



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY MARCH 5, 2020

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 - 1. Minutes of February 5, 2020 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
 - 1. Cattle Barn
 - 2. Discussion on pavement options
 - 3. Fair update
 - 4. Rodeo update
 - 5. Calendar of Events
- IV. Monthly Reports:
 - 1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund
 - 2. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor (No meetings until April)
- V. Public Comment Period
- VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting
- VII. Adjournment

**City of Merrill
Festival Grounds Committee
Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 6:00 P.M.
Bierman Building**

I. Alderman Norton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Committee members Present: Mayor Derek Woellner, Rob Norton, (Chairperson), Alderman John Van Lieshout, Alderman Steve Sabatke, Bryan Bloch, Michael Caylor, Brad Becker

Other attendees included, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Festival Grounds Manager Richard Bjorklund, Krista Mitchell, Kyle Gulke, and a MP3 representative.

Excused: City Clerk Heideman

II. Minutes of pervious meeting:

1. Minutes of the December 5, 2020 meeting.
Motion (Van Lieshout/Bloch) to approve.

III. Agenda Items for consideration:

1. Water & Electrical
Rodeo Association Rep. Bryan Bloch asked that we take a look at what it would cost to upgrade the plug-ins along the south fence for campers. Just electrical and water. He's seen people charged \$20/day at another fairgrounds for the same thing, so there is the possibility of revenue. Would be nice for the rodeo, also could be used during the fair. City Administrator Dave Johnson asked if we were looking to have this available year round or just during events. Bryan said just during events right now, but worth looking into for the future. Possibly also have a restroom that's open year round, if we decide to have camping year round. Alderman John Van Lieshout thought it would be a good idea to get an estimate. Dave Johnson will look into getting estimates.
2. Cattle Barn
City Administrator Dave Johnson reported that there are six things we can do to address the cattle barn: nothing, patches, partial wood replacement, full wood replacement, new siding (different options), or build a new building. There was discussion about the pros and cons of having a new building. Some pros being more space, other venue options, possibly rent out stalls. Cons were that the current building has a lot of sentimental value, it's a "showpiece" as there are only 3 in

the state, cost. Dave Johnson said we have \$107,000 to work with. Food Vendor Rep. Michael Caylor asked why are we wanting to scrap the building if we have the budget to fix it? Alderman Steve Sabatke said he doesn't think we're to the point where it needs to be torn down. Michael Caylor moved to use funds to purchase Hardy Board, Mayor seconded. Michael Caylor withdrew motion to wait so they could see samples of siding first. Mayor suggests we concentrate on fixing the siding on the current building and not a new building. Estimates will be presented at next meeting.

3. Use of cattle barn for animals during natural disasters
Copy of the Emergency Building Use Agreement was handed out. City Attorney Tom Hayden said they worked on it together with Nancy Bergstrom. Mayor motioned to approve agreement, Michael Caylor seconded. Bryan Bloch asked to discuss, Rob Norton opened for discussion. Quick discussion regarding only using the buildings that are available at the time. All in favor Aye, no opposed, motion carried.
4. Calendar of Events/Feedback
Krista reported on the upcoming events. Getting wedding inquiries for summer months. There's a new event coming in May, a pig show, hopefully it will be a repeat event for us. Rick Bjorklund said the wrestling events are getting more filled up with each show. The gun show was successful in the beginning of January, he plans to keep it at that time of year for the future. Dave Johnson mentioned that the Riders Club is thinking about doing some advertising this year with hopes of getting some people in the stands. Bryan Bloch mentioned they might like to see some camping hookups also.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

Mayor agrees that an atv youth track would be a good idea for the area.

2. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor

No meetings until April.

3. Fair Association

Brad Becker reported that they have 25 rides coming to the fair this year, the Carnival has been signed, and they are looking to get hatchet

throwing and an escape room. Demo's are on Friday, Tractor Pull Saturday, and Monster Trucks on Sunday.

V. Public Comment Period

There was no Public Comment.

VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting.

Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bierman Building.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Van Lieshout/Mayor) to adjourn. Carried.
Adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Krista M. Mitchell

March

Cattle Barn

Discussion on Pavement options

Calendar of Events

(Attachment)

Festival Grounds Manager Report – Bjorklund

(Attachment)

Fair Update

Rodeo Update

Attachment: Agenda Items (4863 : Cattle Barn)

What are the different types of siding?

Here are 5 popular choices.

Vinyl Siding

The most widely used material on home exteriors is vinyl. That's for good reason: Vinyl siding is durable, and it's typically under warranty for 30-40 years after installation. Available in an insulated version, vinyl siding has the potential to raise your home's energy efficiency and help you cut down on heating and cooling costs.

Vinyl is easy to maintain, requiring only an annual cleaning with hose or power washer. And color options are almost limitless. Panels generally come with the color infused with the vinyl itself so it cannot flake or chip off.

Fiber Cement Siding

Fiber cement is a popular composite siding option. Made from a combination of substances such as wood fiber, sand, clay and cement, this material is designed to mimic just about any other siding material. Fiber cement siding can look like wood lap siding boards, cedar shingles and wood shake. Fiber cement is known for its longevity, typically a 30-50-year lifespan. Like vinyl, it is available in virtually unlimited color options.

One downside to fiber cement is it will require regular painting and caulking to maintain its appearance. It can also absorb water if improperly installed and maintained, leading to deterioration. Plus, due to its weight and special installation requirements, installation can be trickier and require special training.

Natural Wood Siding

If you're considering natural wood siding, you have several to choose from. Popular woods include cypress, pine, spruce and cedar. In addition, wood offers a variety of styles such as lap, shingle, shake, tongue and groove, board and batten and bevel.

Wood siding requires painting or staining, offering a unique streetscape option. This biodegradable option makes it an environmentally friendly choice to consider. If maintained, it can last for decades.

A note of caution with this choice: Wood can be susceptible to insects and damage from weather elements.

Engineered Wood Siding

Made of wood fibers and exterior-grade resins, engineered wood siding is a less expensive alternative to real wood siding. Built to mimic the look and feel of natural wood siding, it offers less maintenance hassle and more resistance to insects. Plus, it comes already primed or painted in a wide range of colors. The resin surface means that it doesn't peel or chip as quickly as real wood, although it can crack and fade over time.

Metal Siding

Available in steel, aluminum, copper and zinc, metal is a more expensive siding option that has a lot of benefits. Metal siding cannot mold or rot, unlike other siding with the potential for water damage. Known for its low maintenance, the no fading of color with steel siding puts it at an advantage over vinyl and fiber cement.

Metal is relatively eco-friendly, since each panel is precisely cut with little waste material. Plus insects cannot find a home in metal siding, while other siding types may require periodic spraying of insecticide. Like all metal, this siding can dent.

VINYL SIDING VS FIBER CEMENT SIDING

Posted on August 28, 2019

Two of the most popular and versatile choices for siding are vinyl siding and fiber cement siding. When comparing the pros and cons of vinyl siding vs fiber cement siding, it's important to note that they are both less expensive to buy and maintain than wood siding, as well as more durable and water resistant when properly installed.

Vinyl Siding

Vinyl siding has been the most popular siding choice for the last 20 years. It is made primarily from PVC (polyvinyl chloride) with a mix of other materials that give it color and texture. Vinyl siding is attached to the home's exterior in a way that allows it to expand and contract with changing temperatures.

Fiber Cement Siding

Fiber cement siding is sometimes referred to as "hardiplank" or "hardie board" after one of the most popular brands of fiber cement siding manufactured by James Hardie. It is made from a combination of wood pulp and Portland cement and can be formed into long planks or shingles which do a great job of mimicking traditional wood products. Fiber cement siding is directly attached the home's exterior using nails in much the same way as wood siding.

Vinyl Siding Pros & Cons

Pros

- **Energy efficient:** Using an insulated version of vinyl siding increases the R-value of the exterior walls and limits the transfer of heat into the wall during summer months.
- **Durability:** Vinyl siding doesn't crack, chip or fade and is highly water resistant.
- **Less maintenance:** Vinyl siding only needs to be washed with soap and water to retain its vibrant look.
- **Lower Cost:** The initial cost of vinyl siding is less than fiber cement. With lower installation costs and no painting or caulking required, vinyl is significantly less expensive overall.
- **Variety of color and styles:** More styles and colors than fiber cement with panel designs such as clapboard, board-and-batten and Dutch lap, in addition to the traditional plank and shingle designs.

Cons

- **Not fire resistant:** Vinyl siding can melt when exposed to high heat. Even an outdoor grill or other heat source in close proximity can damage it.
- **More easily damaged:** Hurricane force winds can blow entire sheets of vinyl siding off a home and hailstorms can dent and damage the siding, requiring it to be replaced. However, some new, thicker vinyl siding products can handle winds up to 240 mph with extra rigidity in the nail hem, panel projections and locking system
- **Less eco-friendly:** While PVC is a recyclable #3 plastic, it is not recyclable in many facilities and emits hazardous dioxins when burned. However, the lightweight vinyl doesn't take as much fuel to transport, and doesn't require painting which reduces the deposit of paint, stain and other maintenance-related materials into the environment

Fiber Cement Siding Pros & Cons

Pros

- **Durability:** When properly installed, fiber cement siding is unlikely to be damaged by high-wind storms or hail. With caulk and paint maintenance, it is water resistant and should last 50 years or longer.
- **Fire resistant:** Fiber cement has the same rating as brick giving it the highest flame resistance compared to vinyl and wood siding.
- **More eco-friendly:** Fiber cement is made from fairly sustainable materials, such as wood waste, unlike vinyl which requires PVC made from fossil fuels.
- **Looks more like real wood:** Fiber cement is thicker than vinyl and looks similar to wood siding. Some historic districts will accept the use of fiber cement instead of wood. Since it can be painted, there is an almost unlimited color variety and it's also available in pre-painted colors to reduce the initial cost of painting.

Cons

- **Requires more maintenance:** Fiber cement does need to be caulked and painted initially, unless the pre-painted version is installed. Paint will fade, and caulk will dry out over time, so periodic maintenance is required to avoid water intrusion.
- **Higher Cost:** The initial cost of fiber cement is generally higher than vinyl as is the installation cost. When coupled with the extra cost of caulking and painting, fiber cement may cost approximately 50% more than vinyl siding overall.
- **Absorbs moisture:** Fiber cement will absorb moisture which can be an issue in an area that is constantly exposed to water. However, with proper caulking and painting, as well as periodic maintenance, it holds up well over time.

Conclusion

So, which is the best siding when comparing vinyl siding vs fiber cement siding? There are many factors that need to be weighed as mentioned above, such as initial cost, maintenance, durability, longevity, insulating ability, water resistance and eco-friendliness.

If cost and durability are your main concerns, then vinyl siding may be the best option. You'll have more style and color options, and very little maintenance is required to keep it looking new and vibrant.

However, if you live in an area that is prone to hurricanes or wildfires and are concerned about using eco-friendly materials, you may be better off with fiber cement siding.

