

EXTERIOR PAINTS

The right stuff

The patio, the garage door and the banister all need a coat of paint, and you can't wait to start. The following guidelines will help you pick the right paint for the job.

The latex versus oil-based debate regarding exterior paints has become increasingly irrelevant. In September 2009, the Canadian government adopted a regulation calling on paint manufacturers to reduce, by September 2010, the concentration of volatile organic compounds (VOC) in

their products except those designed for painting metals. Retailers have until September 2012 to dispose of all current oil-based paints—also known as alkyd or solvent-based paints—that do not meet government VOC standards.

There's no reason to worry. Technology has made great strides, and today's 100-percent acrylic exterior latex paints are increasingly more efficient, weather resistant and durable. ▶

FOUR TYPES OF PAINT FINISH

Matte

Pros Covers up imperfections; allows the true colour to come through since it doesn't reflect light.

Cons Barely washable, although there are new paints offering a matte finish that are easier to maintain.

Where to use it Recommended for damaged surfaces, those requiring a minimum of maintenance as well as for non-traffic areas (trim, fences, walls, balcony ceilings, cornices).

Satin

Pros Conceals minor blemishes while providing a slight sheen.

Cons Less washable than a glossy finish but at least it is more so than matte.

Where to use it Recommended for areas requiring occasional upkeep (architectural details, fences, walls and shutters).

Semi-gloss

Pros Highly washable and resistant; ideal exterior paint because it will retain some sheen over time despite weather stress. (Paints tend to lose their brilliance outside faster than inside.)

Cons Emphasizes more flaws than a satin finish.

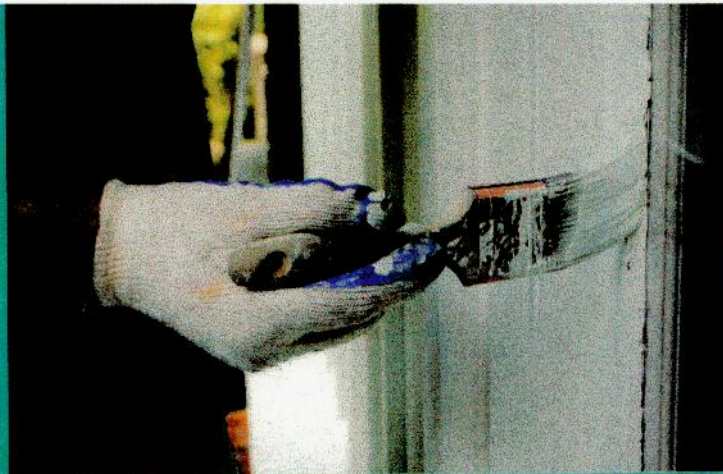
Where to use it Recommended for banisters, doors, door frames, balustrades, as well as for heavy-traffic areas (floors and walkways). Can also be used to highlight architectural details.

Gloss

Pros Super washable and durable; holds up well under normal wear and tear.

Cons Very shiny; shows every flaw including brush and roller marks.

Where to use it Recommended for doors and patio furniture—paints for metal surfaces are offered in a gloss finish; can also be used to highlight architectural details. Reminder: A variation in the sheen causes an interesting visual contrast between the walls of a house and its details. ■



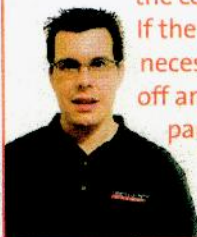
Application tips

- Don't apply paint in direct sunlight—the paint will dry too quickly—or on windy days when the wind can lift and blow dirt onto the painted surface.
- During the paint application and drying period, the air temperature and that of the painted surface should be between 10°C and 32°C, except of course for paints designed to be applied at a cooler temperature. Cold weather slows down the drying process while heat increases the risk of the paint running, and either condition affects paint adherence.
- Hold off painting if rain is forecast for the next 24 hours or if dew is still on the ground: Paint doesn't adhere well to a damp or wet surface. So it's best to proceed after you've had 24 to 48 hours of fair weather. Also, the wood's moisture content should not exceed 15 percent.
- If you plan to use more than one container to paint, blend the paint in all the containers to keep the colour uniform, or at least add the final third of paint from the main container to any new container.

Photo: iStockphoto

Expert advice

The secret of a successful and lasting paint job lies in the preparation, says **Antoine LeBouc** of **Peintres CertaPro**. Begin by thoroughly cleaning the surfaces so as to remove dirt, grease and mould, then rinse with clear water and allow to dry completely. Take time to read the instructions on the container about surface preparation.



If the surfaces are damaged, make all necessary repairs: Sand, scrub and brush off any peeling paint, remove rust particles, and fill all holes and cracks. Then spread a coat of primer over the stripped areas.