

Metals

All metals react differently to paper and photographs.

Copper, zinc, iron, tin, and brass can tarnish or rust leaving stains on the page. Rust and tarnish can react with photos in an adverse way.

Aluminum and gold are inert and have no reaction to paper and photographs.

Metals are better if coated except aluminum.

Metals can have a clear or painted coating. Most painted metals use baked on enamel paint that should be lead free. Varnishes react adversely to photographs and should not be used.

If a metal coating is plastic it can break off and scratch things around it. Rusted tin has been dipped in acid to create the old antique look. These are all acidic products and should not be used in scrapbooking.

Metals can have sharp edges, which can create non-repairable scratches in the photo's emulsion and on precious scrapbook pages.

The only problem pewter has is its color rubs off when rubbed against photos and paper.

Paints

Paints do not contain acid but can contain lead. Use only lead-free paint.

Paint that is dry poses no problem to anything on the page.

Water-soluble paint can fade and also run or bleed through to other pages when wet.

Plastics

Safe plastics are polyester, polypropylene and polyethylene.

An unsafe plastic, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) commonly known as vinyl can be rigid or soft. This plastic leaves droplets of harmful plasticizers and emits chlorine gases. Some vinyl products are labeled "no plasticizers" but there still is the problem of off gassing. Vinyl is identifiable by its strong plastic odor. Plastic contains no acid.

Rubber Stamp Ink

Select pads with ink that are pigment based rather than dye based.

When rubber stamping in your scrapbook, always powder emboss the impression. This seals the ink, protecting your photos and other memorabilia. Powder embossing also ensures that the image can stay true rather than fading or changing color over time. Always brush away the excess embossing powder.

Sand / Rocks

Sand or rocks can be a mess if not contained in special polypropylene pockets.

When gluing down sand and rocks use a strong grip adhesive making sure there are no loose grains left to scratch photos. Clean sand and rocks contain no acid.

Tags

All paper tags should be acid and lignin-free.

Colored tags should not bleed or run if splashed on by water.

Tags with metal rims should be coated because when subject to moisture rusting and staining can occur.

Walnut Ink

Walnut ink contains no acid but can fade with time.

©Preservation Source, 2003

Embellishments for Scrapbooking[®]

*A Guide for the Safe Use of
Embellishments in Scrapbooking*

By Al Thelin & Jeanne English

Members & supporters of the:
Scrapbook Preservation Society
www.scrapbookpreservationsociety.com



Introduction

Embellishments have added a whole new dimension to scrapbooking. The choices and selection is endless only as far as your own creativity will take you. This is a guide to help you choose what is safe and what is not safe when scrapbooking with embellishments.

The first consideration is what problems can occur to these photos and pages years down the road. Some embellishments contain materials that can discolor the paper, gases that can age the photos, acid that can deteriorate the pages, oils that can stain the pages, metals that can scratch and harm photos, and dyes that can bleed and spread. Small polypropylene pockets are available to contain these items and prevent problems on scrapbook pages. Embellishments also add bulk to the scrapbook because of their dimensional shape. The embellishment can leave an impression and eventually cause deformity to the pages and photos before and after it. Special sheet protectors have been developed with a space to adequately house the embellishments on a scrapbook page. Adding bulk to album pages makes the album fan out causing the spine to break down.

Use embellishments as much as you would like to decorate your scrapbook pages, but remember to be responsible and wise.

Buttons

Most plastic buttons cause no problems. Wood buttons contain lignin and should not be used unless they are painted or coated. (See section on paint for instructions.) Buttons made from shells have no adverse effects. For metal buttons see section on metals for instructions.

Chalk

The dust from chalk can fall or rub off if not sealed on the page.
Chalk contains no acid.

Clay

Unfired clay contains moisture and oils that can leach out causing stains.
Moldable clay that has been baked has no problems.
Clay contains no acid.

Crayons

The wax in crayons can bleed through the page leaving a clear colored stain.
Heat changes the composition of crayons causing them to melt and run.
Crayons contain no acid.

Fabrics

Fabrics do not contain harmful ingredients that are unsafe for scrapbook pages.
Always check the dye in fabrics for color fastness. Put a small piece of fabric in water, it must not bleed or run.
Fabrics manufactured in strange places from around the world can contain solvents that are very smelly and deteriorate photos. They also can contain plant matter such as wood, bark, grass and flowers. These items contain lignin, which cause staining and are not safe on scrapbook pages. Do the smell test, use your nose, and if it smells don't use it.
Fabric strands, threads, yarns, cords and trims can be used if they are colorfast. The color should not bleed or run when wet.
Fabric that has been treated with a form of protection guard is ok. The treatment will not off gas or migrate but can only wear off.
Fabric contains no acid.

Foam

See Plastics for details.
Some foam shapes and sheets are made with adverse chemicals and have a very distinct odor. Do the smell test, use your nose, and if it smells don't use it.

Glass

Some glass can contain acids but it does not leach out or migrate.
Glass can have sharp corners and edges. Glass buttons, beads, bobbles and mirrors usually have their edges rounded or softened.

Hair / Feathers

Hair and feathers pose no problem to a scrapbook page except for insects that might come with these items. It is smart to contain these items in polypropylene pockets.

Leather / Fur

Leather and fur are animal products and can attract insects and rodents. There are leather products on the market that are acid-free because they have been tanned with oil not acid. The problem is there have been no tests made to see if the oils bleed through onto the scrapbook page.

Leaves / Greens / Flowers / Foliage / Wood / Bark / Cork

Plant materials contain lignin, which leaves brown stains on the scrapbook page. These stains can migrate from one thing to another.