



Log Home Maintenance and Preservation

Homestead Log Homes has produced and built over a thousand log homes overseas and in the U.S.A. Our experience can be invaluable when it comes to keeping the logs beautiful and preserved inside and out. Maintenance for a new log home may be different than a stick built home, but it's not difficult. Letting the logs weather naturally like an old fence is not an option. If you want your home to look old, just tint the exterior sealer a grey or dark color. The key is keeping your logs healthy and treated. Instead

of painting, you will clean and preserve. The three threats to a log homes finish are wind, sun and moisture. Wind may not blow your house down, but particles in the wind can be as abrasive as sandpaper. Site selection and the natural landscape of a sheltering hillside or line of trees can provide that windbreak. Log homes on unprotected hilltops are asking for it and will need more maintenance. Homes near the coast need to design in covered porches and large eaves to protect from the prevailing winds.

Too much exposure to the sun, with its U.V. rays will degrade the exterior finish of the logs. Sunlight breaks down the lignin portion of the wood and typically the topside of the logs in the log wall will become sunburned and turn a light grey. Again, design in strategic covered porches and large roof overhangs. A little planning up front will go a long way later on. If you experience sunburning of the log finish, sand away the area to new wood, apply a coat of borate (Board Defense) and three new coats of sealer to match the rest of the finish. Moisture can be the biggest problem for homeowners. Gutters and large overhangs will prevent rain from streaming down the side walls or splashing up against them. Humidity and fungus are a fact of life and thrive in moisture in the air. Before applying the sealer to the exterior, clean them first. Pressure cleaning with a high pressure washer is the easiest method. Start at the top, washing away dirt and sawdust as you work your way down. A simple product for cleaning a new log home is household bleach (one part to four parts water). Pressure wash the logs and then spray on the bleach formula with a fruit tree sprayer while they are wet. Scrub any discolored or dirty areas with a plastic bristled brush and wait 20 to 30 minutes, then rinse, rinse and rinse. Now use the sprayer again and apply a coat of borate and let it soak in. Borates have been used as a safe and effective treatment of wood against wood destroying organisms, pests and fungi control for over 40 years. Follow the directions inside and out and if there is a crystallized residue on the surface after it dries, brush it off.

Now is the time to apply a bead of caulking to the checks and imperfections in the logs. Use your finger or a small trowel to smooth out the caulking and a damp cloth to wipe away the excess. Be aware that the upward facing checks on the exterior can cause the most problems, and need to be filled. Use a caulking that matches the color of the logs and is proven with log home manufacturers. Sashco's Conceal is an easy to use textured caulking that comes in seven natural colors. When choosing an exterior sealer for your log home, pick one that provides U.V. protection from the sun, a moisture barrier against the rain, but allows moisture within the log to escape. Never use an impermeable finish like paint or polyurethane on the exterior, because the wood will rot from the inside. There are dozens of products for log homes. We have our choice down to two. Behr's Log Home Gloss Finish is a high quality



exterior film-forming sealer that is soft and flexible, offers U.V. protection, mildew resistance and is easy to clean up with soap and water. This durable product comes in Clear or Cedar and in five gallon buckets. Sashco's Transformation Stain is an oil-based sealer that has been proven to protect the logs, stabilize the wood, while repelling water, inhibiting mold and harmful U.V. rays. Transformation comes in nine natural colors and five gallon buckets. Both products we stock in our warehouse. Now, carefully tape and paper

all the windows and doors (most big box stores carry a tape machine, tape and paper rolls). Use drop clothes or tarps over the decks and roofing, and cover any plants or shrubs near the home. Use an airless sprayer and plan to spray in the morning when there is no wind, if possible. Follow the manufacturers directions for temperature ranges, dry time between coats and clean-up. On new wood spray on three coats of the sealer and back brush as necessary. Watch the drips and do a professional job. Plan on applying one coat of top coat (clear) the following year, and get on a five to seven year rotation of sealing the exterior logs.



The application of an interior finish is similar to the exterior, except that the product is uniquely different. Interior sealers do not have to breathe, so popular products are furniture grade acrylics or polyurethanes. These non-yellowing finishes should last well over fifty years. Most customers will spend a little extra time sanding and finishing the interior often lightly sanding between coats. Logs will absorb the sheen, so if you want it satin, use semi-gloss and if you want it semi-gloss, use high gloss. Saschco's Symphony Interior Acrylic enhances the natural grain, color and beauty of the logs. Environmentally friendly, non-flammable and low toxicity make it a popular product available in one or five gallon buckets.

