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THE SOURCE FOR EXTERIOR REMODELING SPECIALISTS

Considerations for Vinyl Siding Installation

Following important rules of thumb will ensure you install vinyl siding that is aesthetically appealing, long lasting and low maintenance

Photo courtesy of Exterior Portfolio by Crane

A SUPPLEMENT TO *Qualified Remodeler*

Vinyl Siding Quality Control

VSI Programs Certify Products and Installers, and Demonstrate Product Versatility

By Jery Y. Huntley

REGARDLESS OF WHICH EXTERIOR cladding materials they choose, architects, builders, contractors and remodelers want the homes they work on to look beautiful and be durable, pleasing the homeowner for years to come. With an increasingly diverse selection of accessories, architectural trim, colors, profiles and textures, vinyl siding can suit a range of architectural styles and design tastes from historic to contemporary.

The quality of the exterior cladding and its installation are just as important as the aesthetic features of the product itself. Therefore, the Washington, D.C.-based Vinyl Siding Institute Inc. sponsors certification programs for vinyl siding and its installers to ensure beauty and durability throughout the products' lifetime.

Products and Performance

The vinyl siding industry offers third-party product certification and certified-installer programs. Both programs are administered by an accredited, independent quality-control agency to ensure that products and colors meet or exceed ASTM standards and installers demonstrate knowledge of ASTM-accepted application techniques.

In 1998, VSI launched the VSI Product Certification Program for manufacturers to independently verify the quality of the vinyl siding they produce. As the program grew, polypropylene siding certification was added. Both are verified by an independent quality-control agency to meet or exceed the relevant ASTM standards. Additionally, the VSI Product Certification Program includes color-retention certification for vinyl siding. More than 950 products and 300 colors are certified through VSI's program.

In 2005, the VSI Certified Installer Program was initiated to ensure individuals are properly trained and companies are properly staffed and managed to install vinyl siding consistent with the industry-recognized installation standard. The result is a comprehensive program that educates, trains and tests experienced installers about the proper installation techniques for vinyl siding. The program has three distinct types of certification: Certified Installer, Certified Trainer and Certified Installer Company.

To qualify as a Certified Installer, candidates must have at least one year of experience installing vinyl siding and accessories. Then they take a course and pass an examination about proper application techniques to become certified. VSI Certified Installers are required to take a test and recertify every three years to ensure they stay

Designing with Style

Designing Style: A Guide to Designing with Today's Vinyl Siding was created in collaboration with experienced architects, builders, designers, remodelers and vinyl siding manufacturers as a resource for designing with or specifying vinyl and other polymeric siding, architectural trim and accessories.

It demonstrates the versatility and range of styles that can be achieved with vinyl siding. Architectural styles include Cape Cod, Craftsman, Federal/Adam, Folk Victorian, Georgian, Greek Revival, Italianate and Queen Anne. Although the guide originally was created as a resource for architects and designers, builders, contractors and remodelers use it as a sales tool when meeting with homeowners. To order the guide, visit VinylSiding.org.

up-to-date about the latest vinyl siding application techniques. More than 4,000 vinyl siding installers are currently certified through the program.

To become a Certified Trainer, an instructor must complete the Train-the-Trainer course, plus pass an exam about his or her training skills and knowledge of installation techniques. Each Certified Trainer is required to teach an average of two courses per year to maintain his or her certification.

To be recognized as a Certified Installer Company, a vinyl siding installation company must register with the third-party verifier. The company also must demonstrate an approved quality-control program, including having one Certified Installer or Certified Trainer on every crew that is installing vinyl siding.

With the wide range of choices available for vinyl siding, architects, builders, contractors, designers and remodelers can help homeowners achieve almost any architectural style while ensuring durability for years to come. **EC**