Comparing Siding Materials

by HomeAdvisor

Because of the variance of siding materials, the ways to compare them number quite a few. For the most part, the prominent siding materials (vinyl, metal, wood, engineered wood, stucco) are all sound. They carry advantages and disadvantages depending on what you need and where you live. To determine which material is the best for your use, consider performance, cost, maintenance, and versatility.

Siding Performance

The performance of siding materials breaks down into efficiency, durability, and damage.

Efficiency

Stucco siding is the most efficient siding product. The others are not far behind, but this material became popular and wide-spread in the southwest because it kept the cool air in the house even as the sun beat down. If you've ever lived in a brick home you understand how easily bricks heat up then warm the home, which can be murder on a summer day in the south. Stucco is thick enough that it repels the heat from getting in and cool air from getting out, and just the opposite in the winter.

Metal is very efficient, but not that far ahead of vinyl. Both metal and vinyl are excellent insulators, not to mention vinyl comes in a very high performance breed that carries extra insulation. However, metal outperforms vinyl in extreme cold.

Wood is a solid fourth, **not inefficient or non-protective**, but manufactured siding products have an edge in outperforming natural ones. Engineered Wood holds up well to extreme temperatures, humidity & moisture. Special waxes & resins coat the wood to help resist moisture intrusion.

Durability

Metal siding & engineered wood are extremely durable, but vinyl has had no problem keeping up in recent years.

- Metal can be especially durable if it gets an occasional coat of paint, which will protect it even further.
- As long as vinyl is not punished too often, it can last for decades just like metal.
- Wood needs steady treatment, but eventually will need to be replaced.
- If stucco can stay out of harm's way and have holes patched immediately, then it can last **20-25 years**.

Damage

Vinyl siding and aluminum siding are pretty equal. Vinyl won't dent or scratch or need to be repainted since it is one solid material, the same color throughout. And aluminum outperforms every other material close to the ocean because it can resist the corrosiveness of the salty air. While vinyl may not need to be painted it often gets cracked, which is easy and quick to repair, but metal never breaks despite how easily it dents.

If wood is treated routinely it will stave off water damage, dry rot, and insects, although as wood begins to dry over time it will begin to split and bow and allow more elements into small places. Engineered Wood stands up well to insects, rock damages & heavy winds. Over time, engineered wood outlasts wood in terms of maintenance and damages.

Stucco siding at times can feel like it has a target on it. Woodpeckers can make softball sized holes in less than an hour, and because of its porous nature it will soak up nearly any color of stain, tree sap, or chemical and color the siding. It is also easily damaged by sports balls and direct strikes by bats or clubs or children.

Cost

- **Siding Materials:** Because vinyl siding has so many different styles and models, you can spend less on vinyl siding than on any other material with engineered wood becoming more affordable. Metal siding is the next cheapest (including aluminum siding prices), then wood siding, and finally stucco. While the prices vary depending on the model, availability, market and season, vinyl can come in as cheap as \$4/sq. ft. whereas cedar siding can be as much as \$8/sq. ft.
- **Installation:** Metal siding is the cheapest to install, especially in the cases where the metal siding can be applied right over the existing siding. In this instance there is no siding removal fee. Also, metal siding is applied with a hammer and cut with tin snips, which keeps the tools and the process very simple.
 - **Vinyl installation** rivals metal but requires a few more tools to get the sheets to hang properly and seam together right.
 - **Wood siding contractors** have to align the grain, but this only adds a small amount of time. However, wood is not uniform and it can sometimes be a fight to get the wood to cooperate, although engineered wood has become a cheaper, more durable alternative.
 - Most of **stucco's expense** lies in the installation. The materials are basically small slats nailed to the house, wire mesh over that, and then the concrete concoction.
- **Long-Term Savings:** The right siding can help to save more on energy bills and recoup the extra expense over the cheaper options. Given that each siding material is performing at its best and installed properly, **stucco is the best choice for efficiency**. It is the best insulator, especially in the warmer climates.
 - **Metal siding** outperforms the rest, and does particularly well in the colder climates.
 - **Vinyl & engineered wood** are close behind metal, nearly a wash in savings year to year, but over the long haul metal will outperform vinyl.
 - **Wood siding** brings up the rear.

It is important to remember that good insulation will allow any siding product to perform well. If your insulation is not all that good, then you are depending on the siding, whatever type you have, to carry some of the burden.

Siding Maintenance

- **Vinyl siding** needs to be maintained less often than the others. Typically, after you have vinyl siding installed, you can forget about it.
- **Metal** is relatively carefree, though it does dent easily if there is heavy traffic or hail around your home. Other than repairing dents, this is all.
- Because **stucco siding is brittle**, there will be many holes to patch. If there isn't much traffic from children or pets or wildlife, it will last a long time unless a deluge of hail dimples it like a golf ball. Holes need to be fixed immediately because if water is allowed to get behind the stucco it will ruin the walls.
- **Wood (and it's engineered counterpart) siding** needs very little, if any, daily maintenance. It won't break, never dents, and scratches just blend right in. However, in order to keep the wood in good condition it needs to be treated every 4-6 years depending on how harsh the elements are in your area. Treatment can run from \$800-\$2,500 depending on the process and the size of the home.

Versatility

- **Vinyl & engineered wood** have the most options as far as plank size, color, and texture.
- Wood can be detailed in many different fashions, comes in shingles or planks, logs or tongue-and-groove, and can be stained nearly any color.
- Metal siding can be painted, which can help protect it, and stucco can be painted. Although stucco and metal really only vary in paint color.

Siding Material Life Spans Ranked from Shortest to Longest

March 18, 2019ringButt

Your home's siding is a significant investment; after all, it's what protects your home's exterior from the elements. So there's no doubt you'd want to know how long a siding material lasts before you start a siding installation project, in order to gauge which one's the best choice for you home. There are various siding types out there and each of them has its own life span.

In this post, Woodbridge Home Exteriors ranks the various siding materials according to average life spans, from shortest to longest.

Aluminum Siding

Compared to other siding materials, Aluminum siding is actually the most inexpensive and durable. However, it has one of the shortest service lives before needing to be completely replaced, with a longevity range of 20 to 40 years.

Wood Siding

Wood siding is tied with Aluminum siding in terms of life span, lasting 20 to 40 years, as well. But siding companies say it is possible to extend this with meticulous maintenance and various factors such as the wood type, the location of your home, paint and caulking, etc.

Steel Siding

Despite its significant expense, this is one of the most commonly used house siding materials due to its durability. A properly installed steel siding is projected to have a life expectancy of 40 years or more if properly taken care of.

Vinyl Siding

Vinyl siding is a popular choice when it comes to your home's cladding and actually lasts much longer than expected. With no effort or cleaning, it's expected to last you about 60 years but with meticulous care and maintenance, you can expect your vinyl siding to last up to 100 years.

Fiber Cement

Catching up to vinyl siding in terms of popularity is fiber cement due to its attractive, durable, low maintenance and inexpensive cost. Various associations actually predict that a properly installed and cared for Fiber Cement siding should be able to last you more than 100 years. With a life span like that, you'll never have to get it replaced in your lifetime ever again.

All You Need to Know About Engineered Siding Products

By Bob Vila

Not Yet Perfect

Engineered siding has its flaws. Moisture remains a common enemy, and the engineered wood siding industry has suffered a number of class-action lawsuits due to moisture-related problems stemming from product imperfections and installation errors. “Our earlier attempt at engineered wood siding, called Inner-Seal, was not made or treated the way SmartSide is and the result was product failure,” explains Ben Skoog, Business Marketing Manager for LP’s SmartSide. Since the revamping of their siding line, SmartSide products have been installed on more than 1.5 million homes.

Fiber cement siding is also vulnerable to moisture invasion, particularly if installed incorrectly. Failure to properly install fiber cement siding can lead to mold and rot in the sheathing or structural supports. Installation is also a concern with fiber cement siding—it weighs about 1.5 times as much as wood, and requires special tools for cutting.

Vinyl Siding

What is the most durable siding?

In terms of price, maintenance, and strength, vinyl siding is the most durable siding material to choose from. It's also available in many different colors and styles such as Dutch lap, shake, scalloped and more.

From an aesthetics standpoint, today's vinyl siding mimics the look of real wood much more realistically than the faux-wood vinyl siding of just a few years ago. One of the reasons some people disliked the vinyl siding of even 10 years ago was the fact that the siding had a seam that destroyed the illusion of wood. Today's vinyl has no seams and the texture looks more like wood than ever.

The true key to vinyl is the thickness of the siding. Many people are unaware that vinyl comes in at least three gauges or thicknesses, or that the gauge of the siding determines how long the siding will last. Obviously, the thicker the siding the more it will cost. The siding found on many homes is 40 to 45 gauge. This is adequate and can last 25 years or more in some climates. However, true durability comes with 55 gauge vinyl siding.

What are the advantages of vinyl siding?

- Durable and Long-Lasting
- It is made to withstand high and low temperatures, high winds, hail and other extreme climates.
- Vinyl also doesn't rot, rust, warp, or corrode, and it is insect proof.
- Vinyl siding is moisture resistant, so, unlike wood, it will not rot or split.
- Available in a wide variety of colors and textures.
- Lightweight and easy to install, even over existing siding.
- Water-repellent and virtually maintenance-free, requiring only periodic cleaning.
- Comes in fade-resistant colors.

What are the disadvantages of vinyl siding?

- It can crack if hit hard.
- It is more prone to impact damage in extreme cold.
- Seams may be noticeable unless you select extra-long panels,

Vinyl Siding

Vinyl siding is an extremely popular siding option for homeowners due to a number of reasons. Vinyl is inexpensive to purchase, easy to install and durable, and it doesn't require a lot of maintenance. It can also be made to look like wood. Like other siding options, however, vinyl also has drawbacks, and owners should educate themselves on the material before opting to have it installed.

Vinyl siding consists of polyvinyl chloride, which is made by combining impact modifiers, pigments, stabilizers and resin. It is a form of plastic that is melted and molded. **Vinyl siding works well for both residential and commercial buildings.**

Vinyl siding can withstand sun, rain, and snow, and, unlike wood, it can't be destroyed by insects. It also retains its aesthetic appeal longer than painted siding does, which can chip and flake.

Owners also benefit from choosing vinyl siding because of its low installation fees. It is easy to work with and can be installed quickly. The material itself is also inexpensive to purchase because its manufacturing process is not costly.

Vinyl siding doesn't need to be painted, and it can last over 30 years with minimal maintenance. Homeowners should periodically power wash the siding in order to remove dust, dirt and mildew.

Stubborn debris can be removed by scrubbing lightly with a brush. Isolated panels may sometimes need to be replaced if they become damaged, and annual inspections of the joints for necessary caulking should be performed.

