

Paint Dealer

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dedicated to the retail paint market



Project 604: All Hands on Deck

Also Inside: Exterior Paint & Stain

EASE THE FREEZE

How to keep **stain** working through the winter.



Photo courtesy of UGL.

Keep your stain on the grain

While you're inside all winter, your coating: paint, stain, egg yolk—whatever you're using to protect your structures—is left outside to fend for itself against freeze-thaw, snow, ice and rain. Imagine what it's going through! Remember, of course, that from a purely technical standpoint, the coating is there to sacrifice itself and to protect the structure. But a homeowner or building owner probably doesn't want to renew that sacrifice any more often than necessary.

"Typically, a lot happens to coatings during the wintertime, depending on the geographic location," says Sjoerd Bos, the vice president of Sansin Corp. Sansin sells stains out of Canada, so it's a company that knows a bit about winter. "A good coating should stand up to the weather in the winter. Good application procedures (those recommended by the manufacturer) are typically the determining factor for a coating making it through the winter months." In other words, buy quality and read the directions. Like we've never said that before.

The wood beneath your wings

The wood on a deck will go through a few changes in the winter, says Michele Neary of UGL. "The wood will expand and contract during the winter months and you want to make sure you have a coating with good adhesion and flexibility," she says. "Another factor is UV protection. Pick a coating that retains its flex properties as well as color under extreme sun exposure."

So, it's another excuse to sell something that's going to last. Would your customers wear a threadbare coat that

won't close up on the coldest day of the year? Probably not, if there was a better option! Same with a stain, unless they like re-doing it every spring.

"Paint and coatings is one area of home improvement you do not want to skimp on, especially on exterior coatings," says Neary. "The quality of resins and binders in these products are so important. It is these two components that determine how the coating will hold up to freeze/thaw and the ultraviolet rays."

Remind your painters that coatings go through extreme stress as temperatures fluctuate from day to night—just like we do, watching it from our bedroom windows. "Radiant energy can cause snow and ice to melt during the day but then freeze again overnight," says Bos. "If the surface is not prepared properly and the coating is not applied properly, precipitation can absorb into the wood, causing the coatings and the substrate to become damaged."

When choosing a coating that needs to live through the winter—and doesn't get the luxury of doing it with heat and a big screen—look for a product with top quality resin, UV protection, flexibility, durability, and the ability to repel water, says Bos.

For now, however, "now" meaning "it's not too cold to mess with it yet," building owners can prepare their stain to give it a better chance of making it through the colder months unscathed. "We recommend that our customers inspect their coating on a semi-annual basis," says Bos.

"Clean any dirty surfaces that might support the growth of mold or mildew, which could damage the wood. Also, test for water repellency by spraying the surface with water to make sure the coating is repelling



Photo courtesy of Sansin.

effectively. If the coating is transparent, look for color loss by comparing a treated section that is more exposed to the elements to another section that is more protected. Once there is color loss, coatings tend to deteriorate quickly. So if color loss is determined, consider washing the surface and applying a maintenance coat.”

“Before fall and winter arrive, check for chips in the coating,” adds Neary. “These will be weak spots where moisture can enter. Also remove any leaves and debris that will hold moisture and stain the coating.”

Freeze today, thaw tomorrow

Keeping the wood dry in the winter is particularly important, since if water gets under the coatings, turns to ice, turns back to water, and does this say 25 times, well, good luck come April. “Make sure that all cracks and holes in the surface are sealed and patched so moisture can not penetrate the surface and pop the coating from the surface,” says Neary. “Also, it is important that excess moisture is not present in the wood prior to painting. If excess moisture is present and the surface is painted, the moisture will be trapped in the wood. It will freeze in the winter, then thaw in the summer and pop the coating from the surface, creating bubbles in the coating.” Plus, she says, remind your customers not to overdo it. “Follow the coverage on the label. More does not always mean better. Applying too much product could affect the dry time and the curing of the product.”

If you’ve just put on your quality coating, Bos noted it should make it through the winter—but he stresses to keep it dry. “No coating is meant to perform under-water!” he says.

This might take a little bit of work, but here are a few things Bos says you can suggest to your customers that will help them keep a dry baby, plus make you the font of information that keeps them coming back in the spring, when they didn’t do what you said and realized you were right and they have to repaint.

- Be sure to adjust sprinklers so they don’t saturate your surface.

- Consider lowering the grade to reduce

Photo courtesy Sansin.



The Stain Pad from Padco allows for neat and easy application.

splash-back from rain coming off the roof.

- Consider adding gravel to a garden or changing the grade of the garden to reduce moisture exposure to the coated surface.

“Just as proper preparation of the surfaces before staining will help maintain the integrity of the coating, these landscape and design steps can also make a difference in overall performance and durability,” says Bos.

’Tis the season after the season

Finally, it’s spring. Super Bowl’s in the dustbin of history, the hockey season is still going on interminably, and it’s finally time to get out and do the things that the cold weather allowed you to avoid. Like exterior painting and staining. Still, says Bos, inspect the coating to make sure it will survive the spring. “Look for color loss, water repellency, bare spots and any dirty surfaces that could lead to mold and mildew. If any of these are noticed, clean the surface and consider spot sanding. Then apply a maintenance coat.”

Warming up? Homeowners should forget the frisbee in the park, the picnic or the nice Sunday drive to the winery. Suggest that instead they take those first nice days of spring to check the coating for cracking and peeling. But don’t rush to reapply! “If you are using tone coats or semi-transparent stains, you want to make sure that you don’t apply too soon,” says Neary. “It is sometime hard with these two products to know when to reapply. One way is to test the surface by sprinkling it with water. If the water immediately absorbs into the surface, it is time to coat the surface. If the product beads on surface and takes several minutes to penetrate, you are good for another six months. Check the coating with the drop test in another six months following the same instructions.”

Don’t have winter where you live? Still it’s a good idea to look out for the same issues: color loss, water repellency, bare spots and dirty surfaces. “In warmer climates,” says Sjoerd, “UV and heat degradation will be more severe. Choosing a lighter-colored coating can help mitigate this exposure.”

Now that that’s out of the way, time to start selling those interior projects! [TPD](#)

