

how to  
**Paint  
PVC**



(If you want to keep panels white—no need to paint!)

Search the internet and you will find lots of conflicting information about painting PVC. Many people confuse vinyl and PVC and that's part of the problem. Different PVC manufactures have different instructions based on their manufacturing process. And another part of the problem is that no one is distinguishing between "raw" PVC and products made using PVC.

One point in common with all instructions is that use should paint with a Light Reflective Value (LRV) of 55 or greater. White has an LRV of 100. Black has an LRV of 0. Dark colors capture too much heat for PVC and cause greater amounts of expansion and contraction. When purchasing the paint, you can ask for a "vinyl safe" formula, which might reduce the LRV slightly. However, we have successfully broken this rule many times.

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We are typically painting gates or PVC railing panels which are small compared to long runs of soffit trim. The longer the piece, the greater the amount of expansion and contraction which would be aggravated by paint colors with a low LRV.

Raw PVC – or PVC straight from the manufacturer - in general can be painted with a good exterior latex paint. Before painting, always make sure the surface is clean. Don't use solvent based cleaners (such as acetone). Denatured Alcohol works well for cleaning PVC. Make sure the paint is completely dry before re-coating.

If the PVC has been “worked” such that other materials have been applied to the PVC, a primer is required. When filling nail holes or gluing pieces together, one is introducing another material into or on the PVC. Often, the glue residue is invisible but will not allow the paint to bond to the PVC.

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Priming will make sure the paint will adhere to the worked product. Again, make sure the product is clean before priming and paint is completely dry between coats. The best primer we have found for PVC is Sherwin Williams' Extreme Bonding Primer. PVC will hold paint better than wood due to the fact that the PVC is not absorbing and releasing moisture. However, the paint on PVC will take longer to cure.

PVC does not require painting at all. But, in the case of our PVC railing panels, the cut edges expose the interior cells. These cells can hold dirt which is more difficult to clean than the surface. Spraying a bleaching product on the panels usually takes care of this. You will have less of an issue with this on a painted panel as the paint somewhat fills the voids. We have found PVC to be an excellent material for outdoor use.

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Learning the characteristics of any material is key to its successful implementation. Following the rules is always smart, but learning where we can successfully break the rules is so much fun! Here at The Porch Company, we are always experimenting and learning!!

Have questions? email us at [porchstore@porchco.com](mailto:porchstore@porchco.com) or give our office a call at 615-730-8067.



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