

# Five Factors that Impact Paint Selection for Apartment Complexes



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# Introduction

When an apartment complex is trying to appeal to new residents, appearances are indeed everything! Carpets may be clean and heating systems efficient, but the color and neatness of an apartment building are enough to delight- or scare- a potential resident before they even walk inside for a showing. Paint selection is not as simple as it sounds, however, especially for a large property. The colors need to be well coordinated, uniformly applied and carried out in a cost effective manner.

As the manager responsible for the project, it's important to make sure you get the best paint for the property. Many factors should carry weight in these decisions, including your average weather (both summer and winter), wear and tear and pricing.

There are 5 important considerations managers need to keep in mind when selecting the right paint for their apartment complexes. This eBook will dive deeper into each of these factors to explain their importance and what to remember as you look for contractors and paint for your next painting project.





# Durability

Durability lies at the heart of successful paint selection. There are many different environmental factors that help deteriorate paint. Ultraviolet light, oxygen and water combine on paint's surface over time, breaking it down through a process called light induced oxidation.

How quickly this process occurs depends on the weather conditions in your area and the amount of sun or shade your building is exposed to. Humid areas in the South, such as Florida, tend to deteriorate paint faster than non-humid areas.

The specific components in paint that affect their durability are the binder and the gloss level. A higher gloss level leads to a more durable paint. Typically, the surface of the paint begins to undergo chalking over time due to oxidation. This leads to a change in color that can often appear faded or even dingy.

When considering paint durability in apartment complexes, common areas such as hallways, outside walls and clubhouses are especially in need of a high quality covering. The paint needs to be able to withstand wear and tear from constant exposure to both people and the environment

## Choosing Durable Paint

The most durable paints are those made using colorants containing strong ultraviolet resistance. This will help prevent any color changes from occurring on the surface of the paint. The goal is to avoid surface chalking in order to maintain the original color and quality for as long as possible.

When choosing high-quality paint for your projects, be sure to ask your painter for their suggestions on the correct gloss level. Flat and low gloss paint won't last as long in weather than a higher gloss alternative.





## Low Odor

Painting projects in an apartment complex require a sensitivity towards your residents to prevent potential complaints, as well as to offer the best experience possible to those living in your complex. A major component of that sensitivity when painting is to utilize materials with the least odor possible. High odor paints can create a multitude of problems for you and your residents and can add to health concerns suffered by those in your building. You don't want your tenants dealing with asthma, headaches, or other issues during this process.

"Regular" paint in the past has often contained chemicals that can leave odors lasting for as long as four months after painting work has been completed. Odors are often caused by the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These compounds are released into the air in the form of a breathable gas

VOCs are not only unpleasant to smell, but they may also harbor potentially harmful health effects. These include eye and skin irritation, breathing difficulties to those with respiratory issues, as well as kidney and lung damage over longer periods.

## Low Volatile Organic Compounds Paint

The solution to nasty odors and harmful paint components lies in the use of low Volatile Organic Compound paint. Low-VOC paint has been developed with a healthier and safer painting environment in mind.

This alternative is also better overall for the environment. Low-VOC Paint has the following **positive benefits**:

- **They are nearly odor-free**, which makes the painting process proceed with far more ease. Residents will be minimally inconvenienced during the job while reaping the maximum benefits of the property's new look.
- **They are nearly pollutant-free**, which makes them an excellent choice for the health of residents. In apartment complexes where people are particularly sensitive to paint odor and pollutants, odor-free paint is an excellent choice.
- Low-VOC paint spills are **easier to clean up**. Soap and water will take care of most problems if caught while the paint is still wet.
- Low-VOC paints are easily accessible and can be purchased in many different colors. They also come at a reasonable price.

As a manager, you should be wary of conventional oil-based paints. These are the most toxic of the paints available and are becoming increasingly limited in use. Latex paints may be safer and more common, but many still contain high-VOC levels. Low-VOC paint is the perfect combination of quality and cost-effectiveness.

