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## **AN APPEALING PAINT FOR DEFENCE**

A strippable paint coating that can decontaminate itself after absorbing chemical agents is the ultimate aim for scientists at the Defence Science Technology Laboratory (Dstl).

Currently, strippable coatings are used on military vehicles in theatre to change the colour of vehicles quickly. The application of these coatings requires minimal training and can easily be applied and removed by soldiers. Ninety percent of the coatings can be removed by scoring flat areas with a knife and then manually peeling it off, complex areas can be scored and then removed with high-pressure water. The coatings also have a use in temporary camouflage as the paint can be used to flexibly adapt a vehicle's colour and glint signature, reducing the vehicle's visibility. The current generation of coatings have at least a 12 month life span on the vehicles.

Dstl is evaluating the coatings for use in decontamination and is researching the next generation of coatings which will be able to absorb chemical biological and radiological agents (CBR), therefore protecting those operating inside and around the vehicle. Further down the line, Dstl is looking at reactive coatings which would contain catalysts and possibly enzymes in order to create self-decontaminating coatings.

Dr Steven Mitchell, a Dstl research scientist leading the work on strippable coatings says: "Ultimately, what we'd like to create is a coating that changes colour to indicate it's been contaminated, decontaminates itself, then returns to the original colour when it's clean. This is a long-term but not an unreasonable ultimate objective".

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Notes to editors:

**Dstl**

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is a centre of scientific excellence for the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Its 3,500 strong workforce includes some of the nation's most talented and creative scientists with the brief to ensure that the UK Armed Forces and Government are supported in-house by the very best impartial scientific and technological advice. Dstl's position at the heart of the MOD means that its advice is trusted by governments, academia, industry and international partners. It offers timely and accurate advice at all levels of military planning and operations, both overseas and on the home front. For more information please visit [www.dstl.gov.uk](http://www.dstl.gov.uk)