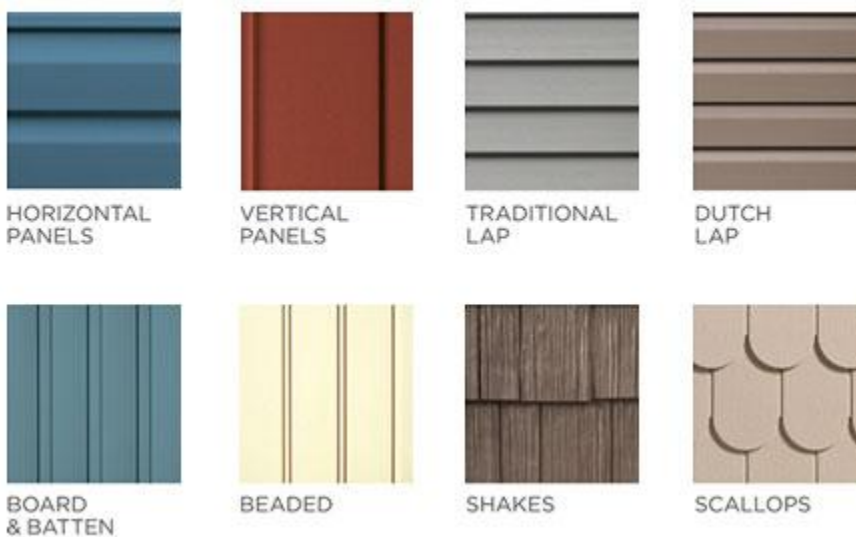
Vinyl siding isn't the best option for resisting extreme temperatures. It can melt if exposed to high heat, and homeowners should take precaution not to leave heat sources too close to this material. In extreme cold, the material can become brittle and be at risk for cracking and breaking if hit.

When windy and rainy conditions are present, water can become trapped behind vinyl siding, and mold or mildew may result. The installation of building wrap behind the siding can help prevent this outcome. Drainage holes in siding also allow trapped water to escape.

Although vinyl siding retains its appearance better than painted siding, its color can still fade after a long period of time. Newer versions of vinyl siding come with special coatings to reduce fading. Fading is also less noticeable in lighter colors of siding.

Vinyl siding is made to withstand the elements, including heavy wind and impact from hail. In addition, **vinyl** resists excessive moisture, meaning it won't rot or corrode over time. In many cases, you can get a lifetime warranty on your **vinyl siding** that is often prorated for up to 50 years on successive owners.

With authentic styles from board and batten to rough-hewn cedar, or beaded to shake, it's difficult to distinguish between today's vinyl siding panels and the more costly materials that inspire them:



The American Society of Testing and Materials requires vinyl siding to be 0.035 inches thick, but the most durable vinyl panels are at least 0.04 inches thick, with 0.055 inches thick

Fiber cement board is extremely durable and long-lasting. Fiber cement is formed through autoclaving, which bonds materials such as cement, sand and cellulose together using extreme steaming. Fiber cement is one of the most resistant and durable siding options for a home

Another aspect of fiber-cement siding that makes it a green building material is that it lasts for so long. James Hardie warrants the material for 50 years. HardiePlank can last longer than that, especially if painted and properly maintained.

Hardie board siding, created by James Hardie and also known as cement board siding, has been around forever, but its popularity seems to come in streaks. Typically billed as a low-maintenance, long-lasting material, does it measure up to its reputation? Here are the pros, cons and costs of hardie board siding to see how it looks under scrutiny.

Hardie Board Siding: The Pros

This siding seems to be a rising trend in the industry lately. It's a product that lasts, comes in a wide variety of textures and colors, and it's affordable. The benefits extend beyond those factors, and when it comes to hardie board siding, there is a long list of pros.

- **Longevity:** Most hardie board siding comes with a 50-year, limited transferable warranty. This siding is completely rot and insect resistant and can even handle salt spray from the ocean.
- **Appearance:** Hardie board siding can be made to mimic just about any other siding material, including wood lap boards, cedar shingles, and wood shake siding. Color options are virtually unlimited. These colors are accompanied by a 15 year warranty on the finish.
- **Fire Resistance:** Hardie board siding is 90 percent sand and cement which makes it fire-resistant. Case in point, a St. Paul Minnesota house fire torched two fire trucks parked 60 feet away, but the cement board siding home next door, 50 feet away, remained unscathed.
- **Storm Resistance:** Whether you're looking for a siding material that can withstand the next Katrina, or one that can fend off the next summer hailstorm without sustaining damage, cement board siding is a proven commodity in the weather department.

The Cons

What's not to like about hardie board siding? Two things stand out. First of all, because of its weight, the siding requires more resources to install than other siding materials. Second, it's not a maintenance-free siding material. You will have to repaint it in time.

- **High Installation and Labor Costs:** Hardie board siding requires more planning, a larger labor force, and takes longer to install due to its composition. It weighs about 300 pounds (100 square feet) compared to 60-70 pounds for vinyl siding. This can increase labor and the cost of cement installation.
- **Maintenance:** It has to be re-painted periodically. Hardie board's ColorPlus[®] Technology Warranty covers paint and labor for peeling and chipping of their finishes for only 15 years.

Problems With Fiber Cement Siding

- 1. Fiber cement siding requires maintenance**
- 2. Fiber cement siding absorbs moisture**
- 3. Fiber cement is difficult to install**

1. Fiber Cement Siding Requires Maintenance



Products like Hardiplank fiber cement siding will require regular painting to maintain their beautiful appearance, unlike other sidings such as brick or insulated vinyl.

Some factory-painted siding panels are available, and come with up to 15 year warranties that cover peeling, cracking, and chipping. However, many homeowners find themselves needing to repaint their home sooner, and warranties can be very particular about what is covered.

Caulking may also be required to help maintain the warranty and protect against the next problem with fiber cement siding we will cover, moisture absorption.

2. Fiber Cement Absorbs Moisture



Absorptive claddings like fiber cement can hold moisture, leading to panel damage, rot, and even mold problems. It is critical that all installation steps are very carefully followed by a professional to ensure all penetrations and gaps are properly treated with the appropriate paint or caulk to protect the panels from moisture infiltration.

Close attention must be paid to all required gap clearances between rooflines and decks during installation, to not put fiber cement in continued contact with more moisture. Any violation of the instructions can create serious moisture concerns and void the product warranty.

A third party study by Home Innovations Research Labs spanning the course of over a year shows that fiber cement retained less moisture than products like stucco and manufactured stone, but performed worse than brick, vinyl siding, and insulated vinyl siding.

3. Fiber Cement is Difficult to Install

In addition to religiously following installation instructions to avoid moisture concerns, installers must also take special steps to protect their health when installing fiber cement. Cutting fiber cement siding generates respirable crystalline silica, a known human carcinogen. Inhaling too much silica can lead to silicosis, lung cancer, and COPD.

Special saw blades, ventilation, and respirators can be used to limit silica inhalation to a safe level during installation.

Fiber cement can also be brittle before being installed on the wall. Care must be taken to properly store panels, which generally require two people to carry and install. Attention must be paid to the types of nails and guns used to prevent blowouts at the point of fastening on the panel.

Problems With Hardie Siding

Fiber cement is a siding material that was first introduced in the 1980's as a replacement for asbestos cement, wood, aluminum and vinyl siding products. Hardie has steadily grown in popularity since, mostly due to it's durability, style, feel and texture. It's also a mostly natural material which is more "eco-friendly" than vinyl, acts as a fire stop, and last longer if properly maintained. With so many siding products available today, it's important to understand the benefits, as well as the problems with Hardie siding before you make a decision about what siding to install on your home. While we'll look at the benefits of Hardie siding elsewhere, this article will explore the five worst problems with Hardie siding.

1. Hardie Siding Problems | Maintenance

Fiber cement siding products are painted. This means they periodically require re-painting to maintain a beautiful appearance. This is one of the worst problems with Hardie siding considering it's not an option. If you don't paint the siding every 7-10 years, on average, it'll start to fade and/or peel, crack or chip. Compare that to other siding products, such as vinyl, which require no maintenance whatsoever. There's a reason you spent a bit more for Hardie siding. This high quality material doesn't need much to keep it looking great throughout the years. Of course, "low-maintenance" doesn't mean "maintenance-free." Hardie siding definitely requires care to keep it looking, and performing, it's best. And paint isn't the only maintenance your fiber cement siding will need. Here's a quick briefing in Hardie care you'll need to do to ensure your siding looks it's best.

Hardie Siding Problems | Fiber Cement Siding Maintenance Requirements

- Re-apply caulk when it begins to show signs of wear to help keep moisture from getting into the wall cavity. These areas include, but not limited to, penetrations, flashing, plank and trim connections, and in some cases, between plank joints.
- Caulk should be permanently flexible
- Dents, chips, cracks and other minor surface damage can be filled with cementitious patching compound.
- Paint every 7-10 years. Sooner may be necessary depending on climate and weather conditions.
- Touch up paint may be needed to cover small nicks, scrapes, scratches, nail holes, peeling, dents, cracks, etc. Nothing larger than a dime.

Inspect Caulking Regularly To Keep Moisture Protection High

Hardie siding is very moisture resistant overall. However, that doesn't mean it can't be affected by moisture and mold. In fact moisture problems are one of the biggest Hardie siding problems you'll have to deal with. Here at Gambrick we typically use a waterproof sealant like silicone caulk to join the siding to other parts of the home. For instance, we use it around door frames, brick or stone facades, window sills, and other edges. This helps keep moisture out. Keeping a home dry is a top priority on all our custom new homes. To make sure your moisture barrier remains intact, you should inspect the caulk annually, looking for gaps and cracks that need repair. This can be expensive as some areas are high and out of reach requiring a professional for safety issues.

Also check for chipped, cracked or peeling paint. Especially along cut edges where water can soak into the fiber cement. You see, Hardie is great at resisting moisture when intact, but once the inside of the material is exposed to water, it soaks up and holds moisture better than almost any siding on the market. Long term maintenance adds cost to an already expensive product to both buy and install.

Make sure you factor in these additional long term costs when deciding if Hardie is the right siding product for you.

Hardie Siding Problems | Fiber Cement Requires Re-Painting

Unlike vinyl, aluminum, and other siding materials, Hardie siding will need to be re-painted. While a paint job on fiber cement siding lasts longer than wood—usually anywhere between 7-10 years, it'll eventually need to be redone. And that can be a pretty expensive task.

There are two types of fiber cement siding. And the life of your paint job typically depends on the type you install. If you go with a pre-painted option, where the boards come pre-painted by the manufacturer, you'll generally be covered by a warranty against chipping and peeling for around 15 years. On the other hand, if you choose primed fiber cement, you can paint it any color you want during installation, but with this option there's no warranty covering the paint job.

With either option however, you still need to eventually re-paint the siding.

When you start shopping for paint, only use a high quality, exterior grade acrylic. If you went with the pre-painted option contact the manufacturer for a list of recommended paints. If you painted it yourself consult the paint manufacturers guidelines for a second coat.

With regular care your Hardie siding can last 50 years or more. But requiring long term maintenance highlights one of the worst problems with Hardie siding which is the cost.

