

## **Home Tips Everyone Can Use**

### **By Lou Prinzi, CRI/RPI**

**Question:** Can I use a pressure washer to clean the aluminum siding on my house?

**Answer:** You can use a pressure or power washer to clean aluminum, wood or vinyl siding but if done incorrectly, you can damage your home, landscaping or worse, yourself!

If you use too much water pressure or spray at too steep of an upward angle, water can be forced behind the siding where it can cause water damage and mildew. Too much pressure can crack the siding, knock it loose, or completely blow it off the house. Removing oxidation can leave unsightly wand marks on the siding as well.

Allowing cleaning solutions to dry on the house or using the wrong type of cleaner can cause streaks on the siding. If handled improperly, chemical cleaners can also damage your property and cause severe injury to you or others. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and be sure to wear proper protective gear like gloves, safety glasses, and a respirator

Using a pressure washer from a ladder is very dangerous and should be left to a professional. Serious injury and even death can occur. Pulling the trigger of the spray gun almost always causes the wand to kick back and could easily knock you off the ladder.

The main thing to remember when using a pressure washer is that they typically deliver between 800 and 2500 pounds of pressure per square inch (psi). People have removed the paint finish from their vehicle, accidentally removed pieces of siding, cracked windows and caused bodily harm to themselves or others. The key is to start out at a good distance away from the object you're washing, then work your way closer until you get the desired effect. Also, start with wider spray nozzles or settings and move to smaller ones only when you need more power. Smaller nozzles and settings mean more pressure, so it's better to play it safe and start bigger before working your way down.

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