

# CARE & MAINTENANCE OF ALL ABTCO HARDBOARD SIDING & TRIM (Prefinished, Primed and Unprimed)

**GENERAL:** The suggestions and recommendations below should be followed to achieve long term, satisfactory performance of ABTCO hardboard siding. Procedures which do not meet these recommendations may result in less than adequate performance, and could void your warranty. In situations where maintenance is grossly inadequate, the effective service life of the siding can be shortened.

**PERIODIC INSPECTION & CARE:** The siding should be inspected periodically with the following routine maintenance performed as necessary:

- Repair any loose siding or trim.
- Cut back any trees or shrubs that rub against the siding.
- Replace any caulking that has hardened, cracked and/or lost its seal.
- Correct the drainage in any spots where water is retained in contact with the siding. Long term contact with water may eventually result in rot and deterioration.
- Avoid regularly wetting the siding with lawn sprinklers since water in many locales contains rust and/or minerals which may discolor the siding's surface. Additionally, this practice can shorten the life of the existing paint job, encourage mildew and mold growth, etc.
- Check the condition of the finish in accordance with the guidelines discussed below.

**WASHING:** Depending on climatic and local conditions, the siding may be subject to occasional accumulations of dirt, dust, etc. To keep the siding attractive, periodic washing to remove this dirt and dust may be in order. Use water to which a moderate amount of household cleaner (such as SollaX or Spic and Span) has been added. Apply the solution with a cloth, sponge or soft brush (such as a car wash brush). As with any cleaning operation, less streaking will result if the siding is washed from bottom to top. Immediately follow all washings by thoroughly rinsing with plain water from a garden hose. Never use harsh cleansers, abrasives, or strong solvents as they may damage the finish. If the discoloration will not wash off, it may be a mildew or fungus growth. Refer to that section below for treatment. **CAUTION: POWER WASHING NOT RECOMMENDED.**

## REFINISHING

**Frequency:** Exterior wall finishes weather most rapidly on those portions of the building that receive greatest exposure to sun and moisture. Areas receiving maximum exposure generally will need refinishing sooner than other areas - sometimes as often as every three years with field-applied finishes and near the end of the warranty period with factory prefinished sidings. The frequency of refinishing will depend on the climate and exposure, the type, quality and color of the paint or stain, and on other factors such as the method of paint application and the number of coats. Repainting is dictated by the degree of wear or erosion of the old paint. Specifically, refinishing is indicated if the surface is discolored and blotchy; or if the coating is cracked, peeling or scaling, or if the coating appears thin, porous and chalked to a point where it no longer protects or hides the surface.

Severe paint cracking, flaking or peeling is not normal paint weathering. Such problems may be caused by inferior paints, incompatible paints, improper painting procedures - such as improper surface preparation, dilution of paints, insufficient or excessive coverage application on wet surfaces, painting at improper temperatures - or by improper construction which permits water or water vapor to reach, condense, or freeze on the back side of the siding.

It should also be understood that under the impact of weathering, colors (other than white) will display some degree of color change during normal aging process. The degree of change again relates to the exposure severity, the color itself and the darkness of the color.

Repainting is sometimes performed solely for the purpose of changing the color of the home. Frequent repainting can result in excessive total paint film thickness, which may cause problems such as cracking and peeling. On the other hand, some people are inclined to delay maintenance repainting too long, which can add substantially to the amount of surface preparation work required. In cases of gross neglect, there may be deterioration of both the paint and siding such that refinishing cannot be accomplished effectively.

In general, it is recommended that the total coating film thickness be maintained at 4 - 5 mils. (.004" - .005"). This typically is considered the equivalent of three coats of finish (one coat of primer plus two coats of finish paint).

**Surface Preparation:** The degree and type of surface preparation necessary is dependent on the condition of the old finish. Loose paint material should be removed by sanding and scraping. In glossy or unweathered areas, it may be necessary to scuff sand the surfaces so the new finish will properly adhere. The surface should be cleaned before painting as described in the WASHING section above. If mildew or other fungus growth is present, it should be removed before repainting (refer to the section below on this subject).

**Repriming:** If the old surface is sound (no peeling, cracking, heavy caulking, etc.) repriming is typically not necessary unless it is recommended by the paint manufacturer for the top coat chosen. (Sometimes factory prefinished surfaces also need priming, see below). However, if the base substrate is exposed and/or if the old primer is exposed, these areas should be reprimed. Also, if the siding's edges or ends show any slight cracks or

fissures, these should be resealed with a primer. Only top quality exterior type primers are recommended. The primer used must be compatible with the chosen top coat and the primer manufacturer recommendations followed in all respects.