3. Hardie Board Installation Problems

At Gambrick, we do siding installation projects as well as build custom new homes and additions. We deal with Hardie products on a regular basis for both new installations and repair work. The vast majority of complaints we get about fiber cement siding are due to improper installation. If you install Hardie according to the manufacturer specifications, it's a terrific siding product. Fiber cement doesn't install like vinyl, most siding companies just aren't trained or experienced enough to install the product. Hardie board installation problems are easily avoided if you hire an experienced professional to do the work.

Because of the high cost to both buy and install Hardie siding, it's imperative that you hire a company trained and experienced in installing fiber cement siding products. This is one of the worst problems with Hardy siding and the one that's most preventable. Hardie siding is a fiber-cement product that comes with a great warranty, but any warranty will be void if the product is improperly installed.

Fiber cement can also be brittle before being nailed to the wall. Care must be taken to properly store planks, which generally require two people to carry and install. Attention must be paid to the types of nails and guns used to prevent errors like nailing too deep or too shallow.

Most Common Installation Defects

Improper Clearances

- Keep siding 2" away from roof surfaces, decks, driveways, steps, and other similar hard surfaces.
- Keep siding 6" above the finished grade.
- Bring gutters 1" away from the siding, and install kick out flashing.
- Keep siding 1/4" above flashing above windows, and not caulked here

Improperly Attached

- Blind nail or face nailed, but not both.
- Use the proper size nails (6d or siding nails).

- Drive nails in straight, do not over-drive or under-drive.

What Does Improper Installation Mean?

Fiber cement siding is considered a premium siding product. It has its own set of unique installation guidelines which are very different from cedar shake or vinyl products. Hardie board installation problems are a huge problem because if installed the wrong way any damage resulting from improper installation will not be warrantied and your siding will be subject to premature damage and deterioration. Hardie siding is very expensive and you'll want to make sure you preserve your warranty and siding for the long term. Make sure you install it right the first time.

4. Moisture Problems With Hardie Siding

One of the worst problems with Hardie siding is due to how it's made and the ingredient cellulose, which is essentially just sawdust or wood pulp. Just about every home has an area where siding comes in direct contact with a surface that collects or passes water, snow, or ice. In these areas Hardie siding can absorb moisture. This leads to swelling, crumbling, cracking, and peeling paint.

Keep in mind damage due to moisture absorption can happen with siding even when it's installed perfectly. The siding itself is sometimes the issue, not necessarily the installation. However, siding installed incorrectly can absorb moisture in all sorts of additional ways depending on what errors were made during the install. This is just another reason to make sure you hire a professional installer of fiber cement siding.

Manufacturers have faced a number of class action lawsuits from consumers whose homes suffered moisture related damage. Because this material is porous, it can also absorb water through the cut edges. This water can then cause the product to crack or split, especially in colder climates. Moisture can also cause mold or mildew in the sheathing. Fiber cement also takes a long time to dry, unlike wood siding which dries quickly. This amplifies the problem during times of extended heavy rains or snow.

Close attention must be paid to all required gap clearances as per manufacturers installation specs. Any violation of the instructions can create serious moisture concerns and void the products warranty.

There are all sorts of issues due to moisture problems with Hardie siding. It's a fantastic siding product but make sure to install and care for it properly and keep your eye on any areas where water collects.

What Are The Top Ways To Reduce Moisture Problems With Hardie Siding

The only way to reduce moisture absorption with any fiber cement siding product is correct installation. It all comes down to installing the material the right way. Follow the manufacturers instructions to a tee. In order to do that you have to hire the right professional to do the job. Make sure they're experienced with installing fiber cement. Moisture problems with Hardie siding aren't going away. There's no way to completely eliminate them when the material itself is the problem. But with proper installation and care you can prevent moisture problems with Hardie siding from damaging your home.

Fiber cement siding is not like vinyl, aluminum, masonry, wood, or any other siding product. It has its own procedures that must be followed to do the job right and preserve your warranty protection.

Things You Must Do:

- Proper nailing with the correct nails
- Respect the recommended clearances
- Caulk where needed with permanently flexible caulk
- Paint cut edges as you install with the correct paint
- Proper installation of all trim and flashing
- Correct installation of gutter system

- Install the right underlayment

Again, make sure your installer is a well trained and experience professional who works with fiber cement. If you do all these things right, then Hardie is an excellent, premium grade siding product. Do them wrong and you'll seriously regret it.

Does Hardie Board Absorb Water?

Does Hardie board absorb water is a questions we're commonly asked and the answer is yes. This goes for not only Hardie siding products but for any fiber cement product. It's what the siding is made of that's the problem. Under normal circumstances, when installed correctly, Hardie is a great siding product and resists water. But, if water manages to get through the surface layer and into the siding, you'll have big problems down the road.

Common areas where water can absorb into the siding are through cracks and splits in the siding or through nail holes that aren't covered up properly. Also areas that aren't flashed correctly or where siding can sit in pools of water. Basically these are all defects caused by improper installation of the Hardie siding.

In cases where water is able to absorb into the siding all sorts of bad things can happen like rot, mold, mildew and complete deterioration of the siding and eventually the sheathing layer.

So does Hardie board absorb water? Yes. But when installed correctly it shouldn't happen. In fact we've never had it happen on any home we've used it on. Make sure when you hire a siding contractor that they're experienced with Hardie siding products and installation methods and you should be fine.

Another point to remember is that assuming you installed your Hardie siding correctly, and it does absorb some water, then your covered by the warranty. However, if you haven't installed it correctly, then your probably not. So bottom line, install it the right way and avoid water issues altogether.

5. Hardie Siding Is Extremely Expensive

One of the worst problems with Hardie siding is the cost. It's extremely expensive to both buy and install correctly. The majority of siding companies are not trained in how to install Hardie siding making companies that are more expensive due to their added skill and experience.

The added cost for install is a must though, don't try to save money hear or you'll live to regret it. As we went over above improper installation is the #1 reason homeowners have problems with fiber cement siding. It really is a fantastic product, but only if it's installed the right way. Do it wrong and the material is a nightmare.

The upfront cost of Hardie is amplified further by it's long term maintenance requirements. It needs paint every 7-10 years on average and caulking when and where needed. If you don't do the required maintenance the problems will be more than cosmetic. Un-caulked areas and edges without paint can let in moisture which leads to all sorts of problems.



Attachment: Fiber cement siding (4863 : Cattle Barn)

6. Hardie Board Cracking And Splitting

Hardie board cracking is another issue that can happen with any fiber cement siding product. Fiber cement is a great siding material and Hardie board is by far the best kind we've used, but it only performs as well as it's installed. We here complaints about fiber cement siding and get called to do repair work from time to time and every single time improper installation was the cause. If you install Hardie siding the right way, it's a fantastic siding product. But if you install it incorrectly, you'll have problems.

James Hardie siding is a fiber cement siding product that comes with a great warranty, but any warranty will be void if the product is installed the wrong way. Make sure you hire a professional that has experience working with fiber cement. It's not installed like vinyl or cedar shake so experience with those products isn't good enough.

There are several reasons why cracking and splitting in Hardie board can occur. It can be caused by one or more of the issues listed below.

Common Causes For Hardie Board Cracking Or Splitting

Over nailing with a nail gun or improper nailing. This is by far the leading cause we've found for cracked Hardie siding. Nails driven below the panel surface and directional nailing can cause cracking and splitting of fiber cement.

Nailing too high or close at an edge. This can create a small crack which leads from the nail to the edge of the siding board.

House Settling or moving. Because Hardie siding is so stiff any movement of the house can cause cracks in the siding which are typical of any rigid masonry product.

Improper handling. Siding boards, especially long ones, need to be supported at both ends when moved. Fiber cement planks are floppy until secured on the wall and holding them only in the middle or transporting them over a shoulder can cause cracking.

Defective material. Although Hardie siding is a great product backed by a fantastic warranty, issues can still happen during manufacturing. If you see some Hardie board cracking call the company and they'll send out a rep to inspect the installation. If you've installed your siding correctly and it's cracking anyway Hardie will cover the defective material under their warranty.

Hardie Board Moisture Problems Caused By Cracking

Fiber cement siding is a hard, brittle product. One of the worst problems with Hardie siding is moisture damaged which can be caused by cracking. Water will run down from this sill, absorb into the siding, get behind into the sheathing and possibly the frame, causing all sorts of eventual problems. Handle Hardie siding with care and always make sure to cut and nail it properly to avoid cracking.

7. Hardie Board Needs To Be Painted

One of the most common questions we're asked is does Hardie siding need to be painted. And the answer is yes. Even factory painted siding will eventually need to be painted again just like any other painted surface. No paint stays looking like new forever.

How Often Do You Have To Paint Hardie Siding?

If you installed factory primed Hardie siding plan on re-painting it in 5 – 15 years. On average, a high quality, 100 percent acrylic exterior house paint should last somewhere in that range on fiber cement that's properly primed at the factory, as long as the paint was applied correctly.

Weather plays a huge role in how long paint will last along with how much sun you get so keep that in mind. An issue that comes up relating to weather is uneven weathering. If one side of the house gets lots of sun and the other doesn't then your siding will fade unevenly, but you'll still have to paint the entire house. Other things, like if the siding is primed or prepped before applying paint, the quality of the paint used, the number of coats the siding receives, the quality of the paint job and the amount of maintenance it receives after being painted will all affect how long the exterior paint lasts on your fiber cement siding.

Always use good quality paint, it's not worth saving a couple of bucks on paint. You may think your saving money but your not. Cheap paint doesn't last nearly as long as high quality paint does so you'll end up having to re-paint everything again in just a couple of years.

Summary

Hardie is a fantastic siding product and a great investment for your home. But it has some big disadvantages compared to other siding products on the market today. It's crucial you take both the pros and cons of Hardie siding into consideration before making such a major decision. Below we'll show some of the worst problems with Hardie siding in detail as well as list the most common Hardie board installation problems we see.

Worst Problems With Hardie Siding Recap



Water Damage

As we said above moisture problems with Hardie siding is a huge issue if installed improperly. By far the worst problems with Hardie siding are all water related and these are mainly due to Hardie board installation problems. In this example water has absorbed into the fiber cement causing the paint to bubble. This is a sure sign you've got moisture either in or behind the siding. This will eventually lead to deterioration of the siding and can possibly spread into the sheathing layer.

If you've got osb plywood sheathing water issues will be even worse as osb absorbs water even worse the fiber cement does.

Does Hardie siding absorb water? As you can plainly see above the answer is yes. But this is most commonly due to Hardie board installation problems and not the siding itself.

Clearance Issues

When installing fiber cement you have to respect the manufacturers recommended clearances. There should be a space between the bottom the the Hardie and the cement. This is another example of Hardie siding installation problems caused by an inexperienced contractor. Future water damage just waiting to happen.

Water or snow will sit against the siding and eventually find it's way in which causes a long list of moisture problems with Hardie siding. Another problem easily avoided with proper installation.

Remember that most Hardie siding problems are caused by improper installation. This is a common mistake and so easy to avoid.



Improper Flashing

Flashing installed incorrectly or siding installed without the proper gap between the siding and flashing will both result in water damage and a voided warranty. The pic shown above has done both things wrong, the flashing is no good and the gap is too tight. This installation checks two huge boxes for me.

