



Thinking About Painting Your Home?

Tommy and Alicia Lewis, owners of GTL Construction, offer some good advice.

Q: We currently have flat paint on all of our walls. We hate it. Every time anything touches the wall, it leaves a mark we cannot get out no matter how hard we scrub! What brand and sheen of paint do you recommend? Does a paint exist that is washable?

TOMMY: I love this question. We get it a lot! Flat paint on the walls is the worst. Most of the time flat paint is used by builders or sellers who want the cheapest paint. They don't care about the longevity of the paint because they won't be living there. Looks good with a quick glance, so who cares, right? Wrong. The person who lives there will care. We use ultra premium velvet sheen by Dunn-Edwards on our clients' walls. Not only is it a beautiful sheen but it is washable! Our children have marked up the walls with pen and we can dampen a cloth and wipe it off easily. This is a perfect paint for high traffic areas and for those who have pets. It is available in a variety of colors as well.

Q: I have heard so many horror stories about bad painters. How can I make sure to hire someone who is reliable and will do a good job?

ALICIA: Yes, sadly there are more bad painters than good. First you want to check to see if their business is licensed. You will want to obtain their license number and then look it up on the contractors licensing board website, www.cslb.ca.gov/. This site will show not only if they are licensed, but if they have workers comp and are bonded. It will also list any complaints against them.

Another good option is to look at websites that have a rating system. Looking on Better Business Bureau or sites like Angie's List is a very smart way to go. On Angie's List, members write about their

experiences with a contractor. They rate them from how fair they felt their price was to how the actual experience was. They also will let the interested future client know if they would recommend using this painting contractor again.

Most importantly, make sure that the painter that you choose is licensed, bonded, and has a worker's compensation policy. Yes, you can find a cheaper unlicensed painter on Craigslist. But remember that hiring an unlicensed painter is a huge risk. What if someone falls off the ladder at your house? What if they don't finish and take off after collecting a deposit? How would you go after them?

Lastly, what if someone breaks something or steals an item? Can you go after their bond? Not if they don't have one. Things to think about!

Note: In California, a contractor can only ask for 10 percent of the job or \$1000 maximum before work begins.

Q: I am having problems picking out colors. The color swatch samples are just not good enough. Do you have any recommendations?

TOMMY: Yes! Dunn-Edwards has small samples that you can purchase very inexpensively. We recommend buying a few of your favorite colors and applying small samples on the wall. This is much more accurate than using a color chip. You can see how it looks during different times of the day and see exactly what the color will look like. It

breaks my heart when a client does not listen to this advice and ends up hating their color choice.

No one wants to pay to repaint their house. It makes much more sense to test colors out and make sure that you love it. It is better to reschedule the job then to rush a color choice.

Q: I am really concerned with the environment. Also, I suffer from allergies. Do you have a low VOC paint that you can recommend?

ALICIA: YES! How about I tell you about a paint that is better than a low VOC paint! What do you think about using ZERO VOC paint? Dunn Edwards recently has launched a new product that is called Everest. It is an ultra premium paint that is low odor and zero VOC. It also comes in the velvet sheen. It's washable, high durability and good for the environment and your breathing issues.

Q: What should we do to prep our house for before a paint job?

TOMMY: That is a great question. We always recommend to our clients to remove things off of the walls. It is especially helpful to move knick-knacks and especially fragile items. Remember, "clutter" is a painter's worst nightmare. Painters will be walking around with ladders and it is better to be safe than sorry. We usually tell our customers to move what they can away from the walls. We will move the really big stuff but anything you can do to help things get ready is fantastic.

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