## The Price

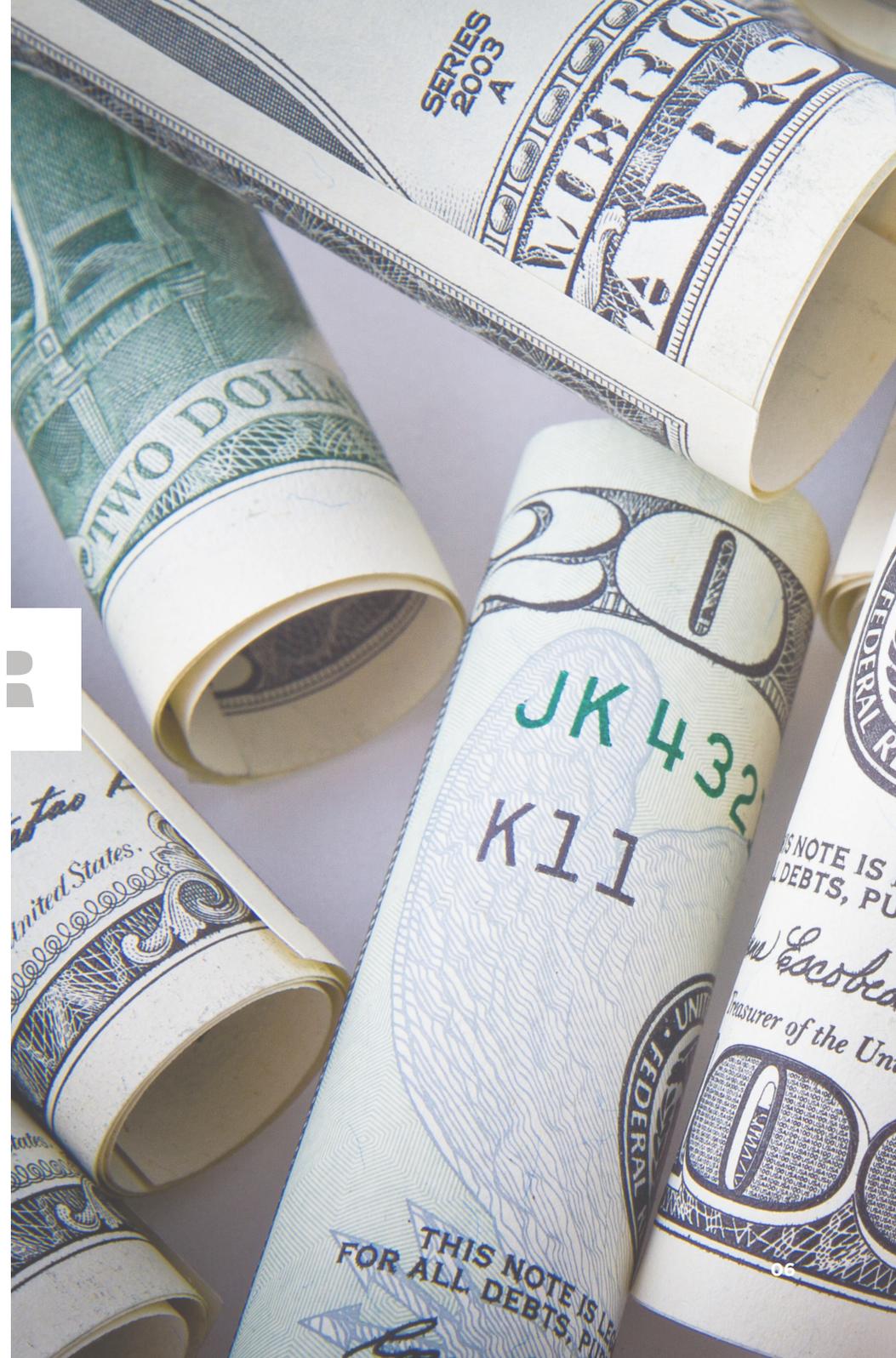
As with any project, getting high-quality paint at the right price is the key focus for any manager. With limited resources available, reaping maximum benefits while incurring the least amount of costs is an important balance to achieve. At the same time, managers should not ignore other factors in favor of lower prices. Purchasing poor quality paint often ends up costing more in the long run, and it is a better option to paint a building once with more expensive materials than twice on a budget.

### When considering the cost of paint, several factors must be considered:

- **Price per gallon:** most paint for both small and large-scale projects is measured by the gallon. Most good quality paint costs \$25-\$40 per gallon. The pricing of the project will partially depend on how much paint will be needed. It is important to work with your painting contractor to get detailed information on the square footage of the apartment complex's exterior, and all the other surfaces that will need to be painted.

When planning your painting project, ask your painter what other equipment is needed to paint your building and how it will affect both your budget and the overall operations of your facility. Does a lift need brought in to paint a taller structure? Will this block parking spaces that need temporarily relocated for your residents? Be sure to get the details necessary to ensure a smooth project.

When selecting paint for your next project, did you know by hiring a professional painter you could actually save money? Painting contractors are not only efficient in their work, but can often get their materials at a wholesale rate, rather than buying a large quantity of product from a local home improvement store like you would need to.