1. Moisture problems with Hardie siding due to improper installation.
2. Hardie board installation problems which cause water damage.

As you can see these two issues always seem to go hand in hand. Hardie siding problems due to improper installation are so common because it's installed a little different than vinyl and isn't as popular. So installers may not be familiar with the small detail you need to know like the proper gap requirements. Make sure you hire a siding company that works with Hardie on a regular basis.



Attachment: Fiber cement siding (4863 : Cattle Barn)

Missing Flashing

When installing fiber cement siding you must also install flashing in between each butt joint. As you can see here the flashing was not installed. This will result in eventual water damage either by absorbing into the siding or getting behind into the sheathing or frame.

Water which makes it's way behind the Hardie siding should hit the flashing layer. The flashing keeps water off the sheathing and drains water properly which prevents water damage. Remember, one of the main Hardie siding problems is water damage however it's also one of the easiest to prevent with proper installation.



Attachment: Fiber cement siding (4863 : Cattle Barn)

Hardie Board Installation Problems

Here we see multiple examples of Hardie board installation problems on the same wall. The gaps are too tight, butt joints are wrong, short filler pieces have been put in because of improperly cut lengths, ends don't meet up properly. I also see some nailing issues and bad caulking at the joints. Just an all around sloppy installation. There is no way you'll be covered by the manufacturers warranty with workmanship like this.

Most Hardie siding problems we see are due to improper installation. Fiber cement is a great siding materials, but you have to install it the right way. And not just the siding itself, but also the flashing, house wrap, and painting too.



Huge Gaps

These gaps are way too big. The installer cut the length wrong and tried to hide it with lots of caulk which eventually dries and leaves a huge gap. Caulk is for small, normal sized gaps, not something nearly an inch. This will eventually cause water damage.

No matter how many times you re-caulk this it'll eventually dry up and shrink. Shrinking caulk leaves a gap for water to drain into and eventually cause water damage not only to the Hardie siding but also the brick, sheathing, trim and window.



Unpainted Joints

When installing fiber cement you have to make sure each butt joint is installed correctly as this is a common problem area. Each end has to be painted before installation which was not done here. The nailing is also bad and I'm sure even though we can't see it in this pic, the flashing behind is missing. Also the siding levels are off by what looks like 1/4". This is a good indication of improper installation which needs further investigation.

As we keep mentioning, moisture problems with Hardie siding are by far the worst issues you'll have using the product so do everything you can to make sure water can not absorb into the siding, including sealing all butt joints properly and installing the correct flashing.

Warped Hardie Siding

It's generally better to replace warped fiber cement "Hardie" siding than it is to try and repair it. Over time the warping can continue since repairing a board or two won't actually address the reason why the boards are warping in the first place. Unless your just unlucky and have a few defective boards something has caused the boards to warp and you'll need to find and fix the problem. And if there are no problems and you just have a few defective boards, do you really want to keep defective boards on your house rather than replacing them.

The removal process for Hardie siding essentially mirrors the installation process, and you'll most likely need to hire a siding professional for the work. However, if siding boards have simply become loose over time, it may be possible to repair the loose siding boards without needing to replace them.

Additional causes for warped siding include structural issues such as missing studs, improper nail placement or using the wrong nails during installation. A good siding specialist with experience working with fiber

cement can inspect your siding to determine the reason it appears warped and the best way to correct the problem. You could also call Hardie or whatever siding manufacturer you used and ask them to send out a rep to inspect. This is one reason we recommend Hardie brand siding over other fiber cement manufacturers. Their customer service is good and they have local reps available to come out and check the job whenever you need.

If you have a good hi resolution picture of warped Hardie siding please send it to us. We could use one for this post.

Fiber Cement Siding Problems

The terms Hardie siding or Hardie board are commonly used in the industry as a name for all Fiber Cement siding. But that's not accurate. Hardie is the brand name of a top fiber cement siding manufacturer, but there are lots of manufacturers out there that sell fiber cement siding. And the problems we've discussed here for Hardie siding apply to all fiber cement siding. The title of this article is Problems With Hardie Siding but it should really be Fiber Cement Siding Problems as that's what Hardie siding actually is.

Vinyl siding is a popular choice when it comes to building cladding and actually lasts much longer than expected. With no effort or cleaning, it's expected to last you about 50 years but with meticulous care and maintenance, you can expect your vinyl siding to last up to 100 years.

Problems With Hardie Siding

Hardie siding problems, a.k.a. fiber cement problems, are rare but do happen from time to time. Fiber cement is a siding material that was first introduced in the 1980's as a replacement for asbestos cement, wood, aluminum and vinyl siding products. Hardie has steadily grown in popularity since, mostly due to it's durability, style, feel and texture. It's also a mostly natural material which is more "eco-friendly" than vinyl, acts as a fire stop, and last longer if properly maintained. With so many siding products available today, it's important to understand the benefits, as well as the problems with Hardie siding before you make a decision about what siding to install on your home. While we'll look at the benefits of Hardie siding elsewhere, this article will explore the five worst problems with Hardie siding.

1. Hardie Siding Problems | Maintenance

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There's a reason you spend more for Hardie siding. This high quality material doesn't need much to keep it looking great throughout the years. Of course, "low-maintenance" doesn't mean "maintenance-free." Hardie siding definitely requires care to keep it looking, and performing, its best.

And paint isn't the only maintenance your fiber cement siding will need. Here's a quick briefing in Hardie care you'll need to do to ensure your siding looks it's best.

Hardie Siding Problems | Fiber Cement Siding Maintenance Requirements

- Re-apply caulk when it begins to show signs of wear to help keep moisture from getting into the wall cavity. These areas include, but not limited to, penetrations, flashing, plank and trim connections, and in some cases, between plank joints.
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To make sure your moisture barrier remains intact, you should inspect the caulk annually, looking for gaps and cracks that need repair. This can be expensive as some areas are high and out of reach requiring a professional for safety issues.

Also check for chipped, cracked or peeling paint. Especially along cut edges where water can soak into the fiber cement. You see, Hardie is great at resisting moisture when intact, but once the inside of the material is exposed to water, it soaks up and holds moisture better than almost any siding on the market.

Long term maintenance adds cost to an already expensive product to both buy and install.

Make sure you factor in these additional long term costs when deciding if Hardie is the right siding product for you.

Hardie Siding Problems | Fiber Cement Requires Re-Painting

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Make sure you install it right the first time.

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Fiber cement siding is not like vinyl, aluminum, masonry, wood, or any other siding product. It has it's own procedures that must be followed to do the job right and preserve your warranty protection.

Things You Must Do:

- Proper nailing with the correct nails
- Respect the recommended clearances
- Caulk where needed with permanently flexible caulk
- Paint cut edges as you install with the correct paint
- Proper installation of all trim and flashing
- Correct installation of gutter system
- Install the right underlayment

Again, make sure your installer is a well-trained and experience professional who works with fiber cement. If you do all these things right, then Hardie is an excellent, premium grade siding product. Do them wrong and you'll seriously regret it.

Does Hardie Board Absorb Water?

Does Hardie board absorb water is a questions we're commonly asked and the answer is yes. This goes for not only Hardie siding products but for any fiber cement product. It's what the siding is made of that's the problem. Under normal circumstances, when installed correctly, Hardie is a great siding product and resists water. But, if water manages to get through the surface layer and into the siding, you'll have big problems down the road.

Common areas where water can be absorbed into the siding are through cracks and splits in the siding or through nail holes that aren't covered up properly. Also areas that aren't flashed correctly or where siding can sit in pools of water. Basically these are all defects caused by improper installation of the Hardie siding.

In cases where water is able to absorb into the siding all sorts of bad things can happen like rot, mold, mildew and complete deterioration of the siding and eventually the sheathing layer.

So does Hardie board absorb water? Yes. But when installed correctly it shouldn't happen. In fact we've never had it happen on any home we've used it on. Make sure when you hire a siding contractor that they're experienced with Hardie siding products and installation methods and you should be fine.

Another point to remember is that assuming you installed your Hardie siding correctly, and it does absorb some water, then you're covered by the warranty. However, if you haven't installed it correctly, then you're probably not. So bottom line, install it the right way and avoid water issues altogether.

4. Hardie Siding Is Expensive

One of the worst problems with Hardie siding is the cost. It's expensive to both buy and install correctly. The majority of siding companies are not trained in how to install Hardie siding making companies that are more expensive due to their added skill and experience.

The added cost for install is a must though, don't try to save money here or you'll live to regret it. As we went over above improper installation is the #1 reason homeowners have problems with fiber cement siding. It really is a fantastic product, but only if it's installed the right way. Do it wrong and the material is a nightmare.

The upfront cost of Hardie is amplified further by its long term maintenance requirements. It needs paint every 7-10 years on average and caulking when and where needed. If you don't do the required maintenance the problems will be more than cosmetic. Un-caulked areas and edges without paint can let in moisture which leads to all sorts of problems.



5. Hardie Board Cracking And Splitting

Hardie board cracking is another issue that can happen with any fiber cement siding product. Fiber cement is a great siding material and Hardie board is by far the best kind we've used, but it only performs as well as it's installed. We here complaints about fiber cement siding and get called to do repair work from time to time and every single time improper installation was the cause. If you install Hardie siding the right away, it's a fantastic siding product. But if you install it incorrectly, you'll have problems.

James Hardie siding is a fiber cement siding product that comes with a great warranty, but any warranty will be void if the product is installed the wrong way. Make sure you hire a professional that has experience working with fiber cement. It's not installed like vinyl or cedar shake so experience with those products isn't good enough.

There are several reasons why cracking and splitting in Hardie board can occur. It can be caused by one or more of the issues listed below.

Common Causes For Hardie Board Cracking Or Splitting:

Over nailing with a nail gun or improper nailing. This is by far the leading cause we've found for cracked Hardie siding. Nails driven below the panel surface and directional nailing can cause cracking and splitting of fiber cement.

Nailing too high or close at an edge. This can create a small crack which leads from the nail to the edge of the siding board.

House Settling or moving. Because Hardie siding is so stiff any movement of the house can cause cracks in the siding which are typical of any rigid masonry product.

Improper handling. Siding boards, especially long ones, need to be supported at both ends when moved. Fiber cement planks are floppy until secured on the wall and holding them only in the middle or transporting them over a shoulder can cause cracking.

Defective material. Although Hardie siding is a great product backed by a fantastic warranty, issues can still happen during manufacturing. If you see some Hardie board cracking call the company and they'll send out a rep to inspect the installation. If you've installed your siding correctly and it's cracking anyway Hardie will cover the defective material under their warranty.

Hardie Board Moisture Problems Caused By Cracking

Fiber cement siding is a hard, brittle product. One of the worst problems with Hardie siding is moisture damaged which can be caused by cracking. Water will run down from this sill, absorb into the siding, get behind into the sheathing and possibly the frame, causing all sorts of eventual problems. Handle Hardie siding with care and always make sure to cut and nail it properly to avoid cracking.

