

VANCOUVER PAINT CONTRACTORS

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# Interior Painting

Interior wall, ceiling, and room painting for Metro Vancouver homes, condos, and townhomes including colour selection, sheen choices, and prep work

30 Expert Answers from Paint IQ

[vancouverpaintcontractors.com/construction-brain](https://vancouverpaintcontractors.com/construction-brain)

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## Q1

### How much does it cost to paint a 2-bedroom condo in Vancouver?

For a typical 2-bedroom condo in Metro Vancouver (around 800-1,000 square feet), you can expect to pay between \$2,500 and \$4,500 for a professional interior paint job. That range covers walls and ceilings in all rooms, including the kitchen and bathroom. If your condo has higher ceilings common in newer Yaletown or Mount Pleasant builds, the price can climb toward the upper end due to the extra prep and ladder work involved.

The quote usually includes surface preparation (patching nail holes, light sanding, taping), two coats of quality latex paint, and cleanup. Paint itself typically runs \$50-\$80 per gallon for a good-quality product suited to our damp Vancouver climate - you want something with mildew resistance built in, especially for bathrooms and north-facing rooms that get less natural light.

Many Vancouver condos have strata rules about contractor hours and elevator bookings, so your painter should be experienced working within those restrictions. Ask whether they carry WorkSafeBC coverage and liability insurance, since most strata councils require proof before allowing work to proceed.

Keep in mind that significant colour changes (say, dark charcoal to bright white) may need an extra coat of primer, which adds to the cost. Similarly, if there is smoke damage or heavy wall texture, extra prep work will be required.

A good next step is to get quotes from two or three local painters and ask each one to walk the unit with you so the estimate reflects your actual walls, not just a per-square-foot guess.

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## Q2

### What kind of paint holds up best in a Vancouver bathroom with all the moisture we get?

Bathrooms in Metro Vancouver deal with a double moisture challenge - steam from showers on the inside and our generally humid coastal climate on the outside. The best choice is a 100% acrylic latex paint in a satin or semi-gloss finish. These sheens repel moisture better than flat or eggshell and are much easier to wipe down when condensation builds up.

Look for paint labelled as mildew-resistant or containing antimicrobial additives. Several major brands available at Vancouver paint suppliers offer bathroom-specific formulas designed for high-humidity rooms. This matters more here than in drier parts of Canada because our mild, wet winters mean bathroom moisture takes longer to evaporate.

Proper ventilation is just as important as the paint itself. If your bathroom fan is undersized or venting into the attic rather than outside, even the best paint will eventually develop mould. The BC Building Code requires mechanical ventilation in bathrooms, so make sure your fan meets current standards and actually exhausts to the exterior.

Before painting, prep the walls thoroughly. Any existing mould spots should be treated with a mould-killing primer - painting over active mould just traps it underneath. Sand glossy surfaces lightly so the new paint adheres properly, and use a moisture-blocking primer on drywall that has never been painted.

As a next step, have a painter assess your bathroom ventilation during the quoting process. A good contractor will flag ventilation problems before they start, saving you from premature paint failure down the road.

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Q3

## **We just bought a townhome in Surrey - should we repaint before moving in or after?**

Painting before you move furniture in is almost always the better approach, especially in a Surrey townhome where rooms tend to be on the narrower side. Empty rooms are faster and cheaper to paint because there is nothing to move, cover, or work around. Your painter can finish more efficiently, which usually shaves a day or two off the timeline and saves you money on labour.

With an empty home, the crew can prep and roll entire walls without cutting around furniture or worrying about overspray on your belongings. They can also address the ceilings much more easily - ceiling work is the most disruptive part of an interior paint job, and doing it over bare floors is far less stressful.

If your townhome is a new build from a Surrey or Langley developer, keep in mind that builder-grade paint is typically the cheapest flat finish available. It scuffs easily, marks up within months, and often has poor coverage. Upgrading to a quality eggshell or satin finish on the walls before moving in means you start fresh with durable, washable surfaces.

One practical tip: coordinate your painting schedule with your flooring installer if you are replacing carpet or vinyl. Paint first, floors second. Painters inevitably drip, and it is much easier to protect subfloor or old carpet than brand-new luxury vinyl plank.

