

Wax Seals Tips & Tricks with Karen Sanson Scented, Sealed and Sent

A Little History on wax seals taken from [Wikipedia](#): Sealing wax is a [wax](#) material of a [seal](#) which, after melting, hardens quickly (to paper, parchment, ribbons and wire, and other material) forming a bond that is difficult to separate without noticeable tampering. Wax is used to verify something such as a document is unopened, to verify the sender's identity, for example with a [signet ring](#), (when nobles would pass on, their wax seal impressions would be destroyed) and as decoration. Wax was used to seal [letters close](#) and later, from about the 16th century, [envelopes](#). Before sealing wax, the **Romans** used [bitumen](#) for this purpose. (Crude bitumen has the viscosity similar to that of cold molasses).

In the [Middle Ages](#) sealing wax was typically made of [beeswax](#) and "Venice turpentine", a greenish-yellow [resinous](#) extract of the [European Larch](#) tree. The earliest such wax was uncolored; later the wax was colored red with [vermilion](#). From the 16th century it was compounded of various proportions of [shellac](#), [turpentine](#), [resin](#), [chalk](#) or [plaster](#), and coloring matter (often vermilion, or [red lead](#)), but not necessarily beeswax. The proportion of chalk varied; coarser grades are used to seal [wine bottles](#) and [fruit preserves](#), finer grades for documents. In some situations, such as large seals on public documents, beeswax was used. On occasion, sealing wax has historically been perfumed by [ambergris](#), [musk](#) and other scents.^[1]

By 1866 many colors were available: gold (using [mica](#)), blue (using [smalt](#) or verditer), black (using [lamp black](#)), white (using [lead white](#)), yellow (using the mercuric mineral turpeth, also known as Schuetteite^[2]), green (using [verdigris](#)) and so on. Some users, such as the [British Crown](#), assigned different colors to different types of documents.^[3]

Today a range of synthetic colors are available. Red wax seals were used for formal

correspondence using vermilion such as the Indian and Dutch used; Blue wax seals were associated with romance and passion; Green wax was used for casual or friendly letters; White wax was used for formal invitations, such as weddings; Pink wax was used for a letter of congratulations; and Black wax seals were of extreme importance. Black was the color of mourning or of death using common lamp black.

Current Sealing Wax

Sealing wax is available in the form of sticks and sometimes with a [wick](#), or as granules or beads. The stick is melted at one end (but not ignited or blackened), or the granules/beads heated in a spoon, normally using a flame, and then placed where required, usually on the flap of an envelope or on a hard, cold surface such as a piece of marble. While the wax is still soft and warm, the seal (preferably at the same temperature as the wax, for the best impression) should be quickly and firmly pressed into it and released. Use of an ice block can keep the seal cold until ready to use.

Traditional sealing wax candles are produced in [Canada](#), [Spain](#), [France](#), [Italy](#) and [Scotland](#), with formulations similar to those used historically.

Mailing Letters through the Postal System

Since the advent of the postal system, the use of sealing wax has become more for ceremony than security. Modern times have required new styles of wax, allowing for mailing of the seal without damage or removal. These new waxes are flexible for mailing and are referred to as glue-gun sealing wax, **faux** sealing wax and flexible sealing wax. Banker's Wax that is hard and brittle is not post office friendly.

Be aware, sometimes the post office requires additional postage to mail a wax seal if sending on the outside of an envelope. If the wax seal is positioned on the upper two thirds of the envelope, the conveyer belt at the post office should not destroy your art. Many times, I avoid this altogether by using a double envelope. I will

add my wax seal to the inner envelope and use washi tape or stickers on the outside.

Karen's History and Tips

The history of my story using sealing wax dates back to the early 1980s. I have a small wax seal with the impression of a fleur-de-lis and I used wax sticks with wicks. I don't particularly like the wicks because black soot can get mixed in with the wax color and degrade the look. When my son got married, I used a glue gun to make a large number of seals and glued them to ribbons.

My favorite type of wax seals is used by melting cut up wax sticks or beads (4 beads make a nice impression for a 1" seal) into a large spoon. The spoon is heated over a tea light, and the mixture is stirred with a toothpick. I'll add scented candle wax and sometimes use crayons for additional color. Creating a mixture with the correct viscosity is important. The crayons and scented candle wax must be stirred in with sealing wax to create a thicker mixture. Even glue gun wax can be used in small amounts. If the mixture is too runny, making a round design will be more difficult. Remember, the advantage of using wax of any type is the ability to re-heat if the impression isn't up to your standard. Just cut up the seal and add to the spoon for a re-do.

When using a glue gun of any size, make sure to have plain glue gun sticks on hand for when colors are being changed. A plain glue gun stick is much less expensive than a wax sealing stick of a beautiful color. 1 – 1 ½ pumps of the glue gun can make a perfect impression. More wax may be needed when applying to a package with string or ribbon.

For a marbling effect, use wax beads and melt together but do not mix or just stir gently and to create a beautiful effect after the wax seal is cooled, the seal can be colored using colored Sharpie pens or brush pens. This makes the design 'pop'. I will then add a double-sided sticker to add to the envelope or letter.

What Products You Will Need:

- Wax: Beads/Sticks with wicks/Glue sticks for large or small glue guns
- Tools: Glue guns – small and large/spoons/tea lights/melting disk/scented candle wax/crayons (essential oils/fountain pen ink)
- Ice pack/marble top/hard surface
- Markers: Sharpie pens/Brush pens
- Spatula/pick
- Imagination!

There are many places to purchase. Etsy has some beautiful wax seals. I have purchased most of my wax seals from China that have been laser cut but I am always on the lookout for vintage wax seals although they are harder to come by and quite expensive.

Where to purchase:

- Amazon
- Esty
- Dollar Stores – for spatulas and picks.
- Michaels – or other hobby stores
- [Nostalgic Impressions](#)
- [Letter Seals.com](#) – located in Washington
- [Artisaire](#) – located in Canada
- [Kings Wax](#) – also located in Canada
- [Kathryn Hastings](#)
- [How to Create a Perfectly Rounded Wax Seal](#)
- [Blushed Design](#) – 7 Wax Seal Tips and Tricks

Here are some Youtube videos of wax seal impressions set to music. Enjoy!

- [The Most Satisfying Sealing Wax Video Compilation](#)
- [Super Satisfying Wax Sealing Compilation](#)

Enjoy your new hobby and any questions, send me an email:

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