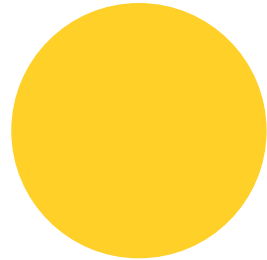


IMPROVEMENT CENTER



Waterproofing Guide

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New exterior siding can make your home beautiful, but unfortunately it won't make it waterproof. Your home's exterior cladding acts as a deterrent to moisture intrusion, but if it rains hard or long enough, water can usually make it past its protective barrier. Even a brick veneer's durable protection may eventually succumb to a wind-driven rain. So what steps can be taken to prevent the expensive damage to your home that an exterior water leak can cause -- especially one that goes undetected for a lengthy period of time?

Waterproofing your siding installation

A new siding installation can be the ideal opportunity to upgrade your home's water intrusion protection, but the most important steps take place before any new cladding goes on. It's what's behind the siding that works to keep the inside of your home dry and damage-free. Inspect and repair or replace the following items as needed before beginning to install any new exterior veneer:

1. Sheathing

If your home was built within the past 50 years or so, there's a good chance that a layer of sheathing is in place behind the existing siding. The material used could be plywood, composition board, or insulation board, or a combination of these common sheathing products. While sheathing might be considered a part of your insulation package, it also works as a line of defense to prevent water from entering your home. Small holes or tears should be repaired with tape or a patching product. If you have any extensive damage, the entire piece of sheathing should be replaced.

2. Utilities

Utilities penetrate the exterior of your home in many places and each can be a potential water leak. Every spot where a dryer vent, kitchen exhaust, plumbing line, or other utility goes through the sheathing should be caulked, taped, or sealed using a similar product.



Waterproofing your siding installation (cont'd)

3. Windows and Doors

There may be no other locations in your exterior walls more susceptible to potential leaks than around the window and door frames, and as such, they often require special attention. Manufacturers have made great strides in providing integral flashing for their window and door products, but it's hard to beat good old-fashioned rubber membrane. The membrane is available in rolls of various lengths and widths, and is normally self-adhering. It should be installed according to product guidelines around the perimeter of all windows and doors.

4. House Wrap

This is a relatively new product so don't be surprised if it's nowhere to be found when you remove your existing siding. However, it can be a wise move to have it in place before your new veneer goes on. The material is available from several manufacturers and is designed to provide an additional barrier to water entering your home. House wrap is sold in numerous sized rolls that make installation



easy and is secured in place with cap nails or staples. Follow manufacturer instructions during application, paying particular attention to overlap measurements and fitting the material around window and door openings.

Once the above four steps have been addressed, you should have a waterproof shell ready to receive your new exterior veneer. Of course, if water remains against any surface long enough, it can eventually find its way through just about any barrier.

Make sure that whoever is doing your siding installation provides the exit points needed to allow the escape of any moisture that gets behind the cladding. Vinyl siding, brick veneer, stucco, and most other veneers have drainage systems such as channels and weep holes that must be installed properly to keep your home waterproof.