



Exterior Preparation Standards

Quick Descriptions of Our Preparation Standards

Level 2 Rental	If this is a rental property, or you really don't care how smooth the surfaces are (you just want loose areas removed by scraping without sanding) choose level 2 preparation .
Level 3 Standard	The most popular choice! If you want areas sanded after they are scraped to make surfaces smoother, but you don't want "over the top" sanding choose level 3 preparation .
Level 4 Upgrade	For those that don't want all the paint stripped back to bare wood, but want very aggressive sanding (beyond what a typical painting contractor will do). If you have been disappointed in the past by the preparation that was done on your house, you might want to choose level 4 preparation .
Level 5 Strip	This is for clients that want all previous paint removed to start for scratch. This can be EXTREMELY expensive if this is done on the entire house, but may make sense for isolated high-visibility areas that you want to look <i>near</i> brand new.

*Note: Detailed descriptions of these standards on the 2nd page.

The Theory Behind the Standards

We have been surveying our clients for over 15 years at CertaPro Painters. The goal is to refine our service every year so that our customers have an exceptional experience and would enthusiastically refer Certa Pro to their friends. Twelve years ago we realized that **our biggest complaint from our clients** (roughly 5%) was that they were not satisfied with the preparation that was done at their house.

As we asked more and more questions, we realized **that different clients have a different expectation of what constitutes a "good" preparation job**. Some felt that a "good" job was making sure there was no peeling paint (just scraping - our **level 2**) others felt that since they hired a professional painter that all paint would be stripped (our **level 5**). Most fell somewhere in the middle (our **level 3** and **level 4**). Please take the time to read the descriptions below to determine what **YOUR expectations are** so we can deliver an exceptional customer experience!



LEVEL 2: BASIC PREPARATION

This is the bare minimum preparation that needs to be done for the paint job to last 2-5 years with 1 coat. This level is recommended only if aesthetics are not critical, or you don't need the job to last as long (still guaranteed for 2 years). Examples: outbuildings, rentals etc.

- 1. Wash all dirty areas with a detergent.** This kills mildew and removes the dirt on the surface. Washing is done with a power washer, by hand, or a combination of the two - whichever is more appropriate for your house.
- 2. Caulk cracks that have been caulked previously.** Areas that are typically caulked: around window frames, door frames etc. This includes filling in where the caulk is missing or cracked (not including hairline cracks), it does not include removing and replacing caulk unless specified.
- 3. Re-putty where previous putty is missing or loose.** Putty is the product that holds the glass in the window and keeps drafts from cooling your house in the winter. Level 2 preparation does not include filling hairline cracks in the putty.
- 4. Scrape loose paint.** Loose paint must be removed with a scraper until a firm edge is reached. Sanding is not included in this level.
- 5. Prime bare wood with quality primer.** All bare wood needs to be sealed and protected.

LEVEL 3: STANDARD RESIDENTIAL

Level 3 is the standard level of preparation for residential homes.

Level 3 preparation includes everything in level 2 above, but also includes Sanding to all rough edges. We use a combination of power sanders (disk sanders, belt sanders) and/or hand sanding with 50 grit sandpaper. This does not leave the surface completely smooth, but makes the edges less apparent. Be aware that we spend more time with the sanding of 1st floor areas and high profile sections than we do with 2nd and 3rd floor areas.

LEVEL 4: UPGRADE RESIDENTIAL

Level 4 is a step up from level 3 without going as far as total paint removal. This level can be performed on the entire house if you want a smoother "look", or just on high visibility areas of house.

- 1. Heavy and light sanding to rough edges.** We 1st go over rough areas with heavy grit paper and heavy duty sanders as in level 3 preparation. Then we re-sand these areas with a lighter grit paper (80 - 100 grit) and vibrating or orbital sanders (considered to be "finishing sanders"). This makes for a much smoother surface.
- 2. Fill hairline cracks in putty work with caulk.** This makes the putty work much "cleaner" and more aesthetically pleasing.
- 3. Remove and replace caulk that is rough.** This makes the edges of the trim much cleaner.

LEVEL 5: COMPLETE PAINT REMOVAL

This includes full paint removal and starting from scratch. This is recommended only in high visibility areas since it is very expensive. This level is most often applied to front doors, garage doors, door frames and window sills.

This level includes everything in level 4 plus:

- 1. Total removal of paint to bare wood.** Usually a propane torch is used, although a chemical stripper is used in certain instances.
- 2. Sand entire surface until smooth.** Similar to techniques used in level 4 preparation.
- 3. Fill all holes and cracks with wood filler.**
- 4. Re-caulk all seams.** Propane torch tends to burn all caulk so it must be completely re-caulked.
- 5. Prime entire surface with high quality primer.**
- 6. Very light sand before finish coat is applied.** Primer raises the grain in the wood, so the surface should be re-sanded.