**Selecting and Applying Top Coat Paints/Stains:** These recommendations deal with refinishing over field-applied top coats. For painting over factory prefinished sidings, see the following section. A good quality paint or stain that is suitable for use on hardboard siding must be used. Low cost paints are rarely genuine bargains because they are usually harder to apply, do not cover well and do not last as long as good quality materials. Also, the finish chosen should be compatible with the existing old finish. In general, good quality exterior acrylic latex paints are recommended. See the following section for guidelines on selecting a top quality acrylic latex. Satin or gloss oil/alkyd paints are also acceptable, as are opaque acrylic latex stains (for textured products only). The following top coats (paints/stains) are not recommended: shake and shingle paints, flat oil or alkyd paints and stains, vinyl acetate (PVA), vinyl/acrylic or vinyl acetate/acrylic copolymer paints and stains, semi-transparent stains, clear coatings. Many of these non-recommended top coats have short service lives, require frequent refinishing, inadequately protect the siding, or are directly detrimental to the siding. The finish coat of paint or stain should be applied in accordance with the recommendations of the paint manufacturer with strict attention given to proper coverage instructions, temperature at time of painting and other specific requirements. Again, special attention should be given to ends and edges to insure complete coverage and protection of these critical areas.

**FINISHING OVER FACTORY PREFINISHED SIDING:** Maintenance painting should be accomplished before the factory applied coating has reached an advanced stage of deterioration - see "Frequency" Section. For washing, surface preparation and repriming (if necessary), see the appropriate sections above. It is recommended that only top quality exterior acrylic latex paints be used for painting over factory prefinished surfaces. The non-recommended finishes in the previous section should not be used over prefinished siding either. In addition, avoid the use of oil or alkyd paints, or stains of any type.

Below are some guidelines which should be followed in selecting a "top quality" acrylic latex product. While these criteria cannot guarantee the paint's quality, this use will diminish the probability of selecting an undesirable product.

- Determine if the paint has a warranty. Paints with *strong* warranties are usually better performers
- Ascertain the paint manufacturer's reputation. National brands are usually more reliable.
- Consider where the paint ranks in the manufacturer's line. Buy only top-of-the-line products.
- Total solids in the paint should be 50 - 60% by weight.
- White paint should contain 17 - 25% titanium dioxide by weight.
- Light, medium and deep tint base paints should contain about 15%, 9% and 2% titanium dioxide by weight.
- Factory mixed colors are generally better than store tinted colors
- The paint should contain 15 - 25% acrylic resin. Avoid paints with vinyl, PVA or vinyl acetate resins.
- The paint should contain an effective mildewcide.

For best adhesion of the new paint, new siding should be allowed to weather through one summer before repainting. If this is not possible, either (1) apply a top quality exterior alkyd primer before applying a compatible acrylic latex paint or (2) use an exterior acrylic latex paint which is described as self-priming and/or alkyd modified. Since adhesion may develop slowly over the factory prefinished coating, repaint only when dry, warm weather without dew is anticipated.

**MILDEW AND OTHER FUNGUS GROWTH:** Mildew is an airborne fungus which attaches to and grows on various surfaces including paint. It often gives a dirty, streaked appearance on a painted surface which appears to be dirt. A simple confirmatory test for mildew is to place a drop of 5% hypochlorite solution (common household bleach) on the stained area. Mildew will bleach out in 1 - 2 minutes, dirt will not bleach. Other fungus growths, such as molds, are more easily recognized since they are thicker, more dense, and range in color from green to brown to black.

Mildew and other fungus growths must be killed and removed whenever they are detected, but especially before repainting since they will grow through a new paint job. This is typically accomplished by scrubbing the infected surface thoroughly with the following solution:

- 2/3 cup TSP (trisodium phosphate) - available in paint or hardware stores
- 1/3 cup detergent containing no ammonia (Liquid detergent)
- 1 quart 5% sodium hypochlorite (Household bleach)
- 3 quarts warm water or enough to make one gallon

It is advisable to wear rubber gloves and goggles when applying the solution. The siding should be scrubbed with a fairly soft brush, then rinsed thoroughly with fresh water. The solution should not be splashed on shrubbery or grass.

If conditions are right for a new set of mold spores to start growing, another infestation may appear in a few days or weeks. Soon after the surface has been cleaned and has dried, a mildew resistant paint recommended by the paint manufacturer should be applied.