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EXTERIOR PORTFOLIO BY CRANE



Curb Appeal with Confidence

Getting Vinyl Siding Right Involves Simple, But Important, Rules of Thumb

By David Smith

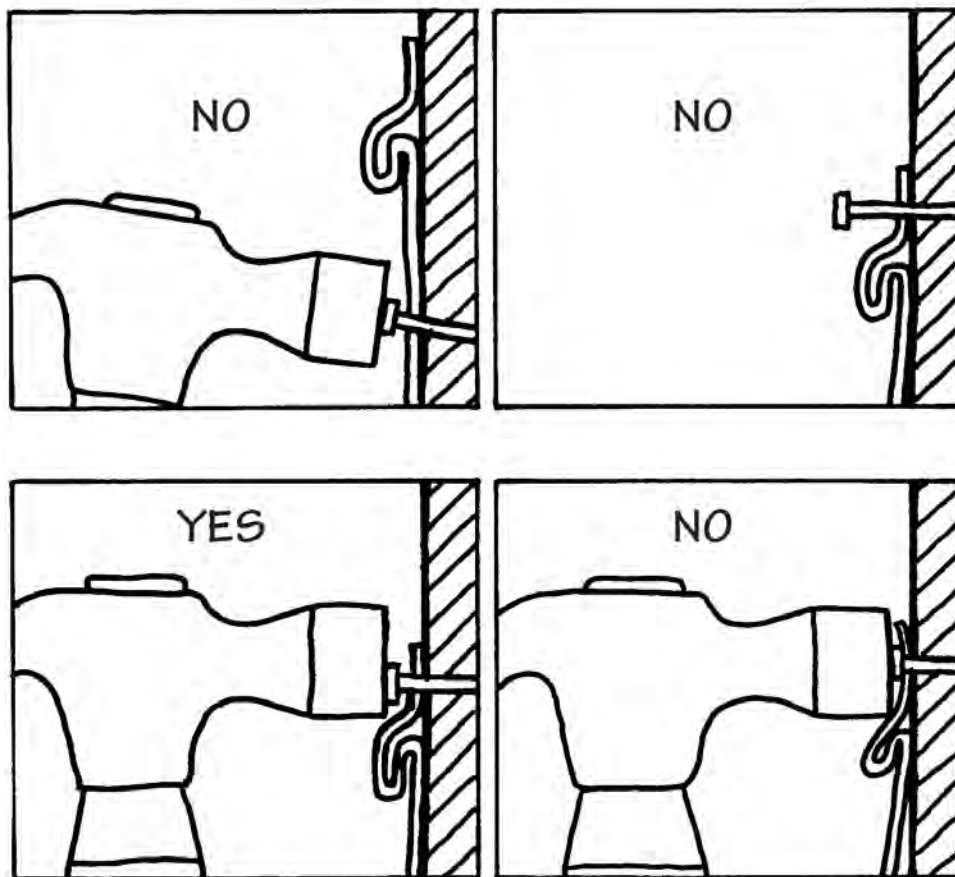
WITH WARMER WEATHER, homeowners' thoughts turn to exterior home improvements, such as vinyl siding. Because quality installation is the key for any home-improvement effort, exterior remodeling contractors who use proper techniques can improve their chances of getting referrals.

Following are some of the most important considerations to ensure the vinyl siding you install effectively replicates classic home exteriors and is aesthetically appealing, long lasting and low maintenance. Proper installation will not only help you avoid costly callbacks, but it will enhance your reputation for quality work.

Preparation Is Everything

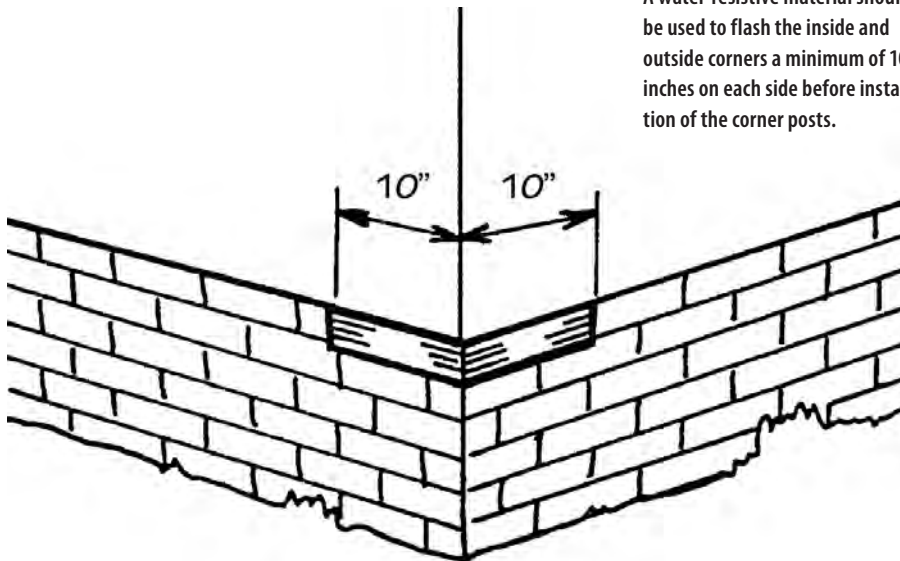
Like any home-improvement project, vinyl-siding preparation can make or break the final job. Make sure you have all the necessary tools, fasteners and accessories. For vinyl siding, fasteners, such as nails or staples, should be able to penetrate 3/4 inch into the nailable surface.

