

TECH BULLETIN NO.3 Finishing Panelized Cedar Shingle Siding

Published by Cedar Valley Shingle Systems Inc., 943 San Felipe Rd., Hollister, Calif. 95023 June, 1999

Cedar Valley Recommends Premium Oil Based Stains

Stains Accent Cedar Grain and Color, Extend Life, Minimize Maintenance

Cedar Valley Shingle Systems strongly recommends finishing with either a premium semi-transparent oil based stain or an oil-based primer and acrylic solid color top coat. Stain fills the pores in the wood to keep moisture from penetrating, adding life to siding and deterring cupping, splitting and shrinking. The finish helps conceal unpredictable leaching of tannic acid, cedar's natural preservative and insect protection (but no finish can guarantee total control of extractive bleeding). Stains protect the cedar without hiding the natural grain and color variations, and provide long-lasting colors.

Cedar Accepts Paint Well

Cedar Valley panels can be satisfactorily painted, again using oil-based products, but the heavy pigmentation tends to hide the shingle's natural texture and colors. Where painting is required, cedar is one of the more paintable wood species.

Natural Color Difficult to Maintain

Cedar Valley does not recommend use of clear sealers to protect the natural colors of cedar because of the unpredictability of extractive staining (which sealers will not conceal) and of the need for frequent re-coating, which would be required at least yearly, more often when the siding is exposed to extremes of sun, wind, rain and/or salt air.

An exception could be for commercial applications where a regular maintenance program makes it practical and economical to retain the natural color by using frequent coats of a commercially available clear coating, but it does have a tendency to impart an orange cast to the shingles.

Naturally Weathered Cedar

If the intent is to achieve the silvery color often associated with weathered cedar, Cedar Valley recommends use of a stain which anticipates the desired shade, such as light gray or driftwood color. Left untreated, cedar weathers unevenly and extractive stains can mar the effect in the short term.

CALL OR FAX IF YOU HAVE FINISHING QUESTIONS: PHONE 800-521-9523 OR FAX 831-636-9035

Pre-staining is Often Good Alternative

While Cedar Valley does not offer pre-staining service, it is one of the more popular options and often recommended, especially when large quantities of panels are involved. Commercial pre-staining can offer significant savings in labor and generally insures a more professional result. It can be done through many competent local pre-staining firms. Ask your local machine stainer about warranties offered by the stain manufacturers. Pre-staining can be done on site with brush, roller, spray or flooding methods, making certain the stain reaches into all of the keyways (spaces between shingles) and is spread evenly over the surface. Excess stain must be removed (see below).

CAUTION: If water-based stains are used, it is essential to remove all excess stain within several minutes. Puddling in the keyways allows water in some stains to pull extractives to the surface of the cedar, resulting in discolored shingle surfaces. Water-based stains vary in their chemical formulae and in how they perform on cedar siding. When selecting water-based stains, factory finishing is strongly recommended! If you choose to use water-based stains in the field, immediately remove excess stain by back-brushing, pneumatic pressure or other means, and stack panels on edge so any excess stain runs off the panels are allowed to dry thoroughly!

Acclimatizing Shingles Essential

Cedar, like all wood species, absorbs and loses moisture, expanding and contracting with the humidity. Cedar Valley dries shingles to approximately 12-15% moisture content to be compatible with the average 12% existing in most areas of the country. To match local humidity, panels should be covered and left in the open air (not inside closed facilities) for a day or so, in more arid parts of the country 3-5 days. Wait until the shingles fully acclimatize before applying the finish to allow the stain or paint to reach any areas exposed by shrinkage. This avoids call-backs to touch-up or re-paint.

Use Known Brands & Follow Instructions When buying any finish, choose a quality label and read and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Do not dilute or thin the product unless there are specific directions to do so for specific application methods (such as sprayers). Always "box" the cans, which means mix each half empty can with the next to maintain the same pigment density throughout the job.