Your best next step is to book your painter for the week after possession but before the movers arrive. Most Metro Vancouver painters can turn around a full townhome interior in three to five days.

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Q4

## Is it worth paying more for premium paint or will the cheaper stuff at the hardware store do the job?

In most cases, the premium paint is worth the extra cost, and the difference matters more in Metro Vancouver than in drier climates. Higher-quality paints contain more resin and better pigments, which means better coverage, richer colour, and a tougher finish that resists scuffs and moisture. You often get away with two coats instead of three, which saves labour time.

Cheaper paints tend to have more fillers and less binder, so they do not adhere as well, fade faster, and are harder to clean. In a Vancouver home where window condensation and seasonal dampness are facts of life, bargain paint can start showing wear within a year or two. A quality paint in a kitchen or hallway can look fresh for seven to ten years with basic maintenance.

The price difference is not as dramatic as you might think. A gallon of budget paint runs around \$30-\$40, while a premium gallon costs \$55-\$80. For an average Vancouver living room, you might need two to three gallons, so the material upgrade is roughly \$50-\$100 more per room. Compare that to the labour cost of repainting sooner because the cheap paint failed.

That said, not every surface needs top-shelf paint. A spare bedroom closet interior or a storage room ceiling can be done with mid-range paint without any real downside. Save the premium product for high-traffic areas, kitchens, bathrooms, and any room with moisture exposure.

A helpful next step is to ask your painter which brands they prefer and why. Experienced local painters know which products perform best in our coastal conditions and can recommend the right level for each room.

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Q5

## How long does it take to paint the interior of a 3-bedroom house in the Vancouver area?

A full interior repaint of a typical 3-bedroom home in Metro Vancouver - around 1,400 to 1,800 square feet - usually takes a professional crew of two painters about four to six working days. That includes all the prep work, priming where needed, two coats on walls, ceilings, and trim.

The timeline depends on several factors. If you are making a dramatic colour change (dark to light or vice versa), extra primer coats add time. Older homes in East Vancouver, New Westminster, or North Burnaby often have

layers of old paint, textured walls, or lead paint that needs careful handling and adds to prep. Homes with a lot of trim, crown moulding, or wainscoting take longer because detail work with a brush is slower than rolling open walls.

Vancouver weather can also affect the schedule indirectly. During our rainy months, painters prefer to keep windows closed, which slows drying times and means they may need to wait longer between coats. Good ventilation and a dehumidifier help, but a job that takes four days in July might take five in November.

Most professional painters in the Lower Mainland will provide a timeline in their written quote. Be wary of anyone promising to finish a full house in two days with a two-person crew - that usually means they are cutting corners on prep or applying only one coat.

A good next step is to schedule your quote at least three to four weeks before your preferred start date. Spring and summer are peak season for Vancouver painters, and the best crews book up quickly.

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**Q6**

## **Do I need to prime my walls before repainting or can the painter just go straight to the new colour?**

It depends on the condition of your walls and what you are painting over. If the existing paint is in good shape, the same or similar colour, and there are no stains or repairs, a quality paint with built-in primer is usually sufficient and your painter can apply it directly over the old finish.

However, there are several situations where a separate primer coat is necessary. If you are covering a dark colour with a lighter one, primer prevents the old colour from bleeding through and reduces the number of topcoats needed. Any drywall patches or repairs absolutely need primer - unprimed spackle absorbs paint differently and creates visible blotchy spots called "flashing" that look obvious in Vancouver's natural light, especially in west-facing rooms.

New drywall always needs primer. If you have had any renovations done - a wall moved, a closet added, a patch from plumbing work - those areas need to be primed to match the surrounding surface. Stains from water leaks, smoke, or old marker and crayon require a stain-blocking primer, often shellac-based, to prevent them from seeping through your fresh paint.

In older Metro Vancouver homes, particularly pre-1990 builds, walls sometimes have a chalky or powdery surface from degraded old paint. A bonding primer helps the new paint grip properly in these cases.

Your painter should assess each room during the quoting visit and tell you which areas need primer and which do not. As a next step, point out any known stains, patches, or problem areas during the walkthrough so the estimate

accounts for the right prep work from the start.

