



STEP 2: WOOD COATING

Beautify and Protect

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STEP 2: Wood Coating – Beautify and Protect

After surface prep is completed, beautify and protect outdoor wood by applying Wolman water repellents, stains or preservatives.

Bare wood left exposed to the weather will eventually cause it to structurally degrade and lose its original, blemish-free appearance. **With so much money and time invested in building/installing a deck, fence or other wood structure, it only makes sense to coat it with a protective water repellent sealer, pigmented finish/stain or wood preservative to ensure its appealing appearance and structural integrity.** Depending on the owner's personal taste and desired "look", coupled with the specific climate type and daily amount of sun/shade and humidity exposure, there is an optimum Wolman coating that will provide damage protection and the desired look the owner is seeking.

Why do I need to use a water sealer or stain to protect wood – aren't pressure-treated lumber, exotic hardwood and naturally durable Cedar and Redwood essentially maintenance free?

Though pressure-treated lumber is protected from termite attack, and therefore is made "rot and decay resistant" on the inside, the outside surface is still subject to water damage, UV (sun) damage, and mildew, mold and fungi attack. This holds true for tropical hardwoods and domestic Cedar and Redwood as well.

Wolman water repellent sealers and pigmented finishes, stains and hardwood treatments are designed to provide maximum protection from the #1 enemy of wood: water absorption! In addition, each coating has a particular purpose that corresponds to one or more needs, whether it is protection against UV (sun) exposure, which discolors wood over time, or fungi growth, which thrives in moist, humid or waterlogged environments, producing black or green stains that detract from the wood's overall appearance.



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Why are Wolman coatings so special – aren't all brands pretty much the same?

Simply put, NO. The Wolman advantage is in the formulation! Whether a clear water sealer, transparent oil finish, traditional stain or wood preservative, the formulations for these products incorporate premium (and sometimes costly) ingredients, proprietary components and state-of-the-art technology that is influenced by decades of wood preservation experience on the “industrial” side of the wood coating business. (Wood window and door manufacturers like Anderson, Pella, and others around the world trust Wolman wood preservatives to prevent rot and decay)! Wolman chemists are “seniors” in their field, meaning they have 30-40 years experience in the areas of wood preservation and exterior coating development, which is invaluable to a manufacturer and nearly impossible to replace. **Since pioneering the “deck care center” at home improvement chains in the mid-1980's, Wolman has continued to produce and sell products that are “premium quality”:** made with the highest concentrations of “active” or key ingredients so they can perform with maximum durability under severe weather conditions, while still being affordable for the contractor and DIY'er. In other words, “Wolman Knows Wood Like No Other” – and because of this fact, you, the exterior wood care professional, are in the best of hands.

Deck and Fence Coatings 101 – **How do I know which coating type to use?**

Once a deck, fence or other wood structure is installed outdoors, it should be **immediately** coated with a protective finish. But with so many sealers, finishes and stains to choose from at the home center, paint or hardware store, or lumberyard, the purchase decision can seem overwhelming. The following section will help remove the mystery by describing the 3 basic types of “non paint” coatings available, and what each is specifically designed to accomplish.

Type 1: Water Repellent Sealer

The first type of protection that you can apply to bare, outdoor wood is a **water repellent sealer**, also sometimes called or labeled a “water sealer”, “waterproofer”, “wood protector” or combination of these terms. Some people also call these “deck sealers” or “wood sealers” because they are frequently used on decks, but water repellent sealers are typically made for use on all exterior wood surfaces.



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Product's Purpose:

1) The primary job of a “water repellent sealer” is to provide a protective finish that **repels water and prohibits water penetration**. Preventing wood from absorbing water will minimize or prevent the swelling and shrinking, which will reduce or eliminate the cupping, warping, splitting, checking and cracking that can otherwise occur over time. Many people think that the lumber they’ve purchased has already been “water sealed”, but generally that is never the case. Others think that they should wait a season or two before protecting their wood, but that is not necessary nor recommended by Wolman. In fact, **exterior wood surfaces should be protected from water penetration immediately after the construction project is completed**. Why? Because dimensional change or “damage” can begin the first day of outdoor water exposure.

Remember, a typical day in the life of an unprotected deck, fence or other “outdoor” wood structure goes something like this:

Overnight/Morning: dew and rainwater or melting ice and snow are quickly absorbed by bare wood, causing it to soften and swell.

Mid-day/Afternoon: direct exposure to the sun’s heat makes wood dry out, causing it to shrink and contract.

Continuous cycles of wetting and drying, swelling and shrinking, and expansion and contraction will force wood to change dimensionally, and not in a pleasing way. From simple checking and cracking to major cupping, warping, and splitting – these changes in dimensional stability can ruin the appearance of your wood structure, lead to premature wood degradation and make for expensive repairs.

2) The secondary function of a typical water repellent sealer is to resist **mildew and other fungi growth on the coating film**. Excessive moisture and water exposure will also act as a breeding ground for fungi organisms. Water repellent sealers thwart fungi growth by incorporating a mildewcide to prevent mildew, mold and other organisms from getting started on the coated surface. If wood were left bare, these organisms could not only create unsightly black or green stains, but also cause “rot and decay” of the wood surface if left to grow unabated.