6. Hardie Board Needs To Be Painted

One of the most common questions we're asked is does Hardie siding need to be painted. And the answer is yes. Even factory painted siding will eventually need to be painted again just like any other painted surface. No paint stays looking like new forever.

How Often Do You Have To Paint Hardie Siding?

If you installed factory primed Hardie siding plan on re-painting it in 5 – 15 years. On average, a high quality, 100 percent acrylic exterior house paint should last somewhere in that range on fiber cement that's properly primed at the factory, as long as the paint was applied correctly.

Weather plays a huge role in how long paint will last along with how much sun you get so keep that in mind. An issue that comes up relating to weather is uneven weathering. If one side of the house gets lots of sun and the other doesn't then your siding will fade unevenly, but you'll still have to paint the entire house.

Other things, like if the siding is primed or prepped before applying paint, the quality of the paint used, the number of coats the siding receives, the quality of the paint job and the amount of maintenance it receives after being painted will all affect how long the exterior paint lasts on your fiber cement siding.

Always use good quality paint, it's not worth saving a couple of bucks on paint. You may think your saving money but your not. Cheap paint doesn't last nearly as long as high quality paint does so you'll end up having to re-paint everything again in just a couple of years.

Summary

Hardie is a fantastic siding product and a great investment for your home. But it has some big disadvantages compared to other siding products on the market today. It's crucial you take both the pros and cons of Hardie siding into consideration before making such a major decision. Below we'll show some of the worst problems with Hardie siding in detail as well as list the most common Hardie board installation problems we see.

Worst Problems With Hardie Siding Recap



Attachment: Problems With Hardie Siding (4863 : Cattle Barn)

Water Damage

As we said above moisture problems with Hardie siding is a huge issue if installed improperly. By far the worst problems with Hardie siding are all water related and these are mainly due to Hardie board installation problems. In this example water has absorbed into the fiber cement causing the paint to bubble. This is a sure sign you've got moisture either in or behind the siding. This will eventually lead to deterioration of the siding and can possibly spread into the sheathing layer.

If you've got osb plywood sheathing water issues will be even worse as osb absorbs water even worse the fiber cement does.

Does Hardie siding absorb water? As you can plainly see above the answer is yes. But this is most commonly due to Hardie board installation problems and not the siding itself.

Clearance Issues

When installing fiber cement you have to respect the manufacturers recommended clearances. There should be a space between the bottom the the Hardie and the cement. This is another example of Hardie siding installation problems caused by an inexperienced contractor. Future water damage just waiting to happen.

Water or snow will sit against the siding and eventually find it's way in which causes a long list of moisture problems with Hardie siding. Another problem easily avoided with proper installation.

Remember that most Hardie siding problems are caused by improper installation. This is a common mistake and so easy to avoid.



Attachment: Problems With Hardie Siding (4863 : Cattle Barn)

Improper Flashing

Flashing installed incorrectly or siding installed without the proper gap between the siding and flashing will both result in water damage and a voided warranty. The pic shown above has done both things wrong, the flashing is no good and the gap is too tight. This installation checks two huge boxes for me.

1. Moisture problems with Hardie siding due to improper installation.
2. Hardie board installation problems which cause water damage.

As you can see these two issues always seem to go hand in hand. Hardie siding problems due to improper installation are so common because it's installed a little different than vinyl and isn't as

popular. So installers may not be familiar with the small detail you need to know like the proper gap requirements. Make sure you hire a siding company that works with Hardie on a regular basis.



Missing Flashing

When installing fiber cement siding you must also install flashing in between each butt joint. As you can see here the flashing was not installed. This will result in eventual water damage either by absorbing into the siding or getting behind into the sheathing or frame.

Water which makes it's way behind the Hardie siding should hit the flashing layer. The flashing keeps water off the sheathing and drains water properly which prevents water damage. Remember, one of the main Hardie siding problems is water damage however it's also one of the easiest to prevent with proper installation.



Hardie Board Installation Problems

Here we see multiple examples of Hardie board installation problems on the same wall. The gaps are too tight, butt joints are wrong, short filler pieces have been put in because of improperly cut lengths, ends don't meet up properly. I also see some nailing issues and bad caulking at the joints. Just an all around sloppy installation. There is no way you'll be covered by the manufacturer's warranty with workmanship like this.

Most Hardie siding problems we see are due to improper installation. Fiber cement is a great siding materials, but you have to install it the right way. And not just the siding itself, but also the flashing, house wrap, and painting too.



Huge Gaps

These gaps are way too big. The installer cut the length wrong and tried to hide it with lots of caulk which eventually dries and leaves a huge gap. Caulk is for small, normal sized gaps, not something nearly an inch. This will eventually cause water damage.

No matter how many times you re-caulk this it'll eventually dry up and shrink. Shrinking caulk leaves a gap for water to drain into and eventually cause water damage not only to the Hardie siding but also the brick, sheathing, trim and window.



Unpainted Joints

When installing fiber cement you have to make sure each butt joint is installed correctly as this is a common problem area. Each end has to be painted before installation which was not done here.

The nailing is also bad and I'm sure even though we can't see it in this pic, the flashing behind is missing. Also the siding levels are off by what looks like 1/4". This is a good indication of improper installation which needs further investigation.

As we keep mentioning, moisture problems with Hardie siding are by far the worst issues you'll have using the product so do everything you can to make sure water can not absorb into the siding, including sealing all butt joints properly and installing the correct flashing.

Warped Hardie Siding

It's generally better to replace warped fiber cement "Hardie" siding than it is to try and repair it. Over time the warping can continue since repairing a board or two won't actually address the reason why the boards are warping in the first place. Unless your just unlucky and have a few defective boards something has caused the boards to warp and you'll need to find and fix the problem. And if there are no problems and you just have a few defective boards, do you really want to keep defective boards on your house rather than replacing them.

The removal process for Hardie siding essentially mirrors the installation process, and you'll most likely need to hire a siding professional for the work. However, if siding boards have simply become loose over time, it may be possible to repair the loose siding boards without needing to replace them.

Additional causes for warped siding include structural issues such as missing studs, improper nail placement or using the wrong nails during installation. A good siding specialist with experience working with fiber cement can inspect your siding to determine the reason it appears warped and the best way to correct the problem. You could also call Hardie or whatever siding manufacturer you used and ask them to send out a rep to inspect. This is one reason we recommend Hardie brand siding over other fiber cement manufacturers. Their customer service is good and they have local reps available to come out and check the job whenever you need.

If you have a good hi resolution picture of warped Hardie siding please send it to us. We could use one for this post.

Fiber Cement Siding Problems

The terms Hardie siding or Hardie board are commonly used in the industry as a name for all Fiber Cement siding. But that's not accurate. Hardie is the brand name of a top fiber cement siding manufacturer, but there are lots of manufacturers out there that sell fiber cement siding. And the problems we've discussed here for Hardie siding apply to all fiber cement siding. The title of this article is Problems With Hardie Siding but it should really be Fiber Cement Siding Problems as that's what Hardie siding actually is.

Fiber Cement Siding Problems You Can't Avoid

Your home's cladding plays a major role in its durability, looks and energy efficiency. That's why you need to pick the right material. Fiber cement is a popular home cladding option but that doesn't mean it's flawless – it's actually far from it. There are many fiber cement siding problems you need to be aware of.

Where some siding options, such as [vinyl](#), thrive in erratic weather and require little maintenance, fiber cement tends to struggle. This can have costly effects on your finances.

In this article, we'll go over cement siding problems that you can't avoid. Let's get started.

1. It's Expensive

Right off the bat, let's start with one of the biggest complaints about fiber cement siding – it's very expensive. There are several reasons for this problem. The first being that the cost of materials is very high. It's made of a mixture of sand, cement and cellulose fibers.

More importantly, fiber cement is expensive to have installed because of the amount of manpower needed. The installation cost will end up running you between \$6 – \$15/square foot. That makes it more expensive than other popular home cladding options such as wood, vinyl and aluminum.

2. Maintaining Fiber Cement Siding Isn't Easy

If you thought spending money was done at the initial payment, you're wrong. Maintaining fiber cement siding is a huge endeavor that takes up a lot of time and money.

For starters, having pre-painted fiber cement siding is extremely expensive and many homeowners choose to paint their siding after installation. However, because of the mixture of sand, cement and cellulose fibers, you need to paint it within the first 90 days of installation.

Whether you choose the pre-painted siding or not, your fiber cement siding will need to be painted often to maintain its looks. The paint tends to fade and can even chip. This isn't a problem you experience with other materials such as vinyl or aluminum.

Also, fiber cement can get pretty dirty rather quickly – you'll need to clean it frequently. It shows dirt more and will take away from your home's curb appeal.

3. Inconsistencies With Fiber Cement Quality

Not all fiber cement is created equally which means that you're never sure of the quality you're getting until it's already installed. When you're mixing multiple components together, there's bound to be some inconsistencies that are unavoidable.

That isn't the only problem though. As you already know, fiber cement is very difficult to install. Different companies will have different ways of going about installing it so you'll never have the same quality of installation.

Installation is key to how a siding looks and functions so you'll need to find a reputable fiber cement siding company and even that might not be enough. They could have a unique product that doesn't withstand the elements as well as other fiber cement options.

REVIEWS

Original review: Oct. 24, 2018

After my house was impacted by fire, I was convinced by my contractor to upgrade my siding from the original vinyl to James Hardie Siding. It was the biggest mistake of my life. You absolutely need a certified installer as there are many subtle installation errors that will not only void the warranty, but cause the siding to become unsightly very fast. Despite the company's attempt to convey the product as a premium material with strength and beauty, it is the exact opposite. My siding contractor read the instructions but was reluctant to spend the time painting all of the cut edges that obviously removes the critical paint and allows an area for water to be absorbed. The the fact that there is fiber in the fiber

cement is why it loves to soak up water. My contractor actually tried to fool me by painting all the seams after it was installed. It's that big of a pain.

Original review: June 23, 2019

Whole house has siding shrinkage and is causing leaks. Warranty is a lie in my opinion!! They do not support their product and do not care about their customers. They are extremely rude to work with and I regret buying a house with this siding.

Original review: July 16, 2019

The ColorPlus Hardie plank has a 15 year warranty. After 5 years the paint started fading everywhere - sun side and shade side. We sent in proof of purchase, tax bills, purchase agreement for our home, and the requested three photos. The warranty was rejected because it was normal. We were reminded that if we painted over the Hardie plank the entire warranty was voided. This must be for the 30 year warranty on the boards, since the paint warranty is not worth the paper it's printed on.

Original review: Oct. 2, 2018

I installed Hardie planks with color plus expecting a beautiful finished look. I was wrong. Within a year the finish started peeling and fading a ways in multiple spots. I placed a claim with manufacturing only to hear they don't warranty this type of issue. They stated it had an issue related to the installer. Easy way to pass on their responsibility. There's a neighbor down the street with the same issue too. Don't buy this product. It is not worth it!!! I have never wrote a review on a product but this company is so bad I have to warn the public.

