



ESTABLISHING an ON-GOING MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

CONTACT INFORMATION

**Wolman Wood Care Products
Attn: Product Support Group
11 Hawthorn Parkway
Vernon Hills, IL 60061**

QUESTIONS

**Phone: 1-800-556-7737
Fax: 1-800-678-1617
Email: info@wolman.com
Web site: www.wolman.com**

Reminder: Wolman Contractor Certification Test can be taken online



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Once you've completed an exterior wood care project, and have followed up with the owner to confirm his or her satisfaction, don't let the opportunity pass to offer to return regularly to keep up the beauty and protection of your hard work and their pride and joy. Establishing an on-going maintenance schedule is critical to keeping the outdoor wood deck, fence or other installation structurally sound and looking beautiful for years to come.

What is an Outdoor Wood Maintenance Program?

A Maintenance Program is defined as a "planned-in-advance" periodic schedule to provide upkeep for a valued investment. Your Wood Restoration Maintenance Program can be your personal plan to beautify and preserve your customers' decks on a regular basis. Any Wolman finish product you first apply to a customer's exterior wood surface is designed to last approximately 2-3 years, but what about the in-between year? Depending on the climate conditions and outdoor yard landscaping, a finish can begin to fade in as little as one year if exposed to extreme sun. A Maintenance Program is a great way to give your customers peace of mind by letting them know you will take excellent care of their investment. It starts with a pre-arranged visit approximately one year after the initial finish application to make sure your customer's deck investment is still protected and looking its best.

How will it benefit my business?

Besides providing additional support, a Maintenance Program is a great way to increase customer retention and help promote you as a wood care professional. In short, it's a way to make (and keep) long-term customers – and a good way to increase your income.

HOW to SELL CLIENTS on a MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Follow these guidelines when talking to clients about follow up maintenance:

Begin by offering your Maintenance Program as an extended proposal when you bid on a job. It can be a great selling tool, especially if your competition is priced lower than your regular service.

Educate your customer about the damaging effects of the weathering process, and how, depending on the environment, a finish can begin to fade within one year.

Explain that your company will return in approximately one year to lightly clean and spruce up the surface by applying additional coating to the horizontal areas.

Describe the key benefit: returning once every year to refresh the coating will help maintain maximum water and UV protection, and keep outdoor wood looking its very best throughout the first 3 years.



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WHAT a TYPICAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM INCLUDES

A poll of many Wolman Certified Contractors found that most that conduct annual maintenance calls provide one return visit (in approximately 1 to 1-1/2 years) to clean the coating surface and refresh the coating. They do not re-apply product to vertical surfaces since these surfaces weather at a slower rate. In general, a **VERY LIGHT coat is all they re-apply**; it is just enough product to enrich the wood color and help the horizontal surface blend in with the verticals.

If you have an airless sprayer, apply a small mist coating over the horizontal surfaces. Usually, just a quick "sweep" with a broom and some minor stain removal are all that is necessary before coating application. There is no need to "crank up the pressure washer" to clean the whole deck.

Here are a few guidelines experienced contractors recommend you consider:

Price accordingly. The price for a Maintenance Program could be 25%-50% off your standard service price. **NOTE: Prices vary from region to region.**

If the customer is interested, adjust his bill the next time you restore the deck and re-apply a new coating, in approximately 2-3 years. You can recover this adjustment in the referrals you're likely to get from happy customers.

Explain to your customer that a Maintenance Program is designed for the "in-between" years. After 2-3 years, you will have to schedule an appointment to clean and re-apply the finish product to the entire surface (vertical and horizontal) and charge the full project price.

A Maintenance Program is not appropriate for all customers. Use your own judgment. Remember, even if a customer is not interested in yearly maintenance initially, he may change his mind after a few seasons of severe weather exposure.