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Q7

## What's the going rate for painting a single room in Vancouver right now?

For a standard-sized bedroom in Metro Vancouver (roughly 10 by 12 feet with 8-foot ceilings), most professional painters charge between \$400 and \$800 for walls and ceiling. A larger living room or open-concept main floor area runs \$700 to \$1,500 depending on the square footage, ceiling height, and amount of trim work involved.

Those ranges include surface prep, two coats of paint, and cleanup. Paint is sometimes included in the quote and sometimes billed separately - always clarify this upfront. If the painter supplies the paint, expect a modest markup over retail, which is standard practice.

Several factors push the price toward the higher end. Accent walls in a contrasting colour add complexity. Rooms with lots of windows, built-in shelving, or detailed trim take longer to cut in with a brush. High or vaulted ceilings common in newer Coquitlam and Langley builds require scaffolding or extension equipment and extra labour time.

Be cautious about quotes that seem unusually low. A bedroom quote under \$300 in the current Vancouver market likely means the painter is skipping proper prep, using one thin coat, or not carrying WorkSafeBC coverage and liability insurance. These shortcuts show up quickly as peeling, streaking, or uneven coverage.

Most painters offer better per-room rates when you bundle multiple rooms together, so if you are considering doing more than one room, get a quote for the whole scope rather than room by room.

As a next step, measure your rooms and note any special conditions (dark existing colours, wall damage, high ceilings) before requesting quotes so you can compare estimates on an equal basis.

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Q8

## Our rental condo in Burnaby needs repainting between tenants - any tips for making it last?

Turnover painting for a Burnaby rental condo is all about durability and speed. You want a finish that holds up to tenant wear, cleans easily, and can be done quickly between occupancies.

Choose a satin or eggshell finish for walls - these are washable enough to handle regular cleaning but do not show every roller mark the way semi-gloss does. For trim, doors, and baseboards, semi-gloss is the standard because it resists scuffs and wipes clean with a damp cloth. Stick to neutral colours like warm white, soft grey, or greige. Neutral tones appeal to the broadest range of tenants and make turnover repainting simpler since you are always going light-on-light.

Invest in a quality paint with good coverage. It costs a bit more per gallon but saves significantly over time because scuffs and marks can often be wiped away rather than repainted. Some Vancouver landlords keep a labelled can of the exact colour and finish for each room so touch-ups between tenancies are seamless.

Have your painter do proper prep even on a turnover job. Patching nail holes, sanding rough spots, and cleaning grease off kitchen walls ensures the new paint bonds well. Skipping prep to save a day means the paint fails sooner and you are repainting again at the next turnover.

If your Burnaby strata has noise or work-hour restrictions, let the painter know in advance so they can plan around elevator bookings and quiet hours without delays.

A practical next step is to establish a relationship with one reliable painting crew who knows your unit. They will work faster each time because they already know the layout, strata rules, and your colour preferences.

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Q9

## **I want to paint my living room ceiling but it has that old popcorn texture - what are my options?**

Popcorn ceilings are common in Metro Vancouver homes built from the 1960s through the early 1990s, and you have a few options depending on your budget and how much disruption you can tolerate.

The simplest option is to paint directly over the texture. This works if the popcorn is in good condition with no flaking or water stains. Use a thick-nap roller (18-20mm) and a quality ceiling paint. Do not overwork the roller - popcorn texture can soften when wet and pull away if you press too hard or go back over wet areas. One heavy coat is often better than two thin ones for this reason.

The second option is to scrape the texture off and then paint the smooth ceiling underneath. This is messier and more labour-intensive but gives a clean, modern look. Before scraping, there is an important safety consideration: popcorn texture applied before 1990 in BC may contain asbestos. You should have a sample tested by an accredited lab before anyone disturbs it. Testing costs around \$30-\$50 per sample and takes a few days. If asbestos is found, removal must be done by a certified abatement contractor following WorkSafeBC regulations - this is not a DIY or general painter job.

A third option is to cover the popcorn with new drywall (sometimes called re-sheeting) or with tongue-and-groove planks. This avoids the dust and potential asbestos issue entirely, though it does lower your ceiling height by about half an inch.

As a next step, if your home was built before 1990, arrange asbestos testing before deciding on your approach. This one step determines which options are safely available to you.

