

PREPARE TO PAINT

BY NOELLE LORD CASTLE

NOTHING CAN SPRUCE up your home more than a nice new coat of exterior paint. Nothing can seem more daunting than when your home needs a nice new coat of exterior paint. Chipping paint and exposed wood siding and trim not only look unsightly, but expose your exterior wood to very damaging elements. Rotting wood and moisture access from the outside of a building can quickly migrate inside, causing more and more damage to your home and exponentially increasing the time and resources necessary to repair it.

The following outlines our recommendation for proper preparation and completion of exterior building painting:

1. ALWAYS set up protection (tarps) on the ground, etc. to capture paint chips and residue for easy disposal.
2. Scrape as much of the loose paint off as possible using putty knife, or paint scraper or a power sander (random orbit sander) can be used.**
3. Sand or scuff up entire surface to be painted to create "tooth" for paint adhesion, and to feather-blend surfaces with different paint layers showing following scraping process. Sanding can be done using a hand, wet sanding process to contain dust, or a power sander.**

4. Scrub wash all surfaces using TSP (tri-sodium phosphate) and bleach solution in a pump sprayer. Proper washing and bleaching are critical to a lasting paint job. Bleaching all exterior paint surfaces is critical because the existence of any mold, mildew and microorganism left on the surface will eat through the new layer of paint. Our recipe: Using 2-gallon pump sprayer add 1 ½ gallon hot water and ½ cup TSP and mix well, fill the rest of the sprayer up with bleach (approx. ½ gal.). Spray to cover surface and scrub with industrial floor broom. Allow to sit on surface 30 – 60 minutes, rinse with clear water (hose off).

5. Let surfaces dry out completely (several warm, dry days)! Use a moisture meter to determine moisture content in wood. Maximum 10% moisture, 6% is ideal.

6. Use a B-I-N shellac product to seal all wood knots and exposed or rusty nails.

7. Spot prime exposed wood areas using a breathable oil primer (Cabot's Problem Solver Primer). Following priming, some wood fibers will raise and show as "hairs." If this is undesirable, lightly sand these areas and re-coat lightly with 2nd coat of primer. These "hairs" are not damaging, purely an aesthetic decision to remove.

8. Use an acrylic caulking product to caulk corner boards and any splits in wood or exposed openings to weather seal siding.

9. Paint using one to two coats of acrylic top-coat paint or a solid acrylic stain. Use a high quality top-coat from a reputable paint dealer, an acrylic latex is best for long-lasting exterior coating. An eggshell finish (slight sheen) is best for exterior wood as it allows water to bead up and roll off finish, it also remains cleaner longer.

**If lead paint exists the use of any technique that generates loose dust should be avoided, thus containing a lead exposure hazard. Power sanders should only be used if HEPA/lead dust bag or shroud attachment is used, or if enclosed staging is used. Tarps should be used to capture all paint chips and debris, and this debris should be contained in appropriate containers for disposal. Use a paint specially formulated for covering lead if available (California Elastomerics). ■

Noelle Lord Castle operates Old House C.P.R., and shares her passion for helping owners of older buildings discover how to take good care of them through consulting, teaching and writing. She can be reached by visiting www.oldhousecpr.com.

