EXTERIORS
ENGINEERED WOOD SIDING

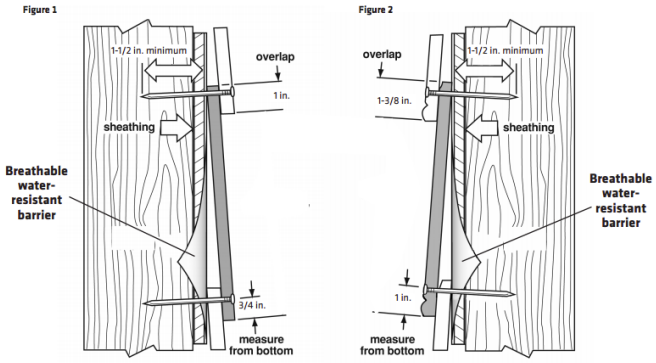
As lumber quality has worsened over the years, manufacturers have developed siding made from synthetic, composite, or engineered materials. Though durable, they also tend to be less tolerant of installation errors. Each siding product has a unique set of installation guidelines that the installer must follow to avoid failure.

The proprietary nature of these products means it would be impractical to cover all the nuances here. However there are some general techniques and best practices that should apply to all products.

FASTENING

Fasteners are critical to the longevity of any siding job. Cheap nails often rust prematurely, leaving unsightly streaks or rusting away completely. For a quality installation:

- Always use nails, not staples.
- When blind nailing, use double-hot-dipped galvanized ring-shank nails.
- For exposed fasteners, use stainless-steel ring-shank nails.
- Nails should be long enough to penetrate the framing by at least 1 1/2 in:



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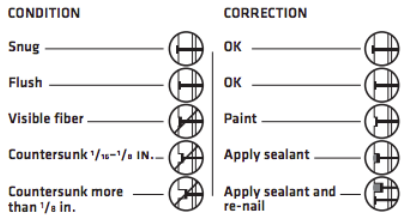
- Nail from the center the ends of the board or from one side to the other. Do not start at the ends and work towards the middle.
- Nails should seat firmly against the siding. DO NOT overdrive nails.



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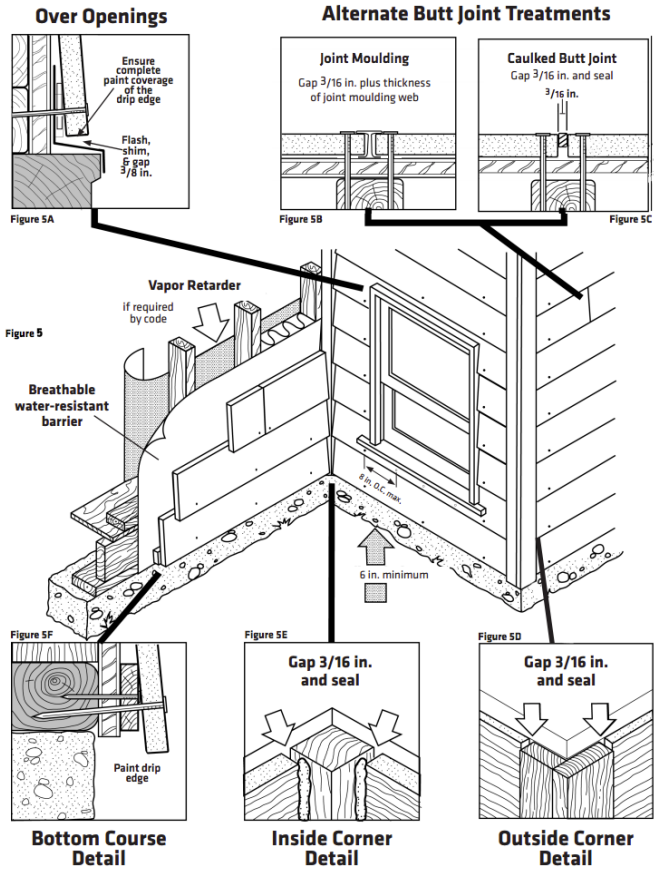
Sue Burnet

A coil siding nailer is a must for fastening denser siding or trim products. Most shoot nails in lengths from 1 1/4 inches to 2 1/2 inches (5d to 8d), and a few can fire 3-inch (10d) nails.

A must-have feature for engineered siding is an adjustable depth of drive on a pneumatic nailer; many nailers have a thumb wheel for this purpose. This practically eliminates the need to leave the work area to adjust your compressor's regulator. Use no-mar rubber or plastic nosepieces to reduce the risk of damaging prefinished material.

INSTALLATION



The stud spacing behind engineered siding should be no more than 16 in. on-center. If codes permit, the siding can be fastened directly to the studs without sheathing.

Make sure that all vertical butt joints fall over stud locations.

Leave a 3/16-inch gap where the siding meets a window, door or vertical trim piece. Caulk the gap with a sealant.

Remember that this is a wood product, so the usual cautions apply.

- Store it off the ground, covered and on a flat surface.
- Use a properly installed weather-resistant barrier behind the siding.
- Prime and paint all cut edges, especially those that will be exposed.
- When using prefinished siding, touch up any damage to the finish before installing.
- There must be a separation between the siding and any masonry or stonework.
- At least six inches of clearance is needed above the finish grade.
- When installing over rigid foam sheathing, use a rain screen: vertical strapping installed at each stud location to provide a solid nailing base and to permit airflow behind the siding.

Installation

As with other horizontal sidings, the first course must be installed over a starter strip. Unlike taper-sawn wood clapboards, however, most engineered siding is the same thickness across the width of each board. So for the starter strips, rip a length of the material into 1 1/2-inch widths.