Original review: June 23, 2018

I purchased Color Plus because it was touted as a superior product and Hardie claims the paint will last longer than a typical paint job. What a lie. My product was professionally installed according to Hardie specifications 5 years ago. Now, there is water staining at EVERY JOINT in the siding. Hardie says the product is not defective and is not covered by warranty. How can it not be defective? I spoke to the warranty department and they will not take any responsibility for this. First they blamed it on my contractor, then they said it's because the joints were "touched up". The joints were not touched up. They are still exactly as installed except that they are stained, more like bleached, at every joint.

Original review: Jan. 29, 2018

Not long after installation some of our siding was peeling. Wrote to James Hardie and nothing was done. I have had the house painted several times and have had to replace several boards because once water gets in it turns to mush. I would never recommend any products from this company as they do not stand behind them. I went with this product because they claimed that paint would last 15 years give or take. It would have been ok if it was just peeling paint after 5-10 years but the product absorbs water like a sponge and falls apart. Now I am faced with having to reside my home. Will stay as far away from James Hardie Products as possible.

METAL SIDING

The aesthetic qualities of metal, both aluminum as well as steel siding, have come a long way in recent years. Today's aluminum and steel siding comes in patterns and textures which mimic wood, and pre-painted metal can provide an owner with up to 50 years of carefree living. Obviously, the thicker the metal, the better it will withstand day-to-day abuse, as well as any extreme events.

PRO:

- Metal siding is low maintenance - It should be noted that in both residential and commercial applications, metal siding requires very little maintenance to maximize its durability and lifespan. Though specific maintenance procedures depend on the type of metal being used, natural elements like rain, wind, and ice have very little effect on the overall condition of the siding.
- It's tough and durable while still remaining lightweight and flexible.
- Unlike some other siding materials, metal doesn't absorb moisture or create an environment conducive to mold growth.
- Metal siding eliminates insect problems and is fire-resistant.
- In either steel or aluminum, metal siding can even be installed over preexisting materials, although it's easier to lay over solid sheathing.

CON:

- Steel siding has the risk of rusting over time.
- Metal siding will dent.

There are several reasons why metal siding has become an industry standard. It's impenetrable and yet it's also virtually maintenance free. All these attributes combine to form a pretty effective material for surfacing a house. And the beauty of the product is its ability to adapt. It can be made to look like wood panels.

Metal Siding Shortcomings

So even though metal siding is tough and durable, it isn't absolutely impenetrable. Here are some minor problems that may arise along with some small remedies for their restoration.

- **Denting:** It can dent, although steel tends to be less vulnerable than aluminum siding. But these blemishes can easily be repaired with a little manipulation and pressure.
- **Fading:** The paint can fade, scratch, blister or peel like with any other material. However, if water or air is allowed to penetrate and oxidize the steel, rust can occur. Therefore, make sure to reapply a new coat of paint ASAP. And you may want to hire a professional who can properly prime, clean, buff the rust, and use appropriate paints.
- **Replacement:** Certain areas can eventually come loose, get damaged, or begin to sag. However, unlike wood which requires you to restore entire panels, aluminum siding allows you to replace only small sections where repair is needed. But if the damage is significant enough, you may need to hire a pro to do the work.
- Metal siding is typically either steel or aluminum; both of these have strong advantages plus distinct disadvantages. The pros of steel siding include its strength and color retention, while the biggest con can be its cost. Aluminum, on the other hand, is a metal house covering that is relatively inexpensive, yet it doesn't have the quality advantages of steel siding.

- Aluminum metal siding doesn't hold its color well, as it tends to fade or get a chalky texture from the effects of weather. It's also a metal that dents easily from hail or heavy rain. Even using a power washing tool to clean the siding may cause it to dent. On the plus side though, aluminum can often just be cleaned with a regular garden [hose](#).
- A large con, or disadvantage, with aluminum home siding is that although it's often used on manufactured homes to save money, as it's an economical house covering, when a section wears out, it can be difficult to find the same color. This may be either because the color selection for the siding is limited or discontinued or that the original pieces have gone chalky over time. Yet, painting [aluminum siding](#) can make it look fresh. Only good quality paint should be used or the new look won't last very long.
- Despite the typically high cost of steel house siding, it has many more pros, or advantages, than its lower priced aluminum counterpart. Steel holds its color well and is much less susceptible to denting. Unlike aluminum, steel metal siding can usually handle machine pressure washing, but the lowest setting should be used.

Misconceptions Related to Problems with Steel Siding

Unfortunately, people still believe problems common with steel over 100 years ago are still an issue today. Steel siding has come a long way since its introduction, and the steel used to clad homes today is similar to those older materials in name only.

For instance, there's no longer a problem with rust thanks to the way steel is treated with zinc prior to being manufactured today. This process also helps with fading and the lack of texture once found in steel produced decades ago.

If you've been considering steel as a durable, low-maintenance alternative to wood, you should know that steel siding is one of the best materials you can put on your home.

There are many misconceptions surrounding the durability of steel siding. Some people confuse steel with aluminum, while others remember the older types of steel siding that had problems with denting, corrosion and scratches on the surface.

Today's steel siding is incredibly durable, resisting dents, fire and insect activity. And thanks to the finish and the way the metal is treated, steel also protects against moisture and scratches. This last means you won't have to worry about corrosion, rusting or discoloration of your siding either.

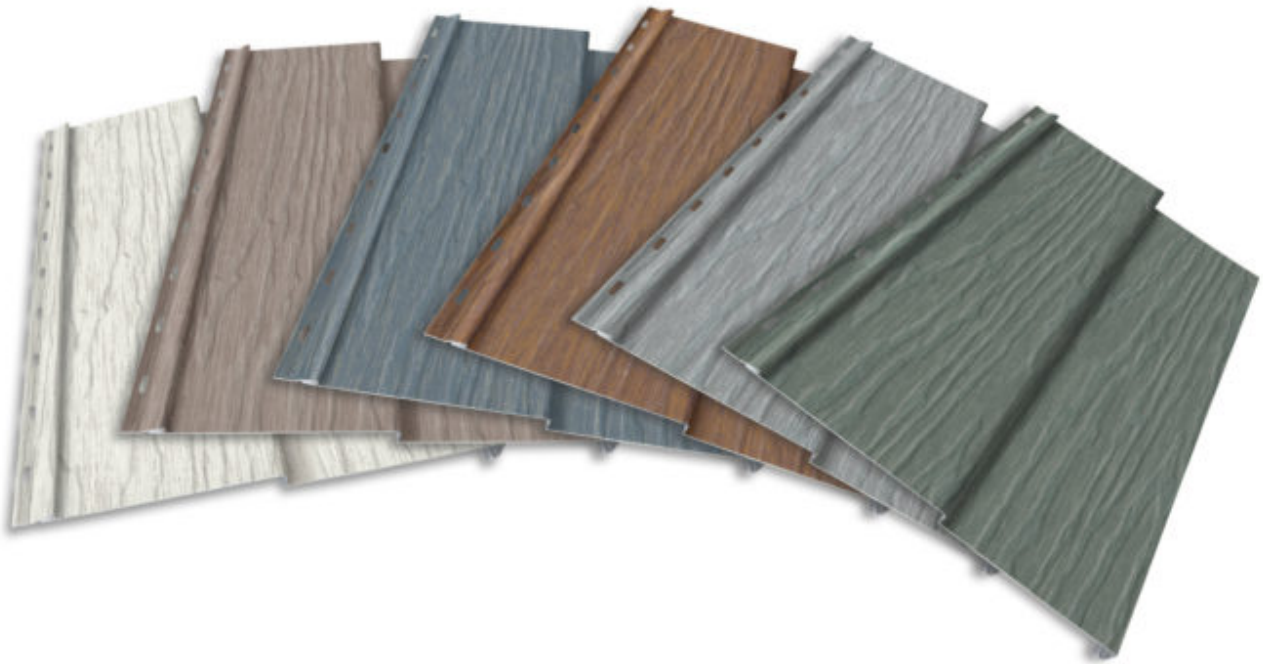
With steel siding from Rollex, you get long-lasting cladding that is both durable and low maintenance, with a lifespan of up to 50 years.



The idea that steel siding is prone to fading is no longer true. Today's steel doesn't cause its paint color to crack, chip or peel the way that wood siding does. This is because the planks are incredibly stable, meaning they don't shrink and expand to the same degree as wood, and the paint coating is flexible enough to withstand any slight movement in the metal.

It's true that older metal siding made of steel and aluminum was susceptible to fading because of the way it was finished. The only remedy was to paint the siding, which meant that it wasn't as low maintenance as people wanted for their homes.

Today's steel siding, from reputable companies such as Rollex, no longer fades the way it once did thanks to the finish coating put on the steel during manufacturing. New technologies use special resins and pigments with an oven-fused system, making steel siding's finish fade-resistant.



When steel siding was first introduced, it came in two forms: sheet material and steel clapboards. And while old steel could be made into planks like traditional wood lap siding, it was produced in a rolled, flat finish. So, while it installed in laps, it still had that flat, smooth finish that revealed what the material really was. For anyone that wanted to get the look of wood, but without any of the issues, older steel siding wasn't quite up to the job.

Today's steel siding, however, changes that. Steel siding produced today not only comes in a range of fade-resistant colors, but it also comes in different appearances as well.

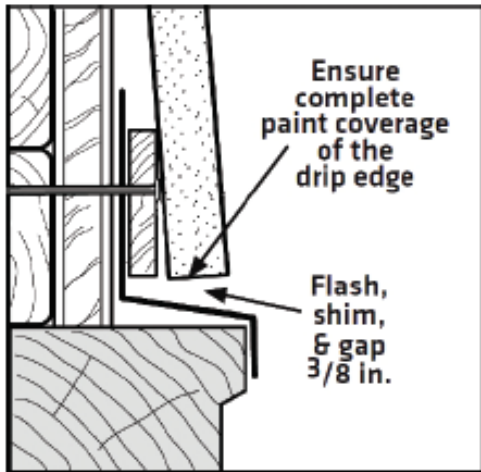
Steel siding can resemble the look of real wood grain, so you get a natural-looking wood grain finish, without any of the issues of real wood such as warping, splintering, rotting or insect activity. And steel siding can even be installed in different configurations so you can get either the look of traditional lap siding or the look of board-and-batten siding, depending on your preference.

Steel can even extend to the trim and finished areas of your building's exterior as well, giving you the same protection and beautiful appearance all over.

Best of all, steel siding from Rollex is made to "float" over the exterior of your building to help hide some of the potential imperfections of your building's exterior. The result gives you an even, long-lasting finish that enhances your home's appearance and disguises its flaws at the same time.

Problems with LP Smartside Installations

REUBEN SALTZMAN



Problems with LP SmartSide® Installations

By Reuben Saltzman, ACI, Structure Tech Home Inspections

LP SmartSide® products are some of the fastest growing siding brands in the United States, with just more than 9 billion feet sold since their launch in 2007. This is also one of the most popular choices for siding and trim by builders in Minnesota, where I live. This product looks similar to fiber cement siding, but actually falls under the category of wood composite siding. This is how we as home inspectors should identify this product in our inspection reports.