3) Lastly, since **color pigment is not present in most “clear” water repellent sealers, these sealers do not provide protection against graying from UV (sun) exposure, but instead, allow the wood surface to gray naturally over time**. Totally, 100% clear sealers have no added pigment to provide coloration to the wood. Without the color pigment to block, absorb or reflect the UV ray energy from the sun, the exposed wood surface will incur UV ray damage. Again, it bears repeating: **sealers that are totally, 100% clear (or colorless) cannot stop UV damage from sun exposure**. “Graying”, the physical, visible result of UV damage is generally undesirable, though many people do not mind, and some actually like the “look” it provides, since it represents a natural, aged condition. For example, New England is an area where the “driftwood gray” or “cape cod gray” look is common. However, **for customers that want to prevent UV graying, select a water repellent sealer with color pigment**, such as *Wolman RainCoat Tinted Water Repellent*, which is covered in detail later in this chapter.



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Intended Projects/Uses:

Water repellent sealers are made to work on all exterior wood structures, including decks, docks, piers and boardwalks, patios and porches, fences, outdoor furniture and décor, gazebos, arbors and trellises, and just about any wood that is exposed to outdoor moisture. If lap siding is the project of the day, a sealer with color pigment is recommended, so the siding is protected against graying from UV exposure.

Type 2: Pigmented Finishes and Stains

The second type of coating protection that you can apply to bare, outdoor wood decks, fences or siding is a pigmented finish or stain.

This type of coating is labeled under a variety of terms by different brands, such as “penetrating oil finish”, “tinted wood protector”, “wood-toned waterproofing wood finish”, “waterproofing sealant”, “deck, fence and siding stain” decking stain”, “wood stain” and many others, adding to a shopper’s confusion in trying to select the right coating for his/her particular wood “environment”, current “age/condition” and desired “look”.

Products’ Purpose:

The primary benefit of using a pigmented (colored) “penetrating finish” or “deck stain” is twofold:

- 1) Color pigment “beautifies” or “decorates” wood, allowing the owner to select from a variety of colors that will complement the surrounding siding and trim color, and give the structure an aesthetically pleasing look.
- 2) Color pigment protects the wood surface from UV (sun) damage, recognized by most deck or fence owners as wood “graying”.

Common Characteristics:

- 1) Pigmented finishes and stains typically contain blocking or absorbing pigments, which impart color to wood while protecting against UV exposure.
- 2) Their color depth can vary widely, from sheer transparency to semi-transparent/ semi-solid to solid-hide opacity.
- 3) Their formulations vary from 100% oil, oil/alkyd, alkyd/acrylic or 100% acrylic bases, depending largely on their intended surface type (horizontal deck vs. vertical siding) and amount of pigment employed (sheer, hint of color toner, transparent finish, semi-transparent or solid stain).
- 4) They typically contain a mildewcide and water repellent to protect against water absorption and fungi growth on the coating film.

Intended Projects/Uses:

Because deck surfaces take a beating, pigmented “deck” finishes/stains are made to hold up to heavy foot traffic and other abrasion that occurs on deck (horizontal) applications, so they can also be used on docks, piers and boardwalks, patios and porches, and other horizontal wood surfaces. In addition, finishes or stains called “deck” stains will generally be suitable for use on vertical surfaces like siding shakes, shingles, storage sheds, fences, outdoor furniture and décor, gazebos, arbors and trellises, play equipment, and any other wood structure that is exposed to outdoor weather.



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Type 3: Wood Preservatives

The third type of coating protection that you can apply to bare outdoor wood is a wood preservative.

Wood preservatives are coatings designed to sustain the surface and structural integrity of “non-pressure-treated” wood, and can increase the longevity of wood by five to ten times its normal life expectancy.

Product's Purpose:

Why are “preservatives” needed? Because many domestically-harvested wood species used in construction are not “pressure-treated” and therefore will be susceptible to rot and decay which is caused by both fungi growth and attack from termites or other wood boring insects. Preservatives contain the proper amount of fungicide and/or insecticide to prevent attack from fungi and/or wood boring insects, prolonging the structural integrity of “non-pressure-treated” lumber.

Common Characteristics:

- 1) All “wood preservatives” are designed to prevent the growth of fungi, including mold, mildew, rot and decay organisms. If left untreated, such fungi will adversely affect both the appearance and performance of wood. Preservatives not only protect wood against the unsightly discolorations caused by mildew, mold, and other fungi, but also the undesirable outcome of fungi growth – surface rot and decay.
- 2) Some preservatives also contain an insecticide to protect wood in ground or water contact from attack by termites and other wood boring insects. These insects (termites, powder post beetles and the like) use wood as a food source, which ultimately results in wood rot and decay.
- 3) Preservatives may come with or without color, thereby offering varying degrees of UV protection depending on their active ingredients and if a colored pigment was added. However, non-pigmented types can be painted or stained to protect wood from UV exposure.

Intended Projects/Uses:

Preservatives should be used to protect any outdoor wood that is NOT pressure-treated, and should be applied BEFORE the wood is installed outdoors. Wood preservatives can also be used on “pressure-treated” lumber, especially if that lumber will be installed in the ground or at ground level.

Preservatives are differentiated by their target application situation – either “above ground” or “ground contact/below ground/water contact” use, because they are formulated with either a fungicide only, or a fungicide/insecticide combination. If the project is “above ground” or in “ground contact” where UV protection is important, and the preservative selected is “green” (due to the insecticide copper naphthenate) or “clear/colorless”, it can be applied as a “primer” coat, followed by a top-coat paint or stain to create whatever final look the owner desires.