.

When our customers contact me asking whether or not to quote on plated automotive parts, I explain to them the very high scrap rates associated with most projects. I now suggest that they should be quoting 25% to 30% scrap rates when quoting on automotive interior or exterior parts.

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