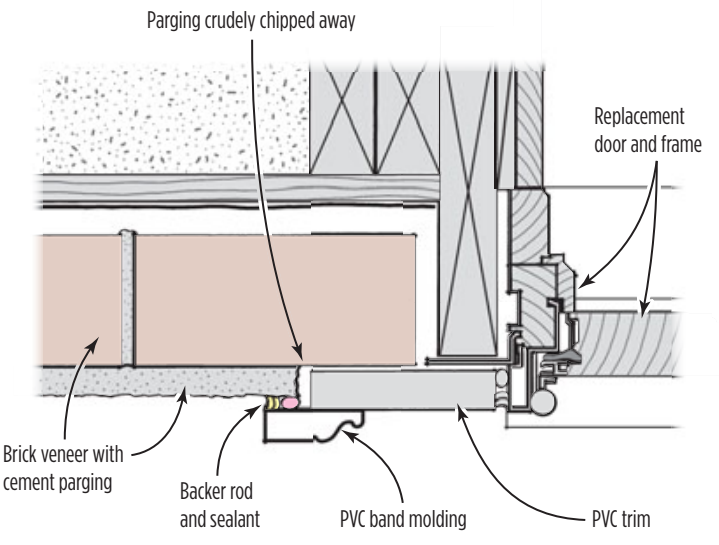
Q&A

Q. Fixing a Botched Trim Job

A homeowner has asked me how to repair what looks to me like a botched job, where new entry doors were installed in a brick home covered with stucco or some kind of cement parging. The home is in New Jersey and dates to 1905. The stucco was crudely chipped away, leaving ½-inch gaps between the new solid plastic trim and the wall surface (see photo). The stucco has a textured surface that would be hard to match. What's the best way to fix this?

A. *Steve Thomas, who has worked for over 20 years in the stucco and masonry industry in Columbus, Ohio, responds:* One possibility might be to try patching with nonshrink grout — but as you note, matching the rough texture would be hard, and getting a color match would be even harder. I would use a simpler approach: Replace the new trim with a wider, thicker trim, or add a band molding around the outside edge to cover the gap (see illustration, below). If the original PVC trim has been glued in place, the band molding might be easier to install, and if chosen well, it could enhance the appearance of the entryway. Use a foam backer rod and a high-quality sealant to finish the job.



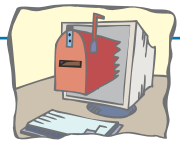
Q. Can You Swap Lithium Ion for Nicad Batteries?

I recently purchased a DeWalt 18-volt cordless tool with lithium-ion batteries and noticed that the new batteries also fit my old DeWalt tools. Is it okay to use lithium-ion batteries in tools that came with nickel-cadmium (nicad) batteries?

A. *Senior editor David Frane responds:* The motor can't distinguish between power from a nicad battery and power from a lithium-ion battery. And because cordless tools are designed so they won't accept incompatible (wrong-voltage) battery packs, you're safe using any battery pack from the same manufacturer that fits the tool.

The earliest lithium-ion batteries were not backward-compatible with nicad battery tools, but that's changed over time. Three of the major tool companies — DeWalt, Hitachi, and Ridgid — now make 18-volt batteries that are both forward- and backward-compatible. Makita and Milwaukee 18-volt batteries, on the other hand, are not forward- and backward-compatible. When Makita began making lithium-ion batteries, it changed from a post-mount to a slide-mount design, which means that its lithium-ion packs do not fit earlier tools. Milwaukee had already adopted the slide mount for its nicad tools, but its lithium-ion slide mount has a different shape. DeWalt and Hitachi stayed with post-style mounts when they went to lithium-ion cells, while Ridgid uses the same slide mount for both types of 18-volt batteries.

Most chargers are also backward-compatible with older batteries, provided they have the same kind of mount. Due to advances in battery circuitry, however, chargers are not forward-compatible; the charger that came with a nicad tool will not work with lithium-ion batteries.



GOT A QUESTION?
Send it to Q&A, *JLC*, 186 Allen Brook Lane, Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com.