

Siding Cover-ups Exposed

Is there anything worse than water coming into your home? And what about the water damage and mold issues that can come with it? Why then, are so many homeowners with siding problems so willing to direct siding contractors to cover-up their current problems?

Conventional rationale suggests the cheapest way to re-side is the cover-up method. It is cheaper up front to install a new layer of siding (such as vinyl siding) over the existing siding because you avoid paying for the removal and disposal of the old siding. It is also believed that it will be cheaper over the long term because the new (i.e.: vinyl) siding is “maintenance free”.

In reality, many communities that have re-sided are now facing expensive problems resulting from previous water damage and water penetration issues that were covered-up prior to the new siding installation. A benefit of removing your old siding first is exposing hidden structural damage in time to correct it before it becomes much worse. This is an opportunity to take preventive measures to protect your property.

While investigating water leaks, we have found many cases where water is actually being funneled behind the new siding. Water often enters into the home through the usual “channels” that weren’t corrected or prevented prior to or during the new siding installation. Of course the correct repair is now more costly because the damage is worse and there are now two layers of siding to deal with. Had the old siding been removed, the damage could have been exposed and corrected.

Typical problem areas include flashings, chimneys and fireplaces, behind gutters and fascia boards, at windows, at ground level where the landscape is too close to the top of your foundation, and where a lower roof area meets a higher second or third story wall. If problems are identified at your community, they are frequently found at the same locations from building to building.

First on your re-siding “to-do” list is to hire an engineering firm or contractor that specializes in “building envelope” issues to analyze your buildings. Hire them to write your re-siding specifications that include the necessary corrections and addressing hidden damage. Face the facts about your homes before proceeding. Correcting your water penetration issues and existing problems is a prerequisite and should be done in conjunction with residing. Make these specifications clear to all prospective bidders. Once you start the re-siding project, use the engineering firm as your construction manager and independent inspector. A pre-construction meeting and regular inspections should be scheduled in order to:



Removing your old siding first exposes hidden damage and possibly hidden danger that can be corrected in time.



Water goes right behind this new vinyl siding at the end of the gutter. This problem is very common.

1. Correctly address water penetration and hidden damage issues
2. Make certain the right corrections are being made
3. Ensure the correct installation methods and specifications are being followed

Monitoring your project closely also allows the engineer to make specification changes to certain problem areas if needed before having to backtrack. This process adds to the overall typical square-foot coat of residing, but it can save a lot of money and headaches in the years to come.

Sure, it is tempting to choose the ‘cheaper’ cover-up method of re-siding, but can you afford not to investigate, expose and correct all of your buildings’ water penetration and hidden damage issues prior to installing new siding?

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