

# Smart Words for Smart Homeowners

THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERTS AND THEIR ADVICE ON RELEVANT HOMEOWNER TOPICS

## Painting Home Exteriors

### Estimating Exterior Paint Coverage

Buy too much paint and it's money down the drain and you've got yourself a big space-eater. This article will help you make fewer mistakes.

### Determine The Preparation Factors

- 1) Priming needed,
- 2) Caulking needed,
- 3) Height of peaks,
- 4) Obstacles [trees, wires, hedges, neighbors],
- 5) Condition of the surfaces,
- 6) Needed repairs / Rotted item replacements,
- 7) Cleaning & power washing,
- 8) Shrubbery and vine risks,
- 9) Hills and slopes,
- 10) Ladder space around the house.

### Exterior Painting Preparation

Gutters leak. Siding cracks. Rot needs to be fixed. Light fixtures, mail boxes, door bells block your way. Take inventory of all the little chores that need to be looked after before you can pop open that can of paint. All of the obstructions take time.

### Covering Shrubs, Steps And Walkways

Foliage can get in the way of outside work, but you don't have to chop them down. Keep your outdoor plants protected with drop cloths or sheets of thick plastic.

### Exterior Painting Preparation

Even if you're fortunate enough to skip spot-scraping, sanding and re-priming steps, there are still some double-painting chores to attack. They're much less laborious than removing peeling paint but no less vital to a successful job. Of the 6 or 7 dozen houses we've painted less than three required no scraping, sanding and priming.

Rust stains on siding, overhangs, and foundations need to be removed or the section of siding replaced. Leaks in gutters and downspouts have to be repaired.

And if they've been leaking for awhile you can bet that there is rot beneath that area. Loose caulking should be replaced with a quality vinyl caulking like Phenoseal®, along with split shingles. Cracks in siding must be filled, sanded, and primed. Mildew must be washed & scrubbed off and steps should be taken to reduce and eliminate its return.

Also, to make painting easier, storm windows, screens, shutters, awnings, wall-mounted light fixtures (be sure to turn the power supply off), the mailbox and even the street address numbers should be taken down, cleaned, holes filled with Phenoseal® and primed separately. You may even want to remove downspouts, especially if they are hiding rot or damaged, as it's sometimes difficult to get a paintbrush behind them. To make painting easier always remove light fixtures and other accessories so you can paint behind them.



You can't typically complete all of these preparations for even a small house in a single day or over a weekend. If you're painting a porch or an outbuilding, it may only take a few hours. If you're painting with latex, you can start the following day; solvent-base paint does not adhere well to moist surfaces so wait several days until all the washed surfaces are absolutely dry before applying this type of finish.

### Washing Exteriors

You must have a clean surface to work. Painting over dust is dumb and expensive and could halve the longevity of any paint. Wash to get all the loose paint and dirt off the house then wait until the surface dry - sometimes 2 to 3 days - to begin the other prep work.

### Determining Gallon: Factors

These are all factors that will determine the amount of paint you buy or how large a mistake you'll make.

- 1) Type of siding, [smooth or rough]
- 2) Number of coats to cover,

- 3) Obstacles [trees, wires, hedges, neighbors],
- 4) Items to cut or remove [vines, branches],
- 5) Quality of paint being used,
- 6) Method of application,
- 7) Size of the house,
- 8) Condition of the surfaces,
- 9) Distance off the ground,
- 10) Type of coating you select,
- 11) Ladder space around the house,
- 12) Condition of exterior trim; rot repairs,
- 13) Number & size of doors and windows.

New or unprimed lap siding, shingles or shakes, brand new masonry, or unprimed stucco can add an additional 15 to 50 percent more time and more paint. Narrow lap siding, shingles or shakes, masonry, or stucco exterior walls can add another 15 to 40 percent more paint and hours than smooth, flat walls.

Since it is difficult to estimate precisely the number of gallons you should buy, be sure that your source has repeatable - computer controlled - mixing in case you need to buy more you can match, with maximum control, the special paint colors. Maximum control does not mean perfect so we'll get into batching and boxing later.

You can get more standard, premixed paint if you run out because premixed paint is made in very large batches and held in inventory. The drawback is that you may see this premixed color on your block... or in your neighborhood. Another drawback of pre-mixed is that retailers buy massive quantities and some may sit around for awhile before it is sold to you. But, on the positive side, if you buy too much premixed paint, many stores will give credit or refunds for unopened standard premixed gallons.

Calculate your needs carefully, then buy an extra gallon for insurance and touch up later.

### Spraying

Airless sprayers, some of which can apply the equivalent of two coats of paint at one time, may require twice as much paint as painting with brushes and rollers.

### How To Measure

To determine how much paint your house needs measure the house's perimeter. Multiply that figure by the height, excluding gable ends.

Take the measurements with a steel tape measure, or reel out a ball of twine around the house and mark and measure the twine. If you will use a different paint on your home's trim, subtract 20 square feet for every door and 15 square feet for each typical window. Divide the final figure by the square-foot coverage specified on the paint can to determine the number of gallons you will need for ONE coat.



Keep in mind that you'll be painting that door, door trim and window trim. Add that cost in later.

If your house has gables, you can estimate by just adding 2 feet to the height when making your calculations. For more precision, measure the width of the gable wall and multiply that figure by its height. Divide the final figure by 2 to determine the gable's square-foot dimensions. Then since you have 2 gables use the first number too calculate the gallons.

For trim paint, the rule of thumb is 1 gallon for every 6 gallons of flat wall paint. To be more accurate, you'll have to figure the areas of doors, windows, and shutters. For gutters, a linear foot is about equal to a square foot, so for 50 feet of gutter, buy sufficient paint to cover 50 square feet.