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**Q10**

## **We have young kids - how do we pick a paint finish that can handle fingerprints and crayon marks?**

With young children in the house, your paint finish matters as much as the colour. For walls in hallways, playrooms, and any room the kids use regularly, satin finish is your best friend. It has a gentle sheen that resists stains and can be wiped down with a damp cloth and mild soap without damaging the surface. Semi-gloss is even more washable and works well on baseboards, door frames, and chair-rail areas where little hands make the most contact.

Avoid flat and matte finishes in kid-heavy zones. While they look beautiful and hide wall imperfections well, they absorb marks and stains and are very difficult to clean without leaving shiny rub marks. Save flat paint for adult bedrooms and formal spaces the children do not use daily.

The paint quality matters too. Higher-end paints with more resin content form a harder, more stain-resistant film when cured. Some brands offer scrubbable formulas specifically designed for high-traffic family use - ask your local Vancouver paint supplier about these options.

For crayon specifically, a satin or semi-gloss finish lets you remove most crayon marks with a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser or a paste of baking soda and water. On flat paint, crayon often has to be primed over because cleaning damages the finish.

Colour choice helps too. Very light whites show every mark immediately, while soft warm tones, light greys, or greiges are more forgiving between cleanings.

A good next step is to ask your painter to use satin on all walls below four feet (kid-contact height) and your preferred finish above. Some painters can blend the transition so it is virtually invisible, giving you durability where you need it most.

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**Q11**

## **How much does it cost to have a professional paint an accent wall with a bold colour in my Vancouver condo?**

For a single accent wall in a typical Metro Vancouver condo, you can expect to pay between \$250 and \$500 for professional painting, depending on wall size, ceiling height, and the colour chosen. Deep or bold colours like navy, emerald green, or charcoal often require three coats instead of two, which adds labour time and material cost. If your accent wall is a standard 10-by-8-foot bedroom wall, most painters will quote around \$300 to \$350 including primer and two to three coats of premium paint. High-quality paints like Benjamin Moore Aura or Sherwin-Williams

Emerald are popular choices among Vancouver painters for accent walls because they offer excellent colour depth and coverage in fewer coats. Keep in mind that if the existing wall colour is very light and you are going dark, or vice versa, a tinted primer is essential and may add \$50 to \$75 to the job. Many Vancouver painting contractors offer accent wall packages as part of a full-room repaint, which can bring the per-wall cost down. Before committing to a colour, ask your painter for a large brush-out sample on the actual wall so you can see how the colour looks in your specific lighting conditions, especially in north-facing units common in Vancouver where natural light tends to be cooler. As a next step, request quotes from two or three local painters and ask them to specify how many coats they include in their price.

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Q12

## **We have an open-concept main floor in our Burnaby townhouse. How do we choose paint colours that flow well between the kitchen, dining, and living areas?**

Open-concept spaces are incredibly common in Metro Vancouver townhouses and newer builds, and the key to making them feel cohesive is working with a unified colour palette rather than painting every area the same flat colour. Start by choosing a base neutral for the largest wall surfaces — warm greys, soft greiges, or muted whites work beautifully with the natural light that comes through on clear BC days. From there, you can introduce subtle shifts in tone for different zones. For example, the living area might use a slightly warmer shade of your base colour, while the kitchen gets a half-shade lighter version to keep it feeling bright and clean. Using the same colour family ensures the eye moves smoothly through the space without jarring transitions. Where walls do meet at corners or architectural transitions like bulkheads or columns, that natural break point is the ideal place to shift colour. Many Vancouver painters recommend doing a "colour run" — painting large poster-board samples and moving them around the space at different times of day, since our overcast winter light and bright summer light can make the same colour look dramatically different. Avoid using more than three colours in a single open-concept floor to keep things from feeling busy. Matte or eggshell finishes on walls paired with semi-gloss on trim creates subtle visual separation between zones without needing different wall colours. Consider booking a colour consultation with your painting contractor, as many Metro Vancouver painters offer this service for free when you hire them for the project.

