



FREE WISCONSIN HOMEOWNER RESOURCE

THE WISCONSIN HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO HIRING A PAINTER

12 practical questions to protect your home, compare estimates and choose with confidence.

LOCAL GUIDANCE. REAL PROJECTS. CLEARER DECISIONS.

Serving Waukesha County, Lake Country, Greater Milwaukee and nearby communities.

No deposit | Pay when complete | Written 3-year workmanship warranty



A Better Way to Compare Painting Contractors

Two proposals can look similar while including very different levels of preparation, protection, crew experience, communication and warranty coverage. Use this guide to compare the work behind the number - not just the number at the bottom.

01

ACCOUNTABILITY

Know who owns the outcome and who you call when questions come up.

05

CREW

Ask who will be inside or around your home and how the work is supervised.

02

SCOPE

Make sure every surface, repair, coat and exclusion is written down.

06

TIMING

Discuss access, weather, start windows, completion needs and daily communication.

03

PREPARATION

Understand the cleaning, scraping, sanding, caulking, patching and priming plan.

07

PAYMENT + WARRANTY

Read the payment schedule and workmanship warranty before approving the project.

04

PROTECTION

Confirm how floors, furniture, landscaping, windows and nearby finishes will be protected.

THE GOAL

Choose the painter whose written plan gives you the most confidence - not simply the lowest opening price.

Who Will Actually Be Working on Your Home?



ASK BEFORE YOU APPROVE

The company name matters. The people, standards and supervision behind it matter more.

A professional estimate should make it easy to understand who will be assigned, how the crew is selected, what standards they follow and who has authority to resolve a concern.

- ☒ Are the painters experienced with your type of home and surface?
- ☒ Does the company use employees, subcontractors or a mix - and who supervises them?
- ☒ Who is your day-to-day contact once the work begins?
- ☒ How are scope changes and quality concerns documented?
- ☒ Can the company confirm current insurance coverage?
- ☒ What standards cover arrival, cleanliness, conduct and daily cleanup?

ACCOUNTABILITY SHOULD BE VISIBLE

A reliable contractor can explain the handoff from estimate to production without vague answers.

1

ESTIMATOR

Reviews surfaces, prep, access, colors, timing and expectations.

2

OFFICE

Coordinates scheduling, questions and the next appropriate step.

3

PROJECT LEAD

Keeps the approved scope visible during production and walkthrough.

What Should a Written Painting Estimate Include?

A useful proposal is specific enough that you can picture what happens before, during and after painting. If a detail matters to you, it belongs in writing.

SCOPE + PREPARATION

- ✓ Rooms, elevations and surfaces included
- ✓ Areas specifically excluded
- ✓ Cleaning, scraping, sanding and repairs
- ✓ Caulking, patching and spot priming
- ✓ Masking and property protection
- ✓ Primer and finish products

PRODUCTION + COMPLETION

- ✓ Planned coats or coverage standard
- ✓ Colors, sheen and change limitations
- ✓ Crew access and homeowner responsibilities
- ✓ Scheduling and weather expectations
- ✓ Cleanup and final walkthrough
- ✓ Payment terms and written warranty



RED FLAG

A one-line total is not a complete scope.

If the estimate does not define preparation, products, surfaces, exclusions and completion expectations, the homeowner is left to fill in the blanks.

Ask for clarity before signing - it is much easier than resolving different assumptions during the project.

Preparation and Protection Are the Real Foundation



Premium paint cannot rescue a poorly prepared surface.

Ask what will be cleaned, repaired, sanded, caulked, primed, masked and protected before finish coats begin.

1

INSPECT

Identify damage, moisture, failed caulk and nearby surfaces.

2

PROTECT

Cover floors, furniture, windows, landscaping and hardscapes.

3

PREPARE

Clean, scrape, sand, patch, caulk and prime as required.