Whenever the resulting calculation exceeds the whole number - like 9.2 gallons - buy the extra gallon and not a quart...buy 10.

### Selecting Exterior Paint

The kind of surface you're painting, the kind of look you want, and the kind of weather you're likely to encounter are all key factors to consider when choosing the right exterior paint. Learn which type is right for you. As one example, go to <http://www.sherwin-williams.com/> and read their details about paint grades, finishes and longevity.

### Research?

If you're the kind of person that enjoys examining and learning there is no better way to peruse and understand the details than the internet. Look under the Professional sections of paint sites to get the best details in the fewest number of words. As an example: <http://www.sherwin-williams.com/pro/problem/tips/>

## Exterior Paints

Choosing exterior paints can be complicated because of the wide range of surfaces. These surfaces include clapboard and aluminum siding, wood shingles, tar shingles, cedar shakes, brick, concrete block, stucco, and, of course, blistered old paint. On many older homes, you'll find a combination of these surfaces. Fortunately, there is an exterior paint for every type of surface, and some paints are suitable for more than one surface.

Like interior paints, exterior paints are available in many quality grades and in either water-based or solvent-based formulas and in many lusters; flat, satin, semigloss, and gloss. Remember, the best paints are expensive and will last the longest.

There are, however, several characteristics that distinguish exterior paints from those used inside the house. For one thing, exterior paints are more expensive. They also contain more resin (for moisture resistance and durability) and more pigment (for color depth) and also more fungicides to reduce the impact of mildew and mold.



You may want to choose your exterior paint based on what was used before. As with interior paints, latex works best over latex and alkyd works best over alkyd. If you can't tell or are unsure about what type of paint is on the house, use an alkyd-base paint.

Latex exterior paints are easier to apply, dry quickly, and can help minimize moisture problems because they "breathe." Cleaning up latex is a matter of soap and water. These paints do not adhere as well to oil-base or alkyd-base paints or to poorly prepared surfaces, however.

Alkyds, on the other hand, are extremely durable, but they are more difficult to work with and they dry slowly. Also, solvents must be used with alkyds to clean brushes, rollers, paint trays, and drips.

One of the alkyd types of exterior paint may be especially appealing because of its regulated, self-cleaning property. It's called "chalking," and that's exactly what it does. Over a period of years, the paint surface slowly oxidizes. Each rainfall washes off a minute quantity of the paint -- along with dirt. As a result of this shedding, the paint surface is constantly renewing itself. The price of this convenience used to be chalky residue on foundations and shrubs, but the newest formulas control the shedding so it doesn't stain adjacent surfaces.

Chalking paint is not recommended for every house. In areas with little rainfall, for example, the powder tends to remain on the surface, dulling the paint. In wet regions, chalking paint may not be worth the extra expense because frequent rainfalls will keep the outside of the house clean no matter what kind of paint is used. If you live in or near either of these climatic extremes, ask your paint dealer if the chalking type is suitable for your area.



## New Formulas

There are probably many innovations in exterior paints since you last opened that stored can. Here's what to look for:

- ✓ Increased resistance to blistering and peeling,
- ✓ One-coat and Self-Priming on repaints, (two coats on new work),
- ✓ Superior adhesion, hide and color resilience,
- ✓ Thicker and more flexible coatings,
- ✓ Guaranteed to last (read every label for warranty information),
- ✓ Lower temperature applications.

## Green Designations For Paint

A number of paints now have 'green' designations. This EPA movement is not always good for the color retention or durability of the paint. It is to protect the environment. Be aware that some green paints don't do the job you expect a great paint to accomplish. In general, the optimal green paints and coating should do these things:

- ✓ Minimize the impact on water and air quality,
- ✓ Deliver maximum longevity and performance,
- ✓ Provide long-term beauty and durability.

## Use the Absolute BEST Materials

I've been trying to explain this to people for years. Most understand it. Over the long term it is always best to use the best materials and that includes the best primer, caulking and paint. Some high quality paint, like Sherwin-Williams DURATION® have a "lifetime" warranty and this paint looks great for a very long time.

It's easy to calculate the cost of getting many more years of durability and good looks from a paint job. Determine the value of paying for the best paint in the world versus paint that costs \$15.00 less per gallon. In

one example the difference could be less than \$230.00 dollars for a job that can take around 3 1/2 man weeks and cost many thousands of dollars. It takes the same hours whether you use the cheapest or best paint. It just looks best and lasts longer with the best.

| Tools You'll Need                                       |  |
|---|--|
| A good ladder and a good understanding of ladder safety | The best, appropriate, paintable, adhesive caulk that is close to the final paint color; Phenoseal®. |
| A hat   | A caulking gun   |
| Primer  | Phenoseal®   |
| Paint   | Drop clothes & plastic sheeting  |
| Paint buckets   | Scraper, sanding blocks and 5-in-1 tool  |
| Drop cloths - many                                      | Rollers, brushes, rags   |

### Awards For Superior Results

We have been granted awards for superior work performance from our customers and from leading consumer rating agencies like Angie's List®. This is our 7th consecutive consumer award. Less than 5 percent of service companies ever qualify for this award in any single year, so it's quite an unparalleled and rare distinction to be a successive winner SEVEN consecutive years. (For math majors it's a probability of 0.000000007813 and a very rare occurrence.)

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- ✓ Morris, parts of Sussex and Warren.



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### Our Angie's List Report Card

|                          |                           |
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| Quality: <b>A</b>        | Responsiveness: <b>A</b>  |
| Punctuality: <b>A</b>    | Thoroughness: <b>A</b>    |

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