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Pricing goes beyond the actual paint. If windows will need caulking or sealant applied, such services should also be discussed at this time. Wood and siding replacements to the exterior facade should also be assessed and prepared for when looking into prices. Remember, these items might add to your overall project costs, but will save you money in maintenance down the road.

- **The cost of labor:** Your painting project budget should also account for the cost of labor. Be sure to get bids and invite potential painters to your site to price out the project and give you estimates on their timeline. Most painting contractors should be able to give you an a rough idea of just how long their crews will need to complete a project. The contract should clearly specify the scope of work being performed, detailing all costs in advance.

As part of the labor cost, a good painting company will list preparation tasks such as scraping, caulking and pressure washing. Are your painters independently insured? You might feel it's not worth paying more for a painting contractor that carries their own insurance, but in case of accidents to either people or property, this piece of mind is definitely worth a few extra dollars.

- **Type of paint:** The type and quality of paint influences the pricing. For example, flat and high-gloss paint vary in pricing, with high-gloss paint costing an average of 10% more, depending on the brand. The binder that is used in the paint can also influence its cost.

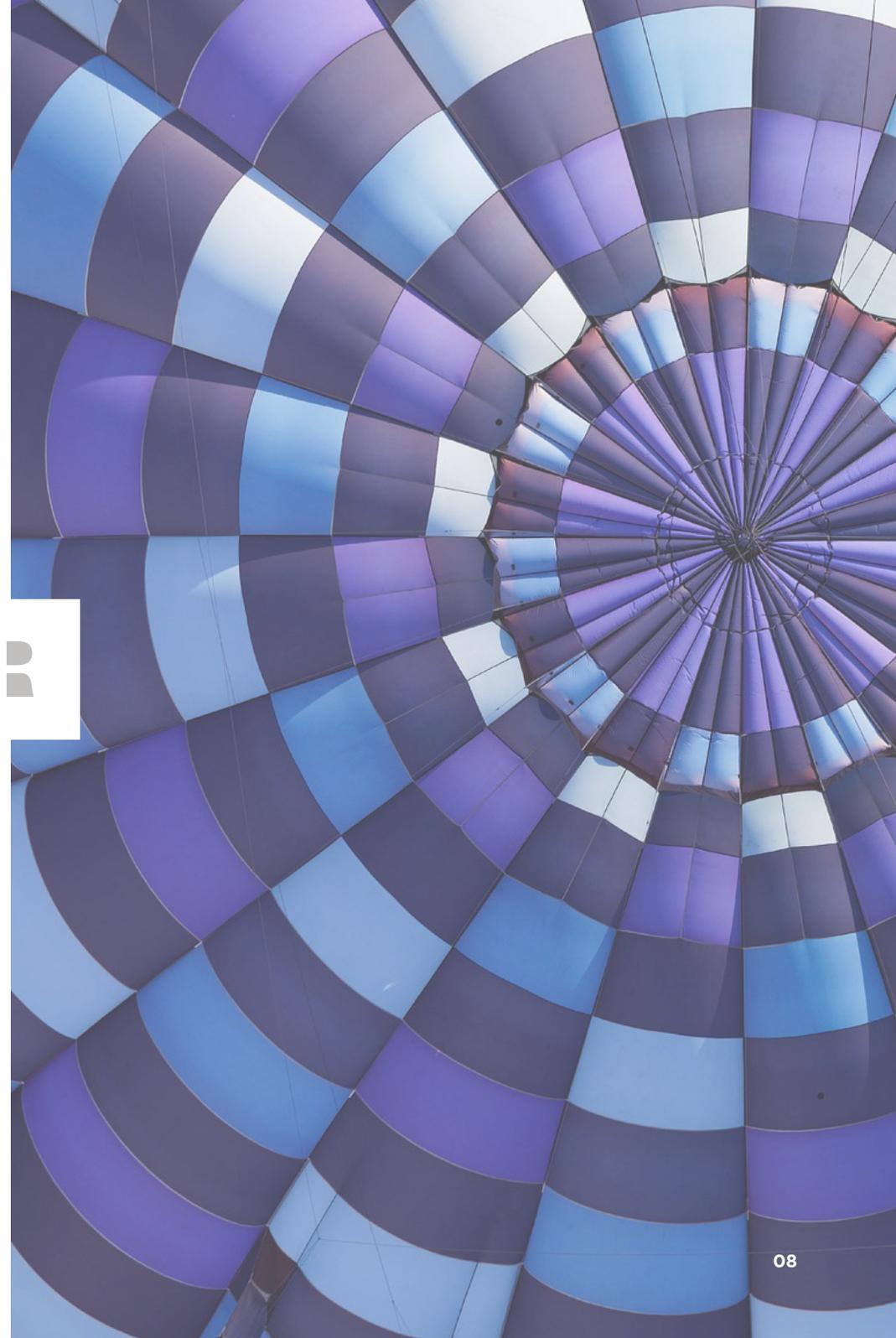
# Coverage

If you've ever painted your own home or apartment, you've definitely dreaded the question "how many coats do I need?" When choosing a professional painter, this question is equally important. Your goal should be to select a paint that needs only one coat if at all possible to allow for your painter to complete their project quicker, saving you money in labor costs! Paint coverage goes hand in hand with square footage.

