

SELECTING THE RIGHT EXTERIOR COATING

Most of the coatings listed below can be applied with an airless sprayer as well as a brush, roller, or painting pad. But if you want to spray, read the labels carefully or ask your paint dealer if you're buying a sprayable coating. Latex paints require only water to thin them enough for spraying. With alkyds, oils, and other types of paints, you'll have to purchase the appropriate solvents to dilute them.

Type	Characteristics/Use	Application
Acrylic	A type of latex; water-thinned and water cleanup. Fast-drying and suitable for any building material, including masonry and primed metal.	Brush, roller, pad, spray. Comparable to regular latex paint.
Alkyd	Similar to oil-based paints, but dries faster. Solvent thinned, solvent cleanup. Use over oil and alkyd coatings.	Brush, roller, pad, spray. Smooths out more readily than latex, but more difficult to apply.
Latex	Most popular exterior paint. Excellent durability. Water-thinned, water cleanup. Mildew-proof; may even be applied over damp surfaces. Do not use over oil paints unless specified by the manufacturer.	Brush, roller, pad, spray. Except when spraying, don't thin; apply thickly with little spreadout.
Oil	Extremely durable, but dries slowly. Solvents must be used for cleanup. Least popular.	Brush, roller, pad, spray on very dry surfaces. Insects and rain are dangers because of lengthy drying time.
Marine	Excellent durability on wood, some metals. Expensive. Solvent cleanup.	Brush recommended due to thick, gooey consistency.
Masonry	May be latex, alkyd, epoxy, Portland cement, or rubber. Some contain their own primers.	Brush, roller. Latex types easiest to apply.
Metal	Water-thinned or solvent-thinned, usually with rust-resistant ingredients.	Brush, roller, pad, spray. Prime bare metals first.
Primers	Seals raw wood, bare metal. Also use over old, worn finishes. Provides good bonding for top coating. Use primer formulated for top coat.	Brush, roller, pad, spray. Easier than top-coat painting. Porous surfaces may drink up lots of primer.
Porch/Deck	Alkyd, latex, epoxy, rubber, oil, or polyurethane types. Synthetics dry quickly; oil-base types dry slowly, but are very durable. Limited color selection.	Brush, roller, pad, or wax applicator. For floors, pour on, smooth out. For decks, dip applicator and apply.
Shingle	Alkyd-, oil-, or latex-base. For wood siding shingles. Permits escape of moisture behind shingles.	Brush, roller, pad, spray. Do not use on creosote-treated wood less than eight years old.
Stains	Water- or solvent-thinned; both types durable. Choice of transparent, semi-transparent, solid-stain pigmentation. May contain preservatives.	Brush, roller, pad, spray.
Preservatives	Moisture-, rot-, and insect-resistant for decks, fences, wood siding, and shingles.	Dipping, brush, spray.
Varnish	Acrylic for metal; moisture-cured urethane, alkyd, or spar types for exterior wood.	Brush, roller, or pad. Limited durability; one to two years. Won't dramatically alter natural appearance and color of woods.