

## Exterior Painting Tips for the Do-It-Yourselfer

Planning a house painting project this season? Commonly viewed as a dreaded laborious task, using these tips will result in a professional-looking, longer-lasting paint job, after which you can hang up your ladder and not need it again for many years!

- Do an extensive assessment. Are there specific problem areas? Is something causing the paint to peel within a year or two of painting—moisture problems, decayed wood, improper prep? Correct these issues before you correct the symptom (the peeling paint).
- Preparation is the key to a durable paint job. Do a thorough prep job, including scraping to remove all loose or flaking paint to the next sound layer, sanding to feather the edges where there is paint buildup and to dull gloss finishes, and washing to remove dirt, dust and mildew. Closely follow all recommendations for handling lead paint. (\*See note below.) Allow ample time for the surface to completely dry before painting.
- Repair or replace any rotten or damaged wood. Prime all surfaces of new wood, don't forget ends too! Re-nail loose clapboards with stainless steel ring-shank nails.
- Pressure/power washing and sandblasting are not recommended paint removal or cleaning techniques. They can damage the wood's surface and allow moisture to get inside the wall cavity.
- Apply a good quality oil-based primer to all bare wood within 48 hours of scraping. If applying a latex topcoat over oil paint, apply a complete coat of oil primer to all surfaces first.
- After priming, fill holes, caulk minor cracks and butt joints, and caulk around doors and windows where necessary. Do not caulk the undersides of the clapboards.
- Latex or oil? Basically, it depends on the material being painted and the environmental conditions. Latex is desirable if a breathable surface is required. Oil is used when adhesion is an issue, moisture is not, or when covering a previous oil coat.
- Buy the best quality paint you can afford. High quality paints are more chalk resistant and have better color retention and durability.
- Never paint when temperatures are below 45° F. Latex should not be used below 50° F. It is best to paint in the shade. Direct sun causes rapid drying time often resulting in lap marks and leveling problems.
- Do not paint on foggy, damp or high humidity days. Make sure the weather forecast is clear until the paint is completely dry. Only paint clean dry surfaces.
- The two topcoats (preferably the same brand as the primer) should be applied immediately after the primer has dried.
- Keep your painted surfaces clean and mildew-free to extend the life of your paint. A quality paint job can be expected to last 5 – 8 years or longer.

- Be environmentally conscientious when disposing of excess paint and empty paint cans. Oil paints should be disposed of at your town's sanitation facilities on hazardous waste collection days. Latex paint cans, once dried out, can be recycled.
- Enjoy your beautiful paint job!

\* As a homeowner doing your own painting, you are exempt from the requirements of the Renovation, Repair and Painting Law. But you should be very familiar with the best handling practices for lead paint.

Visit the Preservation Alliance's website for more Historic Property Resources:

<https://nhpreservation.org/>

#### Helpful Websites:

National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/10-paint-problems.htm> (Preservation Brief 10 - Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork)

[www.alsnetbiz.com/homeimprovement/procedurext.html](http://www.alsnetbiz.com/homeimprovement/procedurext.html) (Handy website for do-it-yourselfers)

#### Lead Paint Websites:

<https://www.finehomebuilding.com/membership/pdf/15587/021150066.pdf> (Finehome Building - Lead-Paint Safety, at Home and on the Job)

<https://www.epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program> (EPA - Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Program)

[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/healthy\\_homes/lbp/hudguidelines](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/lbp/hudguidelines) (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Guidelines for the Evaluation and Control of Lead-Based Paint Hazards in Housing)