

## Composite wood Siding- Moisture Intrusion Prevention

Composite wood sidings are a common product in modern construction. If properly installed and maintained will perform very well.

Moisture intrusion prevention is very important. Here are some tips to maintain this type of siding product.

Check for nails that have penetrated the surface of the siding, small construction dents and gouges and impact damage. These must be filled with an exterior grade-patching compound and primed before finishing.

- Maintain sealant at all penetrations for utilities, fixtures, and mounting fasteners
- Maintain a clearance of six inches to one foot between the siding and all shrubs, trees and plants.
- Direct all sprinklers spray away from the siding and trim.
- Keep the siding and trim free from mold, mildew and algae.
- Maintain a six-inch minimum clearance between the siding and finished grade. Don't allow leaves, garden mulch, bark dust, or other landscaping material to build up to within six inches of siding bottom.
- Keep surrounding soil and landscaping material sloped away from the foundation (six inches in ten feet or a 5 % to a swale is recommended) so that water drains away from the house.
- Remove and replace missing or damaged caulking around windows and doors, at abutment joints and any other area where there is an interface between dissimilar materials.
- Have the siding repainted before the existing paint fails. Consult your paint manufacturer's recommendations for repainting.
- Keep all window weep holes clear
- Keep gutters and downspouts clear and in good repair so that water is diverted away from the siding.
- Inspections of the siding and trim ARE ESSENTIAL component of a successful maintenance program.

At least twice a year a homeowner should check the following:

- Paint: Look for cracking, peeling, fading or chalking. Be sure to inspect the bottom courses, drip edges and under window casings.
- Joints and seams: Look for cracking or missing sealant.
- Exterior envelope: Look for signs of pest and dry-rot infestation
- Flashings and gutters: Look for damage or blockage.

Properly applied paint is the best protection for siding. When painting or repainting, ask your paint store to recommend appropriate, good quality paint with a minimum five-year warranty.

First, remove all dust and mildew from the surface by washing the siding with a brush. Do not use a pressure washer. Always wash from the top down so water won't drip back underneath the siding. You can buy commercial cleanser, or try this formula for removing mildew: 2/3 cup TSP and one quart of bleach, dissolved in three quarts of warm water. After applying to the surface, let the cleanser sit for 10 minutes, then rinse and if necessary, clean with a soft bristle brush.

When the siding is dry, it is time to paint.

Carefully follow the paint manufacturer's instructions. Avoid painting surfaces that are damp, too hot or too cold. Make sure paint covers all exposed surfaces. It is especially important to cover the bottom edge or drip-edge of all siding boards. The paint can be applied with a sprayer, roller or brush. If you use sprayers or rollers, you'll need to make an extra effort to be sure bottom edges are covered. Back-brushing these drip edges or panel grooves is recommended. It is recommended to apply two coats of un-thinned paint at the manufacturer's required spread rate to achieve coat of 2 mils.

Through simple periodic inspections of your siding and timely attention to needed repairs, you can ensure the lasting beauty and value of your home for years to come.