

Guide to House Paints

Where painting contractors can find the best house painting products

By Erin Brereton

As painting contractors know, house painting jobs can involve a variety of house paints. Interior paints, exterior paints, oil-based paints and latex paints are just some of the many options available. Selecting the correct type of house paint is crucial for every job to ensure customer satisfaction. The look your clients hope to achieve and the painting surface generally determine which type of paint and primer are necessary for each house painting task.

Before starting a project with house paints, items to consider include:

1. Whether you need interior paints or exterior paints.
2. Whether a project requires oil-based paints or latex paints.
3. How to help your clients choose colors for house painting.
4. How to store house paints.

Action Steps

The best contacts and resources to help you get it done

✓ Options for interior paints

Interior paints come in two main types: water-based, also called latex paints, and oil-based paints, or alkyd, which work well on chalky surfaces and keep rust and other stains from seeping through. Latex paints are used more often because they are easier to apply and work well on most surfaces.

I recommend: [Duron Paints & Wallcoverings](#) offers more than a dozen types of interior paints. [Hirshfield's](#) sells several well-known brands of house paints, including Pratt & Lambert and Cabot Stains. [Behr Process Corporation](#) and [Benjamin Moore & Co.](#) boast dozens of types of interior paints.

✓ Options for exterior paints

Exterior paints can be either oil-based paints or latex paints and are typically more expensive than interior paints.

I recommend: [ICI Paints](#) offers a good selection of exterior paints, as well as interior paints, for a variety of house painting professionals, including residential repainters, home builders and commercial contractors. Exterior paints are just some of the many house paint products available from [The Sherwin-Williams Company](#). [Glidden](#) offers a product finder for painting pros to help you zero in on the right exterior paints (or interior paints) for your projects.

✓ Master the art of selecting house paint colors

A wealth of color tools and resources are available to help you and your clients visualize, select and coordinate house painting colors.

I recommend: The [Behr Process Corporation](#) sells eight-ounce house paint samples in more than 3,700 colors, and its website provides tools to help you pair and visualize house painting colors. Several color sampling resources are also available from [The Sherwin-Williams Company](#) to help you select and coordinate colors. [Benjamin Moore](#) lets you order color samples in more than 200 colors.

✓ Specialty and premium house paints

For some clients, only the best, unique house paints will do. Fortunately, there's a growing number of specialty and premium interior paints to meet these needs.

I recommend: [Ralph Lauren](#) interior paints are available in four unique finishes. [Dunn-Edwards Paints](#) also boasts a variety of house paints in special finishes. The premium house paint collection from [Eddie Bauer](#) includes more than 100 colors.

✓ Primers for house painting

Before using interior paints, drywall and wood must be primed with either an oil-based or latex primer. Exterior paints also last longer and look better when primer is applied first.

I recommend: Most house paint manufacturers, including Benjamin Moore & Co. sell both [interior primers](#) and [exterior primers](#).

✓ Use proper storage of house paints

Store any leftover house paints for future touch-ups carefully since improper storage can affect a paint's color and consistency.

I recommend: To store a limited amount of house paints, try [Wagner's Paint Storage and Touch-Up Kit](#) — sold at a number of [locations](#), it will preserve latex paints for up to five years in a container with an attachable roller for touch-ups.

Helpful advice for making the most of this Guide

- Use premium house paints for house painting. They are more likely to cover surfaces in fewer coats because they have a higher volume of solid material, pigments and binders.
- Primer should be used before interior paints to provide a clean, blank surface that will allow the color of your chosen house paints to remain true.
- Interior paints come in a number of sheens - most commonly, flat/matte, eggshell, satin, semigloss and gloss.
- Exterior paints are either flat, semigloss or gloss and contain more resin and pigment, giving them extra color and durability.
- Some house paint vendors offer accounts with discounts and speedy ordering for painting contractors.

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