



# Exterior Paint Prep Checklist

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7 steps every crew should complete before the first coat goes on

Prep takes 3–5 days on a typical MetroWest home. Painting takes 2–3. Skipping steps = peeling, bubbling, and early failure.

**1 Power Wash All Surfaces**   
1,200–1,500 PSI, wide fan tip, mildew-fighting solution. Wait 24–48 hours for surfaces to fully dry before proceeding.

**2 Scrape All Loose & Peeling Paint**   
Work down to sound surfaces. Alligatored paint must come off completely — painting over it just delays failure.

**3 Check for Lead Paint (Pre-1978 Homes)**   
Use wet-scraping or encapsulation. Never dry-sand lead paint — it creates toxic dust. Discuss with your contractor upfront.

**4 Replace Rotted or Damaged Wood**   
Paint cannot fix rot — boards must be fully replaced before painting. Check windowsills, corner boards, and siding bases carefully.

**5 Caulk All Gaps & Joints**   
Seal around windows, doors, corner boards, and wherever materials meet. Proper caulking blocks water while allowing seasonal movement.

**6 Sand All Scraped Areas Smooth**   
Feather edges between old paint and bare wood. Thoroughly clean all dust before priming — dust prevents proper adhesion.

**7 Prime All Bare Wood & Repaired Areas**   
Oil-based or shellac primer on bare wood and knots. Never skip — this is what seals surfaces and creates lasting adhesion for topcoat.

## TIMING TIP FOR METROWEST HOMEOWNERS

Paint between late April and October. Aim for 50–85°F with 48 hrs of dry weather after each coat. May, June & September are the most reliable windows in the Boston area.

