



NEWS YOU CAN USE

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BYGGMEISTER EARNS GUILDMASTER AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY CUSTOMER SERVICE

We place a high priority on closing feedback loops at Byggmeister, as the accompany article by Kerry Koskinen attests. Closing feedback loops is the best way for us to learn and to improve our services. This strategy applies not only to the construction quality issues addressed by Kerry, but to the quality of our overall service as well. We work with GuildQuality to survey our clients at the end of each major project to monitor their overall satisfaction and to benchmark us against similar companies across the country. Those surveys have shown that we rank among the most service-oriented design and remodeling companies in the nation, and as a result we've received the 2007 Guildmaster Award for exemplary quality and customer service. To learn more about this, visit us at www.byggmeister.com.



MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT WOOD EXTERIORS:

Wood is a commonly used building material that has unjustly been losing favor for exterior applications. Its obvious aesthetic value is sometimes offset by a reputation for needing frequent maintenance. PVC products like vinyl siding and windows have grown more common in recent decades because they don't rot and don't need painting. The downside, though, is their often inferior appearance, less-than-benign chemical composition, and vulnerability to ultraviolet radiation degradation over time (which is why you never see vinyl siding in darker colors—dark colors absorb too much ultraviolet). Although PVC has a legitimate place on a house when used selectively, the fact is that wood, when prepared and installed properly, can be even more durable and low-maintenance than vinyl.



Peeling paint usually indicates a failure either in construction detailing or in paint application. Ideally, paint should wear away only gradually over several years, from the sun's ultraviolet light and from wind and rain. It should only need a light sanding and a new coat of paint every 15 years or so, even in our climate. Vinyl siding will look old and faded in fifteen to twenty years, and at that point can only be replaced, not refinished. It is less costly to the homeowner—and to the environment—to repaint every fifteen years or so than to throw away old siding and replace it. Another downside to vinyl siding is that it can conceal ongoing leaks until structural damage results.

There are two main strategies Byggmeister applies to achieve low-maintenance wood exterior finishes—to give your siding a good chance of holding a coat of paint indefinitely. The first is to seal all exterior wood on all sides (including cut ends) prior to installation. This limits the amount of water the wood absorbs over time. The second strategy is to install the wood siding over wood battens and not directly onto the sheathing or as shown in the upper photo on the next page. This creates a 1/2" or so air space that allows water that the wood does absorb to dry out evenly over time. Steady, even drying of small amounts of water does not stress the paint finish.

MOST RESIDENTIAL BUILDING FAILURES ARE WATER MANAGEMENT FAILURES

Water rains on roofs, walls, windows and doors. We need to detail our buildings to keep the water on the outside, so we can monitor where it goes and keep the building from being damaged by it. Water has lots of ways of getting behind and into exterior finishes—and windows and doors, too. At Byggmeister, our rule of thumb is to detail our exterior assemblies so the building sheds water properly *before* we install the exterior clapboards, shingles, stucco—whatever the final exterior finish is to be. This way we know that water that gets in behind the siding will be properly guided back out before it does any harm.

There are a few materials all builders use to make structures water resistant. Many use these materials incorrectly. Building paper, adhesive-backed membranes, and metal flashings will divert water away from the building when installed in a way that upper layers lap over lower layers, just like shingles or clapboards. Imagine if your clapboards were installed from the top down, with lower layers lapping on top of upper layers. Water running down the wall would be guided back behind the clapboards. Similarly, when building paper and flashings are installed incorrectly, or not installed at all, water can get guided into the building cavity, where it can cause mold and rot, instead of safely towards the outside, where it will run off and evaporate.



Metal flashing is the most misused water diverting material. Flashing is a sheet of bent metal used to carry water away from the interior of a house. Step flashing is used where a roof meets a side wall. The photo below right shows all step flashing pieces installed correctly—except for the bottom one. The bottom edge of the bottom piece was behind the side wall trim and funneled water behind the trim and into the framing. The result, as seen here, is that the structure got moldy, attracted ants, and then got eaten away. Flashings must lead water away from the house.

By Kerry Koskinen, Warranty Manager



William Rose of the University of Illinois is the country's leading expert on moisture problems in residential structures and the author of "Water in Buildings," the preeminent textbook for architects, builders, and engineers on the topic. Paul Eldrenkamp and Bill Rose have become acquainted over the years, attending various conferences together and writing for some of the same industry publications. On July 20, Bill will be giving an all-day workshop to Byggmeister's design and construction teams on the latest research regarding moisture management at the residential level. If you're interested in sitting in, please e-mail Paul at paul@byggmeister.com.