A flat, level surface is necessary for proper installation of vinyl siding. In a re-siding job, be sure to nail down loose boards of existing siding and replace any rotten or damaged ones. Remove loose caulk and recaulk around windows, doors and other areas first to ensure a watertight seal. Check all walls for evenness and install furring strips where necessary, making sure



Do not drive the head of the fastener tightly against the siding nail hem. Allow approximately 1/32-inch gap (the thickness of a dime) between the fastener head and the vinyl.

A water-resistive material should be used to flash the inside and outside corners a minimum of 10 inches on each side before installation of the corner posts.



to establish a smooth, continuous surface.

Waterproofing measures are important for siding's longevity and performance. Vinyl siding is designed as an exterior cladding—not a water-resistive barrier. Because vinyl siding is designed to allow the material underneath it to breathe, it is not a water-tight covering. Therefore, the first step to proper installation is to use a housewrap. High-quality housewraps keep water out while allowing moisture from the inside to escape. Not only do housewraps reduce or eliminate leaks, they limit air infiltration, helping to reduce heating costs. (To read about proper housewrap installation, see the March issue, page 62.)

Even where housewrap is applied, flashing is critical at all openings, such as windows. Use at least 10-inch flashing at inside and outside corners prior to installing the corner post. There should be at least 9-inch flashing on the bottom edge of the window and at least 8 1/2-inch flashing on all other sides if the windows are preinstalled nail fin windows.

Although nail fin windows on new construction jobs usually have flashing already applied, older remodeling jobs where previous vinyl or aluminum siding has been removed around the windows require flashing before re-siding. If a window with exterior casing has been previously installed without flashing, cover the exterior casing with aluminum or vinyl trim sheet. The trim sheet should be installed in weatherboard fashion with the bottom piece installed first, then overlapped by each side sheet and finished with the top sheet overlapping the

side sheets. Install rigid head flashing on the top piece of exterior casing, covering the trim sheet. The rigid head flashing must be sealed to the exterior sheathing and to the top of the exterior casing.

Installers frequently think everything should be level or plumb when installing siding. However, in many jobs, siding is installed level on an unlevel structure. In these cases, the siding appears to be slanted, even if it was sided as "level." Aesthetically, it is better to hang the siding straight with the structure. Although the level may tell you you're off, it will look level to the eye.

Leave Some Wiggle Room

One of the most critical installation requirements for vinyl siding is allowing for expansion and contraction. All forms of vinyl siding expand and contract; a 12-foot piece of siding can "grow" 1/2 inch from the coldest temperature to the warmest.

Depending on the temperature at the time of installation, space allowances need to be given to accommodate movement. When installed at temperatures below 40 F, a 3/8-inch space is allotted between siding and accessories; 1/4 inch is allotted if installed above 40 F.

Vinyl siding and its accessories are designed with elongated slots to accommodate movement as the product expands and contracts. It also is important to leave a gap between the nail head or staple and the siding nail hem to account for movement on the nail shank. About 1/32 inch—the thickness of a dime—is the recommended

gap. Position nails in the center of the slot to allow for expansion.

A good tip for assessing proper nailing is to make sure you can move the vinyl siding side to side or a corner post up or down slightly. Visually, you also should see a gap between the end of the siding and the back of the accessory. On the flip side, it is also possible to leave too large a gap. Overlapping siding and accessories is important; if pieces are cut too short in the heat of summer, they could possibly shrink out of the pocket of the accessory in the winter. Overlap one panel over the other by half of the factory notch, or approximately 1 inch. If the overlap is not enough, the panels could separate in colder weather; if it is too much, movement could be restricted.