Typically, a gallon of paint covers between 200-400 square feet, especially if you are hoping to need one application only. Areas such as windows and doors may not need to be included in the square footage calculation, and they can be subtracted from the total number.

When hiring an interior painter, keep your square footage numbers on file.

Because apartment complex units are similar in size, it is easier to get a total estimate of all the surfaces needing work.





## Color Consistency

Have you ever seen a wall that appeared to have slightly differing shades of the same color in different areas? The paint job immediately looks lack luster and gives off a dingy effect to the entire room or building. There are several potential causes of this, but the most common two are flashing and holidays. Flashing is color bleed from a light to dark color or dark to light color due to coverage. Holidays usually occur when the “hooks and crannies” on stucco aren’t completely covered, giving inconsistent look.

Achieving a clean and uniform paint finish on large projects can be much more complicated than simply painting different rooms in your house. Factors such as natural variations in paint quality over large orders can make the units or outside walls of apartment complexes have inconsistent colors.

Manufacturers have taken steps to try and ensure that their paints are as consistent as possible. The use of spectro-photometric assessment within software programs in the production process has been implemented in order to increase the consistency with which paint reflects off of walls and other surfaces. No manufacturing process is perfect, however there are ways to ensure color consistency is maintained throughout an entire painted surface.

### **Purchase from the same Manufacturer at the same time-from the same store when possible**

If you are hiring a painting contractor, this may be a moot point, but remember when considering which bid will win your next painting project, their material purchasing capacity makes a major difference in your final product. The first step towards ensuring color consistency is to select and purchase all of the paint needed for one job from the same manufacturer at the same time. Acquiring all of the needed product, and enough extra to account for touching up later on, at one time enables you to avoid paint color variations that occur during the production process by purchasing paint from the same batch. Be sure to budget for extra when planning your materials as hard to cover surfaces may need extra coats and a paint spill can cause a project to come up short unexpectedly. Although color mixing is computerized by manufacturers, the calibration of machines is still subject to human error. A slight variation in hue can lead to an overall uncoordinated look, thus it makes sense to get your paint all at once from the same location (and pigmented by the same machine).



### **Avoid switching cans or buckets on the same wall**

Another important step to ensure color consistency is to plan for the painting of each unit in such a way that you don't have to switch between paint cans in the middle of a particular wall. On the same wall, the slightest variations in paint will be magnified. Color consistency is much easier to achieve when you use a different can for each surface as the surfaces will receive a different amount of light and reflect it in a unique way, hiding potential issues far easier.

### **Don't milk your cans dry**

Another best practice to follow is to avoid using every last drop of paint from a particular can. You should always leave some paint in order to make one more pass to touch up hidden surfaces and corners that you may have missed during the first run.

### **It is not just about the paint**

While selecting the right paint, it is also important to consider other services that will make your painting job a success. Walls need to be prepared in advance before any paint is applied. Talk to your painter about their preparation practices to ensure any dirt, mildew, or chipping paint from previous work is removed in advance.

Managers preparing for the painting of apartment complexes should consider the condition of outside walls, siding and sidewalks. As these tend to need constant care from weather, wood and siding replacements should be considered for such areas. Exterior walls may need to undergo pressure washing in order to remove debris, and any other wood surfaces (decks, stairs, etc.) may need repair or replacement of sections before they can be safely painted over. Windows in apartment complexes need to be sealed regularly, and caulking may also need to be applied to prevent water leaks. As you select the right paint, and the right painter, you should also consider the condition of other areas in and around your buildings and what work they require rather than just looking at the painting itself.

# Conclusion

Remember that selecting the right paint for your apartment complex involves many different factors. In addition to the quality and price of the paint, managers also need to pay close attention to how the painting job will be carried out, including services that are related to the actual painting process. Paint odor and coverage are critical to the scope of the project, and color coordination ensures an attractive and high quality exterior and interior look that will keep your tenants happy and attract more to your complex!



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