

# How to *Ask Allerdice,*

## Painting Over Flaking Exterior Paint

### Level of difficulty: Intermediate

Flaking paint can ruin the look of your wood siding, but it can be repaired. But before you paint over the damage you need to know why this is happening. Flaking occurs when moisture collects behind the painted surface. The moisture, which enters the wood siding from the unpainted side, gets absorbed and then dries in the wood. This causes repeated swelling and shrinking of the wood, which breaks the paint film and forces it to pull away from the wood surface.

#### Step 1: Locate the Source

The first step is locating the source of the moisture. Check the area for leakage from the gutters or eaves of the house. If the flaking paint is near a bathroom or kitchen, the pipes may be sweating or leaking, or excess heat may be causing condensation.

#### Step 2: Correcting Moisture Build-Up

You may need to install attic louvers, moisture vents or exhaust fans to correct the build-up of moisture.

#### Step 3: Remove the Flaking Paint

Scrape and sand away all flaking paint. Remove the paint as far as 12" in all directions beyond the flaking area.

#### Step 4: Sand the Surface

Sand the surface down to the unpainted wood, and spot prime the area with a good grade of undercoat.

#### Step 5: Caulk the Seams

Protect the area against moisture by caulking all seams, holes and cracks that appear in the freshly sanded area.

#### Step 6: Apply Paint

After the caulking compound has thoroughly dried, apply at least one coat of a top-quality house paint according to the manufacturer's directions. You may need to apply two coats. These steps should completely resolve the problem.

**Caution:** If you scrape, sand or remove old paint, you may release lead dust. Lead is toxic. Exposure to lead dust can cause serious illness, such as brain damage, especially in children. Pregnant women should also avoid exposure. Wear a NIOSH-approved respirator to control lead exposure. Clean up carefully with a HEPA vacuum and a wet mop. Before you start, find out how to protect yourself by contacting the National Lead Hotline at 1-800-424-LEAD or log on to [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)



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