When overlapping siding, face the overlap away from the driveway or front entryway to avoid showing seams. Overlaps or joints should be randomly placed, and if one joint needs to be directly placed above another, there should be a least three rows between them. To avoid waviness, look down the length of the panel when installing and adjust the nail in or out to keep the top lock straight. If the nail has to be adjusted out more than 1/4 inch, a shim should be placed between the wall and the back of the panel.

As you install panels, always check that

A Class above the Rest

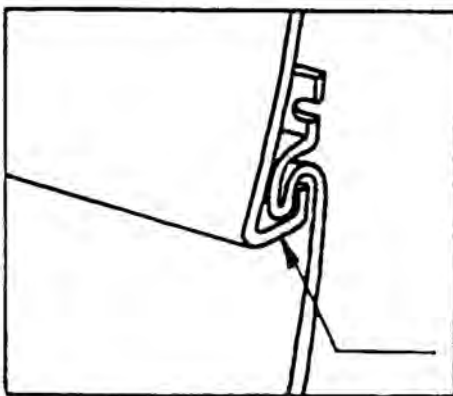
Installation certification is an increasingly important selling point to customers, and some jurisdictions and companies now require it.

The Washington, D.C.-based Vinyl Siding Institute-certified installers must have at least one year of installation experience; take a course about vinyl siding installation from a VSI certified trainer; and pass an examination to independently verify their knowledge of proper installation techniques. VSI-certified installer companies must have in place an approved quality-control manual and a VSI-certified installer or trainer present on every crew where vinyl siding is being installed.

For more information about finding or becoming a VSI certified installer, trainer or certified installer company, visit VSI's Web site at VinylSiding.org. To learn more best practices for installing vinyl siding, consult the manufacturer's instructions; local, state or regional building codes; and the VSI *Vinyl Siding Installation Manual*, which can be downloaded for free from VSI's Web site.



PLY GEM



Make sure the panels are fully locked along the length of the bottom, but do not force them up tight when fastening.

the buttlock, or the lip at the bottom of the panel, is fully engaged with the panel below it for the entire length of the panel. When you get to openings or the top of a wall, there are techniques for installing partial profiles. Consult the Washington, D.C.-based Vinyl Siding Institute's *Vinyl Siding Installation Manual* or your manufacturer's instructions for details about these specific installation procedures, as well as proper techniques for installing fascia and soffit on a home. **EC**

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Siding that Saves Energy

As homeowners look to increase their home's energy efficiency, many are turning to insulated siding. Insulated siding is vinyl siding engineered with rigid foam insulation integral to the panel. Insulated siding reduces thermal bridging, or heat loss, around studs and wall openings. It complies with the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code requirements for continuous insulation and can meet the requirements of various building energy-performance programs, including Energy Star Qualified Homes Version 3, which goes into effect this year.

To ensure insulated siding helps improve energy performance, proper installation is critical. Many insulated siding installation techniques are the same as those for vinyl siding, but there are a few specific techniques to keep in mind:

Because insulated siding is thicker than vinyl siding alone, it may require fasteners and accessories that can accommodate the foam insulation.

Extra thickness also should be accounted for at windows, doors and other openings; installers can use wood shims and aluminum trim coil or vinyl lineals to build out openings.

No gap is needed between the foam at the ends of insulated siding panels. When installing panels, installers should be sure the ends of the foam insulation behind the vinyl siding are touching (unless installing in cold weather).

In remodeling jobs, insulated siding can be installed over furring strips, but for it to qualify as home insulation it must be installed directly over a water-resistive barrier and sheathing. Insulated siding installed over furring strips alone would not be considered home insulation.

As a supplement to the *Vinyl Siding Installation Manual*, the Washington, D.C.-based Vinyl Siding Institute has created a resource with energy-performance information and installation techniques for insulated siding. *Insulated Siding as Home Insulation: Guide for Users and Energy Raters* describes and illustrates various wall assemblies for insulated siding to ensure performance in various climate zones. The guide also demonstrates how insulated siding can be used as a component of a high-performance wall to help meet or exceed the IECC requirements for continuous insulation.

The free, downloadable guide is available at InsulatedSiding.info and can help you compete with insulated siding in this energy-conscious market.