4

APPLY

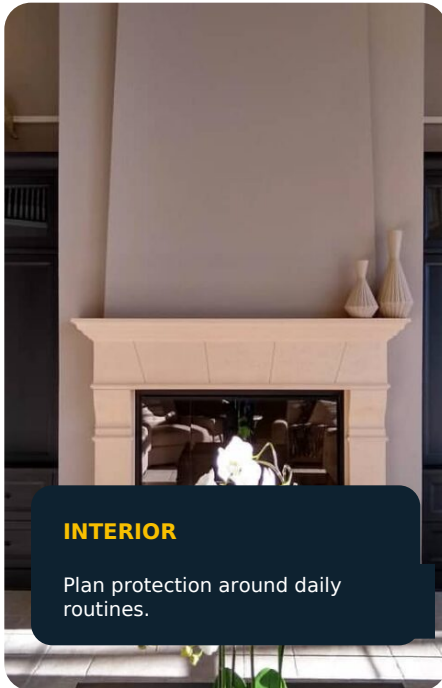
Use the planned coating system with controlled application.

5

CLEAN + REVIEW

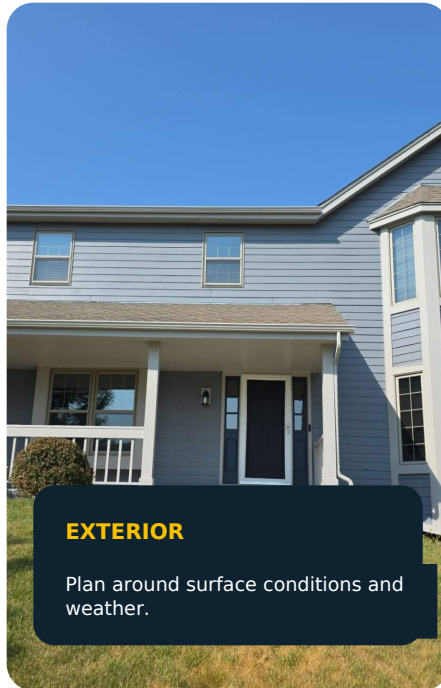
Restore the work area and complete the final walkthrough.

Interior, Exterior and Cabinet Painting



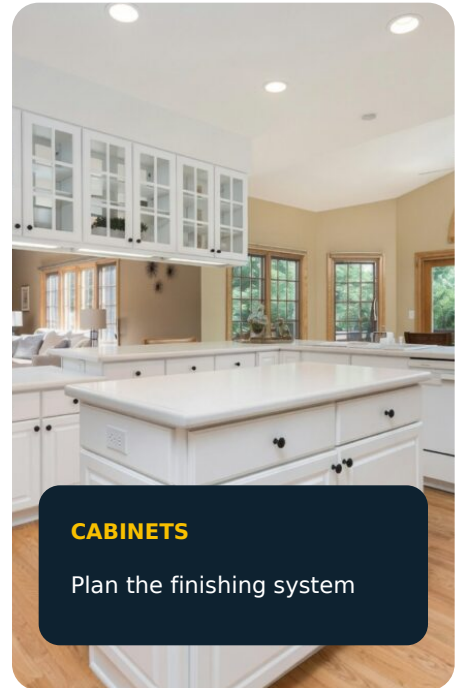
INTERIOR

Plan protection around daily routines.



EXTERIOR

Plan around surface conditions and weather.



CABINETS

Plan the finishing system

ASK ABOUT

- ☒ Floors, furniture and fixtures
- ☒ Repairs, ceilings, trim and doors
- ☒ Room order, access and cleanup

A complete scope names the surfaces and the process - not just the room or service.

ASK ABOUT

- ☒ Siding and trim condition
- ☒ Moisture, access and landscaping
- ☒ Primer, coating and cure windows

A complete scope names the surfaces and the process - not just the room or service.

ASK ABOUT

- ☒ Cleaning, sanding and bonding primer
- ☒ Doors, drawers and exposed boxes
- ☒ Drying, curing and reassembly

A complete scope names the surfaces and the process - not just the room or service.

If your project mixes services, ask for alternates so you can prioritize intelligently.

Example: walls only | walls + ceilings | complete room with trim and doors

Compare Proposals Side by Side

A lower number may reflect less work, different products, a smaller protection plan or a weaker warranty. Compare the categories below before comparing totals.