LP SmartSide® siding and trim seem to be great products and I have yet to find a single failure with either product. Nevertheless, I suspect I'll be seeing failures soon enough because I find installation errors on nearly every home I inspect. When inspecting homes that have this type of wall covering, look out for the installation defects described below. These are the most common mistakes being made by installers today.

Missing Paint

Without a doubt, the most common installation error that I find with LP SmartSide® products is missing paint at the cut edges. The manufacturer requires all exposed surfaces to be primed and painted. The image to the right also shows missing sealant at the joint.



Overdriven Nails

This is another common defect. Here's a small collage of overdriven nails.



The diagram below shows the appropriate repair methods for overdriven nails.

CONDITION		CORRECTION	
Snug		OK	
Flush		OK	
Visible fiber		Paint	
Countersunk 1/16"-1/8" IN.		Apply sealant	
Countersunk more than 1/8 in.		Apply sealant and re-nail	

Insufficient Clearance

The manufacturer requires 6 inches of clearance from the siding to the finished grade. It seems that almost every home has one or two areas where this clearance requirement isn't met.



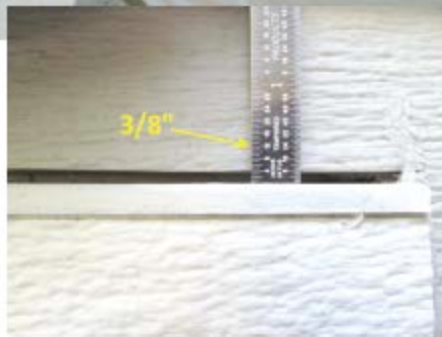
The manufacturer also requires 1-inch clearance to shingles. This is usually done right, but not always.



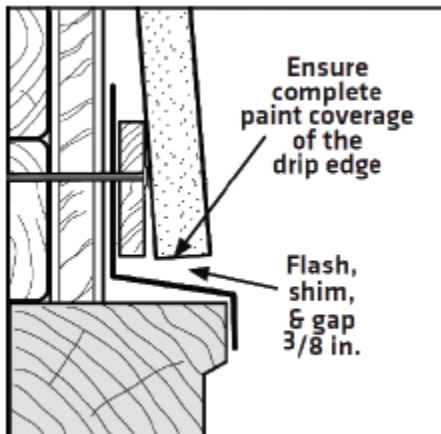
The manufacturer requires a 3/8-inch gap above windows and other similar penetrations.



A 3/8-inch gap is a BIG gap. Even when a gap is left here, it's usually not what the manufacturer requires.



This is rarely done.



Improper Spacing at Ends

The manufacturer requires a 3/16-inch gap at the end of each piece of siding. This includes butt joints and places where the siding terminates vertically against windows, doors and other fixtures.



A $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch gap is a pretty large gap. Here's what a proper $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch gap looks like:



Insufficient Kickout Flashing

Kickout flashing is a piece of metal at a roof end that prevents water from leaking into the wall. For more information about this issue, refer to my related blog post (<http://structuretech1.com/kickout-flashing/>) and the diagram below, courtesy of the fine folks at Code Check.



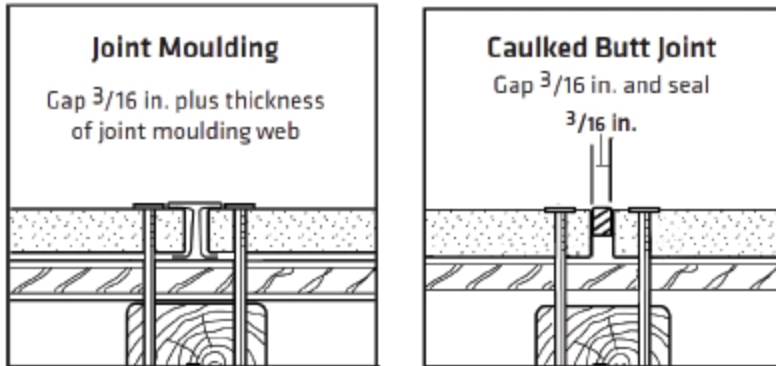
The manufacturer requires flashing to have a 4-inch upper leg. This means the kickout flashing needs to be 4 inches high. This usually isn't done.



Joint Treatments

There are three options for keeping water out of the butt joints. The first and second options are to have the joints caulked or have joint molding installed.

Alternate Butt Joint Treatments



The third option is to have flashing at least 4 inches wide installed at the joints, as long as the ends of the siding are factory finished and the siding is prefinished by an approved or preferred prefinisher. That means no cut edges at the butt joints. When field-cut edges are present, flashing at the joints is not an appropriate installation method.

Conclusion

That wraps up my list of the most common installation defects seen with LP SmartSide® products. Again, this is not a full list of defects. For the full list of installation instructions and for more information on these products, visit the LP SmartSide® website (<http://lpcorp.com/products/siding/lp-smartside-trim-siding/>).

UP COMING EVENTS AT THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

2020

March	03-05-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	03-06/07-20	Gun Show**
	3-20-20	Merrill High School Boosters Club Fundraiser
	3-28-20	Wrestling
	3-31-20	Merrill City Council Candidate Forum
April	04-02-2020	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	04-03/04-20	Enrichment Center Craft Show**
	04-18-20	Prom**
May	05-02-20	Wedding
	05-07-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	05-23-20	Pig Show (cattle barn)
	05-29-20	Riders Club (grounds)**
June	06-04-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	06-06-20	Wedding
	06-12/13/14-20	Rodeo**
	06-19-20	Riders Club (grounds)**
	06-20-20	Wrestling – Tentative

**** Yearly Repeat Events ****

Merrill Festival Grounds

March 5, 2020

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

In the process of removing snow mass from the sides of the Expo Hall building, it became impossible to do so without dragging landscape stone with the snow being removed. Future consideration to replacing the stone with another material may eliminate this problem.

Addition of lighting needs to continue to be a priority to create a safe and user-friendly environment. Raising the grandstand poles and enhancing the light clusters is a priority for safety, production and ease of operation (not having to keep refocusing). American flag is missing.

Projects that have improved the appearance and function of existing buildings is very noticeable and appreciated by the community and user groups. Capital improvement categories could include: Barn replacement, Perimeter Fence (with caution and concurrence of user groups), reduction of Humane Society footprint, paving/asphalt at the Grandstand and improved elevation between the east and west bathrooms, plantings, trees, electrical grid, winterized buildings, canopies, shade and rest areas, picnic tables, sewer and water hook-ups.

Events or contests with low cost operations but relatively broad appeal are the goal for the grounds. Even those events will require advance funding assurance.

Bierman Expo Hall:

The NRA Gun Show is on March 6 and 7. The organizer is very pleased with the facility and with the help he receives from Merrill. The consensus is that three gun shows that currently occupy our schedule is the maximum that our size market can absorb without harming the attendance at all shows.

The City crews do an excellent job of opening and clearing parking space in case of snow.

The Aqua Jays have conducted set-up and clean up for all the commercial shows in the Expo and are respected by all the show managers.

The Flag obtained by Tammy for the Expo Hall is stunning. Thank You Tammy.

The last Wrestling Show produced about 340 attendees. Given the short lead time, it was an encouraging turnout. The promoter has scheduled another show for March 28 titled Merrill Mania. It will feature a former Merrill resident who went on to a WWF career. Ryan

Schwartzman has helped the promoter tremendously and the Chamber has helped with sales and marketing. New sales at County Market and Mobile helped. The event is seeking sponsorship as well as angel backers.

The show that was originally held on opening day weekend was moved to early Jan. It did well and expects exhibitors to book more heavily in subsequent years. Attendance was over 1000. The consensus among the exhibitors is that the move to Merrill was good for all.

Reservations for weddings are increasing monthly.

Tractor Pull:

The Midstate's Pullers replaced the WTPA/NTPA. The Dirt Flingers (minis and garden tractors and specialty classes) were added with the antique Pullers for the daytime free show.

Efforts have been made to move the Tractor events into the County Fair to help the overall health of both events.

Rodeo:

Entrance Gate created a nice welcoming sense of arrival.

The new layout of the grounds was excellent and well received by all.

Show did a good job of watering down the entrance area and practice areas to hold down dust.

Consider improving hook-up service on S fence line.

Commercial and concessions set-up was accomplished rapidly and was a clean presentation.

Though the intent was good the use of orange plastic barrier was not necessary. Saw horse barriers look better and accomplish the same goal.

Double check electrical load balance along the Memorial fence line.

Increase infield electrical capacity to 600 amps.

Elevate arena light poles by 20 feet and continue to add lighting across the grounds.

Obtain a hydrant hose bib (similar to the ones used by the carnival) for better hose use.

Elevate/barrier an area with hose and water for horse washing.

Put benches along the chutes for use by contestants.

VIP and handicap parking worked very well.

Parking operation in general, was excellent; the best of any event.

Consider moving the tent a few feet west to better avoid utilities.

Consider "selling" deep discount tickets for Sunday only to sponsor's favorite charities.

County Fair:

The elimination of fencing worked very well; it was also efficient to allow the beer stands to sell wristbands at the counter.

Seek to sell, trade or barter for display space under the Grandstand, west of the carnival and east of poultry barn. Perhaps, invite the military to move displays in at no cost. Attempt to leave no empty space between the east end of the grandstand and the cattle barns. Attempt to fill all buildings

Consider active and/or participative displays such as chain saw carving, wood working, fish tank, kid's shows, animal petting, jugglers, etc. Such shows are inexpensive, easy to book and easily fill space as needed. They give a sense of activity and fun and help to keep families at the grounds longer. Put all benches and picnic tables in areas closer to the activities.

Renovation of the restrooms was excellent. They were clean and well lit. Families appreciated it.

Review ATM vendor and fees. Require a report from the Processor of the ATMs.

Use the Expo stage for pie eating and butter carving contests and other such competitions and free programs. Work out re-scheduling use of the building to make sure the expo stage is kept busy.

Open the Enrichment Center end of the Expo for passive display of projects and programs; open the gift shop to sell items to the public and hand out information to increase public awareness and participation.

The committee in charge of the livestock auction (the fair is a terminal show) has done a superb job of lining up corporate and private buyers for the auction. It is one of the better auctions in the state in the county fair category. The work done by the committee is a model for the fair to use in seeking new altruistic support, sponsorship and possible angel underwriting of specific events. Sponsor each day of the fair. Such additional support is essential to help the fair continue to be a "free fair".

Add lights to the east and west poles in the grandstand to keep from having to refocus lights. Consider raising the height of the north grandstand poles to reduce glare into the grandstand seating. Focus heavily on general lighting throughout the grounds. Light equate to safe in attendee's minds.

Have a heavier presence of electrician during set-up. Lock electric panels throughout the fair, reduce hose and cable crossings and cover all crossings with heavy rubber mats. Assure that the electrician contractor is bonded, certified and insured.