

# Sealants

Sealants are important in constructing and maintaining watertight and airtight building envelopes. Sealant is an elastic compound used to fill the small crevices, holes, separations, and joints between similar and different building components or materials. They are used to seal joints, terminations of waterproofing membranes, around windows and doors, and at flashings. These openings typically cannot be sealed by any other means to prevent the passage or penetration of wind, rain, water and dust.

There is a distinction between caulking and sealants. Caulking refers to products that are manufactured for interior use, and are often used by painting contractors. They are lower-grade materials that are used as a filler between dissimilar materials.

Sealants are higher-grade materials than interior caulking, usually applied to exterior building components, and exposed to the elements.

*Polyurethane* and *Silicone* sealants are the best choice for components such as stucco, trim, rough concrete and wood siding joints. Polyurethane is paintable, but silicone is not. It is sometimes referred to as a sash and trim sealant. These come in different grades with different extension and compression capabilities and strengths.

*Latex* or *Butyl* sealants are latex or oil-based, less expensive, lower grade (often referred to as “painter’s caulk”), and are more appropriate for non-critical “hole-filling” before painting.

## Important Information

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- **Proper Preparation.** As with repainting, caulking and sealing is only as effective as its preparation. Follow directions for surface preparation as an improperly prepared surface may lead to early loss of adhesion.
- **Expansion Joints.** Do not seal expansion joints as these are used to accommodate natural shifting and settling in your house. Take note of what was or was not caulked or sealed as part of the original construction, or ask GHO Homes Corporation’s customer service department. In addition to expansion and contraction joints, keep areas such as window sill weep holes and exterior wall base screeds clear for movement or drainage.
- **Inspect the Surfaces.** No amount of sealant will correct deteriorated surfaces. If there is already rust or rot present, repair affected areas prior to applying sealant.

- **Follow Instructions.** Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions on the sealant package and for the component itself. Use the appropriate sealant for the application.
- **Inspection and Replacement.** Check sealants regularly. Sealants should be elastic (recover after deformation). Remove and replace sealants that are cracked, split, or incompletely adhered.



**Note:** Use a primer or cleaner where required as recommended by sealant manufacturer when resealing.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Examine for cracking or incompletely adhered caulking and sealant, and repair or reapply as needed. Common areas for this maintenance are around wood trim, light fixtures, and windows.	Annually

### Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Failure to provide the maintenance required will result in water intrusion and possible damage.