

Question: I recently painted my garage door and it looked great for the first few weeks. Now the new paint is peeling off and I suspect that the original paint that was on the door was oil based and I have painted it with latex (water based) paint. I would like to stick with latex paint. What can I do to correct the problem? Elly Vandenburg, Chelsea

Answer: What you have done is not uncommon, so do not feel alone in your mistake. To start, the new latex paint will have to be removed. That can be done by using a paint removal product available at your local paint store, that will break down the latex paint and allow you to scrape it off. Then the entire door will have to be sanded, etched and cleaned using paint thinners. After the door is thoroughly dry, you can apply a coat of 100% acrylic latex primer specifically designed to allow you to paint latex based paints over oil based paints. Once the primer is dry, you can apply the top coat of semi gloss exterior latex paint. Using top quality products is always recommended for a longer life, remember, you get what you pay for.

There is a very simple test to determine if your current paint is oil (alkyd) or water (latex) based. Take a small amount of nail polish remover on a paper towel and rub it on the painted surface. If the paint is latex, it will roll off and break down quite easily with a little bit of pressure. If the paint is oil based, the paint will break down marginally, but it will become milky in texture. Don't forget that older oil based paints contain lead and caution should be taken in sanding these old paints, use a mask. Exterior painting can be done as long as the overnight temperature does not go below 7 degrees celcius. If it gets cooler than that, the paint will not dry properly and you will have problems in years to come.

Peter Weeks has been a Chelsea resident for 15 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing residential home inspections for about one year. He is an associate member of OAHI (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB. **He is a Qualified and Fully Insured Inspector.** Forward your question to , Peter at pwhi@sympatico.ca or by phone at 290.3697.