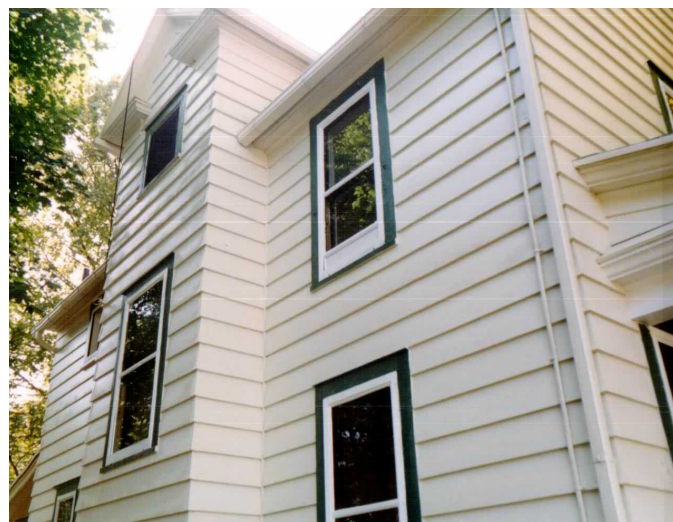
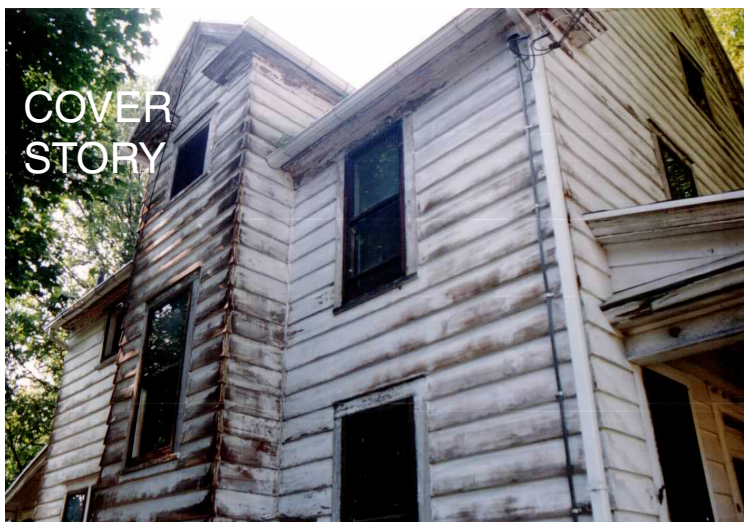


by Benjamin Margalit/Margalit Studio

With 25 years in the business, Roger Begue's *Ohio Painting and Pressure Wash* has painted over 5,000 homes in Northeast Ohio. Here, Mimi reveals Roger's top 20 questions you should always ask a home improvement contractor—especially a painter. See page 5.





Proper preparation is essential to a high-quality paint job, Roger says.

# Twenty Questions

What most painting contractors don't want you to ask.

by MimiVanderhaven

This spring, thousands of area homeowners will have the exterior of their homes painted. Some will attempt to do it themselves. Others will ask friends and neighbors if they “know anybody good.” Still others will search classified ads, yard signs and the internet for a name and a phone number.

Well, here's a number you should certainly have: 9-1-1. Dial it as you go tumbling from your stepladder Humpty-Dumpty-style into the hedge after trying to reach the top window with your paintbrush.

And here's another number: 330-253-4590. That's the number of the Akron Area Better Business Bureau. You'll need this number after the nice man in the pickup truck disappears with your deposit.

Or you can save yourself all those phone



on the cover

by Benjamin Margalit/Margalit Studio

Roger Begue's Ohio Painting and Pressure Wash is one of Ohio's top painting contractors.

calls and dial just one number: 330-730-8344. That's the number of Roger Begue, the former professional baseball pitcher and founder of *Ohio Painting and Pressure Wash*. In the past 25 years, Roger has painted over 5,000 homes—and he'll paint another 150 homes this year.

And in spite of his solid background, professional reputation and crisp button-down Oxford, Roger is genuinely—affordable.

“Customers are often surprised at how affordable our estimates are,” Roger explains, “especially after receiving our professional presentation and finding out everything we do to get the job done right.”

Because Roger's company specializes in residential exterior painting, he has developed various systems that allow his crews to be fast, efficient and professional. The result is quality work at a competitive price.

“A proper, long-lasting paint job requires a lot of prep work,” Roger insists. “Getting ready to paint is the most important part of the job. That's why we give our clients a spec sheet so they will see everything we do when we paint their house.”

Here's a summary of what you'll find on that spec sheet:

- Pressure wash the entire house to clean the siding of chalk, mildew, dirt and pollution using a biodegradable cleaner that is harmless to plants, children and pets;
- Remove all shutters and clean behind them;
- Hand scrape and clean all loose paint from wood surfaces and prime all exposed wood;
- Caulk all doors, windows and open gaps on surfaces to be painted using a 35-year acrylic siliconized caulk;
- Mask off all fixtures, doors, windows, foundation and roofing, and cover all plants, trees, grass, etc.

