



Prepping & Painting Wood Siding

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There are few more rewarding projects than giving your home a new look with a fresh coat of paint. It's a labor-intensive task, but doing it yourself will save you a lot of money. This project will help you cover previously painted wood siding, but many of the procedures and advice hold true for other types of siding and exterior surfaces. **Remember**, you can apply latex over oil-based paints (unless there are three or more coats of paint on the house), but you cannot apply oil-based paints over latex.

Tools & Materials Checklist

- Safety goggles
- Dust masks
- Paint Clothing, hat, etc.
- Canvas & plastic drop cloths
- Ladders
- Paint scrapers w/extra blades
- File (to sharpen scrapers)
- Disk or random orbit sander
- 60, 80 & 120-grit abrasive disks
- Wet/dry vac
- Putty knife
- Exterior spackling compound or a polyester resin filler
- Plastic squeegees
- Sandpaper
- Paintbrushes
- Primer
- Screwdriver
- Exterior paintable caulk & gun
- Pruning shears & tree saw
- Soft scrub brush & bucket
- Pressure washer (rent or buy)
- House wash
- Masking tape
- Paint (topcoat)
- Paint bucket swivel-type hanger

Tips: Scraping Paint

- *Always wear eye protection and a tight-fitting dust mask when scraping or sanding painted wood.*
- *Sharpen often or replace scraper blades. A dull blade makes it more difficult & increases the likelihood that you will damage the wood since it requires you to use more pressure.*
- *Keep the sander moving constantly to prevent heat caused by friction from softening the paint and gumming up the paper.*

Depending on the size of your house and the condition of the paint job, this project can take anywhere from a week to several months.

Tip: If you are painting each side of the house the same color, simply paint one side of your home each year, and take the fifth year off.



Caution:

- *When on the ladder be careful of bees and wasps. Also be mindful of overhead electrical wires and painting near where service lines attach to the house.*
- *If your house predates 1978, chances are that the paint contains lead. Before working on an old house contact the National Lead Information Center (NLIC) at 1-800-424-LEAD.*

Step 1. Evaluate Existing Conditions

Examine the entire surface of your house for problems such as peeling paint, open joints or seams, wet or rotted wood, mildew (black or gray spots) and other problems. Identify and repair or resolve the problems and their causes before you pick up a paintbrush. Discuss any major problems with our paint manager.

Step 2. Remove Loose Paint

Remove all peeling or flaking paint. Although there may be cases where chemical stripping, heat guns, or other approaches may be more appropriate, sanding and scraping are by far the most common ones. Cover the ground with canvas drop cloths to catch the paint chips. Use as large of a scraper as is appropriate for the surface. For very limited areas you can use a random-orbit sander, a hand sander, or a disc sander drill attachment with 60-, 80- and 120-grit sanding discs. Begin sanding with the coarse abrasive and finish with a fine one. Pay particular attention to smoothing (feathering) the edges between painted and scraped areas. Painting will accentuate, not hide, any ridges and edges that you leave. Use a wet/dry vac to clean up any chips that do get on the ground.

Step3. Patch Damaged Wood

Use an exterior spackling compound or, for larger damaged areas, a two-part polyester resin filler (such as Bondo®) to repair any holes or damaged wood. Mix the filler as directed and apply it with a plastic squeegee. Sand the cured filler to make it smooth and level with the surrounding wood.

Step 4. Scuff-Sand the Surface

If the surface you intend to paint is glossy, sand lightly to remove the gloss. This improves the bond between the new and old finishes.

Step 5. Prime Bare Wood

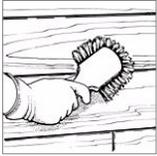
Paint will not bond to wood exposed by sanding. Apply an exterior latex or oil-based primer with a brush to all bare wood. Allow to dry.

Step 6. Caulk Around Joints

You've probably noticed that the previous paint film peeled or flaked near joints between dissimilar materials (siding/trim, window frames/glass). This is because water seeps into cracks and soaks into the wood, ultimately causing the paint to peel off. Use an old screwdriver to scrape out any caulk from joints and cracks. Use compressed air and/or a brush to clean the joint. Allow any moisture to dry completely before applying paintable caulk. Do not caulk the horizontal joints between siding courses or the vertical joints between members in the same course. These joints permit moisture behind the siding to escape.

Step 7. Cut Back Vegetation

Cut off tree branches that overhang your house. Prune or remove foundation plantings that are less than 2 feet from the house.



Step 8. Clean the Exterior

Rent or buy a pressure washer to thoroughly clean the exterior (or hire a contractor to handle this). Or, use a soft scrub brush and a detergent/water solution to remove all dirt and grime. If mildew is present (black or gray spots), it must be killed with bleach. Ask the paint manager at the store to recommend an appropriate house wash that includes a mildewcide. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Allow the house to dry for at least two to three days in dry weather before painting.

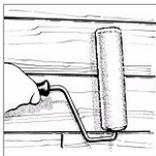
Step 9. Make Final Preparations

Remove light fixtures and other hardware or cover them with plastic and masking tape so you don't have to paint around them. Remove shutters so you can paint behind them. (Save painting the shutters for a rainy day in the garage.) Cover shrubs, the ground, and walkways with canvas drop cloths. Slide window screens up behind storm windows or remove them. Set up your ladders where you will need them first.



Tip: Masking

Don't mask until the last minute, and remove masking tape shortly after you complete painting an area.



Step 10. Paint

Anyone will tell you that preparation is nine-tenths of the work. So here's the fun part. Apply your topcoat with a good-quality brush or other applicator. Generally, start with the body first then paint the trim, and start at the top and work down. Follow the manufacturer's directions relating to weather, temperature, and damp surfaces.



Tip: Painting the Siding

- *If possible, avoid painting in direct sun. The rule of thumb states, "Follow the sun." Allow the sun to warm a surface and move around to another side of the house before you start painting the warmed surface. Also, avoid painting in windy conditions that can blow dirt and insects onto the wet paint or cause the paint to dry too quickly.*
- *As you paint, carry sandpaper, a scraper, spackling compound, a putty knife, and caulk so you can clean and patch any defects that you may have missed.*
- *Allowing that rough surfaces absorb more than smooth ones, apply paint to cover about the area described on the label (typically 1-gallon for 350-400 square feet). Measure the area you covered by 1 quart of paint; if it is not between 90 to 100 square feet, adjust your application rate as needed.*

Step 11. Final Inspection

Check your work carefully, inspecting for missed spots, spills, drips, and other problems.

Step 12. Finish Up

Once the paint is dry, reinstall removed items such as light fixtures, hardware, and shutters. Do a thorough job cleaning brushes and other tools, and store them properly. Store leftover paint in a small well-sealed metal can, or dispose of it properly.

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