
HOW TO CHOOSE A HOUSE PAINTER

What you need to know before choosing a home painting contractor

By Everett Marabian, President, RI Painting & Restoration, Inc.

For generations people have been concerned about the appearance of their homes. Colors and color combinations are sometimes determined by the age and architectural style of the home as well as the homeowner's personal preferences.

Today, most homes are painted or preserved with a wide variety of paints and stains. Surface preparation and proper material selection are the realm of the painting professional.

With over 30 years of experience painting homes, I've learned what makes for a successful painting job and a satisfied customer. Let me share some basic yet important facts with you.

Getting started

House painting should be performed by a professional painting contractor who is licensed and insured. Interior or exterior house painting may seem like a simple activity but it is much more complex. Find a contractor willing to simplify this process and make it a pleasurable experience. Use this [painting checklist](#) to help you cover the essentials during your interviews.

Here are some important questions to keep in mind:

- How long have they been in business?
- What is the quality of their work?
- Is their preparation excellent before painting?
- Do they work in a timely manner?
- Is the worksite clean and neat at the end of each workday?

And as always check references.

Project Evaluation

Every home is unique and as a professional home painter, I take these factors into account when evaluating painting needs:

- Exterior
 - Condition and type of existing paint or stain
 - Type of wood siding (clapboard, shingles, etc.)
 - Species of wood (white cedar, red cedar, pine, etc.)
- Interior
 - Condition and type of existing paint or stain
 - Type of walls (plastered, wallboard, wood, etc.)
 - Condition of walls
 - Type of wood trim

These factors and others will help in determining surface preparation and material selection. **Remember that surface preparation is 99% of the job!** Proper preparation adds to the appearance, quality and duration of your project.

It's Chemistry

Selecting types of paints and stains can be challenging. A professional painter can make recommendations and explain the pros and cons of each. Some examples:

Choosing exterior products:

- Paint or stain
- Oil or latex base products
- Clear, Semi-transparent or Opaque stains
- Sheen levels
- Types of primers

Choosing interior products are determined by the types of surfaces they are applied to — wood, plaster, wallboard, metals, etc.

What are my colors?

There are thousands of colors, shades, tints, glosses and textures. The good news is that your perfect colors do exist. Finding them can be fun. Do this with friends, family, decorators or with your home painter and enjoy the process. You will need your painter's recommendations on gloss levels for wall and trim finish. If you are inclined to hit the Internet for information, here is a [link to a professional color scheme site](#) . This website allows you to enter a color of your choice as well as suggesting other color schemes.

Testimonials

[When deciding on a painting contractor look at their testimonial page](#) and read what customers are saying about them. This will give you a good idea of who will be working in your home.

Links

[Painting Checklist – RI Painting & Restoration, Inc.](#)

Other References

Why House Paints Fail – [Purdue University](#)

Choosing paint colors appropriate to house style – [This Old House](#)

Green Home Remodeling – [REGREEN](#)

Repainting the Paint Neglected House – [US Dept. of Agriculture](#)