- Apply TWO coats of high-quality Sherwin Williams paint to a thickness adequate to assure smooth solid coverage.

**“No homeowner should ever travel beyond the third step of a ladder.”**

—Mimi

And after all this, Roger's team removes all masking, cleans and landscapes the work areas, does any necessary touch-ups, then applies two coats of Sherwin-Williams paint to your shutters and re-installs them to their original position.

“Our customers choose us because we do a good job and we keep our promises,” Roger adds. “We finish the job on time and we offer a solid warranty.”

Make that a 15-year warranty.

“Ohio Painting and Pressure Wash, Inc. warrants the application of the finish coat of paint for a period of fifteen years from the date the final finish coat is applied,” reads Roger's warranty certificate—which you and he both sign.

“The warranty is important because it states that no surface preparation or final coating defects will cause your paint to lift, crack or blister,” Roger explains. “In fact, paint should never peel within the first 15 years. If it does, then something went wrong.”

By the way, discerning whether a painting contractor offers a warranty is critical to your selection process. Roger suggests that you not only ask the question, but ask to see a copy as well. In fact, after 25 years in business, Roger has developed a list of 20 questions you should ask any contractor, especially a painter (see sidebar this page).

see TWENTY QUESTIONS, page 6

## The Top 20 Questions You Should Always Ask Any Home Improvement Contractor—Before the Work Begins

By Roger Begue

How long have you been in business? Can you produce references dating back that long?

What type of painting (or service) have you done in the past? Is it specific to what my job entails?

Can you show me your certificate of insurance? Do you have at least one million dollars in coverage?

Are you covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance? (Ask to see it, paying specific attention to the policy period).

Are you in good standing with the Better Business Bureau?

How many workers will be on my job?

How long will it take to complete my job?

How old are the employees? Are they all adults?

Do you require deposits prior to starting? (At Ohio Painting and Pressure Wash, we only want full payment at completion and satisfaction by the customer. However, if the cost of the materials is a substantial percentage of the service, this request may be reasonable. This is not the case with painting.)

Will there be vehicles at my property and how many? Where will they need to park?

Will we have to leave during the job or can we come and go?

Will there need to be any preparations required by us prior to the job?

Will there be any clean up required by us at the end of the job?

Do you offer a warranty? (Ask to see specifics and the number of years.)

Is the warranty pro-rated? (Our warranty is non-pro-rated and transferable)

Ask if the warranty has ever had to be used.

Who is the owner of the company? Is there a partner? Are you incorporated?

Is the company a franchise or is it privately owned?

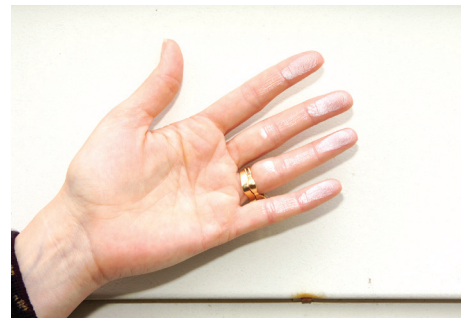
Can you produce references for your company name dating back to the start of your company?

Are there any past or present lawsuits or judgments against your company?

“Many homeowners ask the right questions, but they don’t insist on a solid answer,” Roger explains. “An answer like ‘Oh, sure’ is not enough. Insist on specifics.”

Although Ohio Painting and Pressure Wash performs all kinds of exterior painting, Roger and his team specialize in washing and spraying techniques specifically developed for aluminum and vinyl siding. “No one can paint aluminum siding better, faster and more affordably than we can,” Roger insists. “And although some people think you don’t have to paint vinyl, it’s often a good idea to do so, especially if you don’t like the current color or if it has faded.”

According to Roger, paint breaks down over time and “dies.” And when your paint fails, it is no longer protecting your house as well as it should. Paint often converts to “chalk,” which you can actually wipe off with your fingers. “Pressure washing is



**Paint can break down and “die,” leaving a chalky residue. It should be removed by pressure washing before painting begins.**

so important because it removes chalk and other debris,” Roger instructs. “If you paint over chalk you’re asking for trouble.”

**“Customers are often surprised at how affordable our estimates are.”**

**—Roger Begue**

And because of Roger’s expertise with pressure washing, he offers other services like house washing, deck cleaning and staining, driveway and sidewalk cleaning, plus cleaning and staining or painting cedar siding, railroad ties, stucco, asbestos siding or masonite.

Now, take Mimi’s advice, darling. No homeowner should ever travel beyond the third step of a ladder—especially toting a paintbrush and a can of paint. Getting more than three feet off the ground can easily result in serious injury and a lifetime of needless suffering.

Of course, inviting an uninsured “guy in a truck” onto your property is no better. His injuries can quickly become your responsibility.

Make it easy on yourself.

Call Roger.

*For more information about Ohio Painting and Pressure Wash, Inc. call 330-730-8344. Or you may also e-mail Roger at [roger@OPPW.com](mailto:roger@OPPW.com) or visit his website at [www.OPPW.com](http://www.OPPW.com).*