

Exterior Paint Guide

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A fresh coat of paint not only increases your home's curb appeal, it also helps to protect your home from the elements. If you are confused by all of the choices that are out there, we can help you out. We'll show you how to select a quality exterior paint that can last for years. Lowe's is happy to provide this information as a service to you.

What is Paint?

Paint consists of:

- Pigments provide color.
- Binders hold the pigments together.
- Liquid disperses and delivers the pigments.
- Additives supply traits such as moisture resistance.

Pigments, binders, and additives are solids that stay on the painted surface. The liquid evaporates (or cures). Product labels reference the percentages of solids in paint. A higher percentage usually indicates a thicker, better covering paint.

The two common types of paint are:

- **Solvent-based (oil or alkyd)** In oil-based paint the liquid solvent is mineral spirits. Oil-based paint dries slower than latex — usually taking 24 hours to cure. Clean up with turpentine or paint thinner.
- **Water-based (latex)** The liquid is water. An advantage to latex paint is that it dries relatively fast, which may or may not be desirable in hot weather or direct sunshine. Clean up is faster, requiring only soap and water.

Choosing Paint

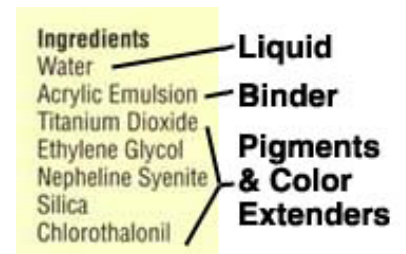
Sheen is the term used to describe the degree of light reflection a paint has. Usually the less sheen a paint has, the less stain-resistant it is. Different manufacturers may have various trade names for them, but in general sheens are classified as:

- Gloss is the toughest. It cleans easily and resists scuffs better. Therefore, it's a good choice for areas of high traffic or constant use, like door jams and window casings. For shutters and other trimwork, gloss paint provides a sleek, eye-catching look. Gloss paint will, however, show imperfections in the surface more than other sheens.
- Semi-gloss paints are also durable and easy to clean, but have less shine than gloss. They are just as suitable for trimwork and casings.
- Satin (sometimes referred to as eggshell or low lustre) offers a good combination of easy-clean and moderate sheen. It's a good choice for siding that is in good condition.
- Flat paint is the best choice for vinyl and aluminum siding that is scratched or dented because it hides imperfections well and spatters less when applied. It's also easier to touch up.

If you want to change colors, buy a small quantity of your color choice. Try it out before purchasing several gallons. Paint a small area and wait a few days. Paints can react to each other and cast reflections that may change the appearance.



Spend less time weeding and watering.



Check the percentages of solids in the paint.

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Four Characteristics of Quality Exterior Paint

- Hiding power is the ability of the paint to sufficiently cover or conceal the surface where it's applied. Hiding power comes from the paint's pigment and is affected by the manner and thickness of the application.
- Color retention refers to tinted paints only. The paint's ability to maintain its original color during exposure determines its color retention.
- Chalking resistance prevents the white chalky powder from forming on the surface and lightening the color of the paint. Chalking occurs over a period of time by the binder slowly degrading. The telltale streaking of paint (chalk run-down) is one consequence of using a paint that isn't chalk resistant.
- Blister resistance will keep excessive moisture from coming through the substrate and affecting the paint layer. If paint is applied over a damp or wet surface, blistering is imminent.

Need a Primer?

A primer will help paint adhere to the surface, providing a more uniform appearance. Use a primer when painting over new wood, bare wood, or repainting over existing bright or dark colors. Ask your salesperson and read the labels before making this decision.

Before You Buy

Once you have decided your color scheme and type of paint, measure the area you are painting, including the door and window areas. Take these measurements with you when you go shopping.

Also identify and correct exterior paint problems, see our Exterior Paint Problem Solver.