COMPARE	LOWEST-PRICE VIEW	COMPLETE-VALUE VIEW
Preparation	One general line item	Surface-specific prep and repairs
Protection	Assumed or undefined	Floors, furniture, landscaping and adjacent finishes
Products	Brand name only	Primer, finish, sheen and surface compatibility
Coats	Unclear	Defined system or coverage standard
Crew	Not discussed	Experience, supervision and project contact
Timing	Fastest promise	Honest start window, access and weather plan
Payment	Large upfront payment	Terms that match progress and completion
Warranty	Verbal assurance	Written coverage, process and exclusions

THE BETTER QUESTION

Don't ask only, 'Why does this proposal cost more?'
Ask, 'What work, protection and accountability are different?'

Plan Exterior Painting for Wisconsin



Exterior durability depends on the system - not a single paint name.

Wisconsin sun, moisture, freeze-thaw cycles and seasonal temperature swings all affect coating performance. A professional recommendation should connect the surface, preparation, primer, topcoat and application window.

SURFACE

Wood, fiber cement, masonry, metal and previously coated surfaces behave differently.

PREPARATION

Cleaning, scraping, sanding, repairs, caulking and priming support adhesion.

EXPOSURE

Sun, shade, moisture, rooflines and landscaping change how an exterior weathers.

TIMING

Temperature, rain, dew and cure windows can affect when work should proceed.

MAINTENANCE

Prompt attention to failed caulk, moisture and damage can extend finish life.

EXPECTATIONS

No honest contractor can promise one universal lifespan for every home.

Payment, Warranty and Lead-Safe Planning

\$0

NO DEPOSIT

Empire does not require a deposit before work begins. Payment is due when the agreed work is complete and reviewed.

3

YEAR WARRANTY

Qualifying residential projects include a written 3-year workmanship warranty with project-specific terms.

WI

LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

An established Delafield-based team remains available before, during and after the project.

WHAT A WRITTEN WARRANTY SHOULD ANSWER

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ What is covered? | ☐ How long is it covered? |
| ☐ What is excluded? | ☐ Who handles a concern? |
| ☐ How is the issue evaluated? | ☐ What records should you keep? |

HOMES BUILT BEFORE 1978

If your home was built before 1978 and painted surfaces will be disturbed, ask whether Wisconsin's Lead-Safe Renovation Rule applies. Verify that both the renovator and company hold the required certifications. Learn more: dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/hire-a-contractor.htm

12 Questions to Ask Any Painting Contractor

1

Can you confirm current insurance coverage?

7

How will my home and property be protected?

2

Who will be working on my home?

8

How will access, weather and timing be handled?

3

How are crews selected and supervised?

9

Who is my contact after the project begins?

4

What preparation and repairs are included?

10

When is payment due?

5

What is specifically excluded?

11

Is the workmanship warranty in writing?

6

Which primer, paint or stain system will be used?

12

Can I review recent local projects and customer feedback?

Clear answers now prevent different assumptions later.

A reputable painter should welcome thoughtful questions and document the agreed plan.

Painting Contractor Comparison Scorecard

Use a 1-5 score for each category, then add notes. The strongest fit is the company that gives you the clearest, most complete plan and the greatest confidence in execution.

CATEGORY	PAINTER 1	PAINTER 2	PAINTER 3
Written scope			
Preparation plan			
Property protection			
Products + coating system			
Crew experience			
Supervision + communication			
Schedule realism			
Payment terms			
Written warranty			
Local work + reviews			
TOTAL / 50			

NOTES / NON-NEGOTIABLES

WHY HOMEOWNERS CHOOSE EMPIRE

A CLEAR PLAN. REAL LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

Serving Southeast Wisconsin since 2003 with careful preparation, clear communication and workmanship backed in writing.

2003

Serving local homeowners since

280+

Customer reviews across the web

\$0

No deposit required before work begins

3-YEAR

Written workmanship warranty on qualifying projects

READY FOR A CLEAR WRITTEN ESTIMATE?

**Choose a time online or call the local Empire team.
(262) 303-6472**

24 Enterprise Road, Unit D | Delafield, WI 53018
empirepaintingestimate.com

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE ESTIMATE



SCAN TO SCHEDULE