

MPI Paint Matters – Tips for Painting Wood Sidings – Priming

The difference between not using a primer and using a primer on wood sidings can be a washed out colour with no protection and visible stains, or a high performing coating that has a bright and durable finish.

Which one of these results would you or your client be satisfied with?



Wood siding - Primed



Wood siding - Not primed

When it comes to coating wood siding, priming of the wood is a vital step.

Wood shake and shingle siding is predominantly made from softwood. Various species of cedar and redwood are the main types used. Oil and alkyd based primers or stains are recommended for cedar/redwood, to protect it from water intrusion, as this often leads to swelling or cupping of the wood, which in turn causes blistering, peeling, and cracking of the coating.

End/edge sealing and back priming can help reduce water intrusion in shakes and shingles used as siding.

All siding must be back primed prior to installation.

New regulations on VOC levels have lessened the use of Oil and Alkyd based primers, except when they are specifically formulated and required to block tanning staining.

Alkyd primers are designed for wood surfaces where penetration into the wood fiber is required for optimum adhesion. These primers ([MPI #5](#)) tend to dry faster than oil types (due to their larger polymers), and are recommended for all bare (new or repainted) exterior wood surfaces. The oil primers ([MPI #5](#)) penetrate deeper into the wood fiber.

Latex primers ([MPI #6](#)) do not penetrate into surfaces as well as alkyd and oil-based primers, but show better overall resistance to blistering. Woods containing watersoluble stains, such as cedar, redwood, and some composite boards, are better served by the application of oil, or alkyd based, stain-resistant primer to further reduce the chance of extractive bleeding.