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Q13

## What is Venetian plaster and is it worth the cost for a feature wall in my West Vancouver home?

Venetian plaster is a decorative wall finish made from slaked lime and marble dust, applied in multiple thin layers and burnished to create a rich, luminous surface with depth and movement. It has been used in European homes for centuries and has become increasingly popular in upscale Metro Vancouver renovations. The finish can range from a subtle matte stone-like texture to a highly polished, almost mirror-like sheen depending on how many layers are applied and how aggressively it is burnished. For a feature wall in a West Vancouver home, expect to pay between \$18 and \$35 per square foot for professional Venetian plaster application, which puts a typical 10-by-8-foot wall at roughly \$1,400 to \$2,800. This is significantly more than standard paint, but the result is a truly unique, high-end finish that adds real character and value to a space. Venetian plaster is also highly durable, naturally resistant to mould — a genuine advantage in our damp BC climate — and can last decades without needing to be redone. The finish works particularly well in living rooms, dining rooms, and primary bedrooms where you want a statement surface. It pairs beautifully with the West Coast modern aesthetic common in Vancouver homes. One important consideration is that application requires a skilled artisan, not just any painter. Look for contractors in Metro Vancouver who specialize in decorative finishes and can show you completed projects in person. As a next step, ask potential contractors for sample boards in your preferred colour so you can see the actual finish before committing.

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Q14

## Our house in Coquitlam has 18-foot ceilings in the foyer. How do painters handle such high walls safely?

High ceilings in Metro Vancouver homes, especially in areas like Coquitlam, Burke Mountain, and newer developments in Surrey, present unique challenges that require specialized equipment and experienced crews. For ceilings up to about 20 feet, professional painters typically use a combination of extension ladders, scaffolding systems, and sometimes baker scaffolds or rolling towers that can be adjusted to the right height. For an 18-foot foyer, most reputable Vancouver-area painters will set up sectional scaffolding rather than relying solely on extension ladders, as scaffolding provides a stable working platform that allows for better quality work and is much safer. Some contractors use articulating boom lifts for extremely high or awkward spaces, though this is more common in commercial work. The key safety requirements in BC fall under WorkSafeBC regulations, which mandate fall protection for any work above 10 feet. Your painting contractor should have proper WorkSafeBC coverage, and their crew should be using harnesses and tie-off points when working at height on scaffolding. High-

ceiling work takes longer than standard-height rooms because of the setup time, the need to work in sections, and the physical demands on the crew. Expect a high-ceiling foyer to take two to three times longer than a standard 8-foot room of similar square footage. When getting quotes, ask specifically about their approach to high work, what equipment they use, and whether scaffolding setup is included in the price or charged separately. As a next step, verify that any contractor you consider has active WorkSafeBC registration, which you can check online through the WorkSafeBC clearance letter system.

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**Q15**

## **I want a two-tone look in my bedroom with a darker colour on the bottom half and lighter on top. How does that work?**

A two-tone or split-wall paint treatment is a classic design technique that works wonderfully in bedrooms and is straightforward for an experienced painter to execute. The standard approach is to divide the wall at chair rail height, which is typically 32 to 36 inches from the floor, though you can adjust this based on your ceiling height and personal preference. In rooms with standard 8-foot ceilings common in many Vancouver-area homes, a one-third to two-thirds split tends to look most balanced, with the darker colour on the lower portion. The process involves painting the lighter upper colour first, letting it dry completely, then using high-quality painter's tape to create a crisp, level line all the way around the room. A laser level is essential for getting this line perfectly straight, especially in older homes where floors and ceilings may not be perfectly level. The darker lower colour is then painted up to and slightly over the tape edge. When the tape is pulled while the paint is still slightly tacky, it reveals a sharp, clean division line. Many homeowners in Metro Vancouver are also opting for a painted moulding strip or a thin wooden batten at the colour break to add an architectural detail and create an even cleaner transition. This is especially popular in Craftsman and heritage-style homes found in neighbourhoods like New Westminster and North Vancouver. For colour pairing, consider keeping both tones in the same colour family for a sophisticated look — for example, a deep slate blue below with a pale blue-grey above. Ask your painter to do a test section on one wall first so you can confirm the colour combination and line height before they commit to the entire room.

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**Q16**

## **What's the best way to deal with textured ceilings before painting the walls in our 1990s Richmond home?**

Many homes built in Richmond and across Metro Vancouver during the late 1980s and 1990s have textured or stippled ceilings, often called popcorn or knockdown texture. When you are painting the walls, the junction between a textured ceiling and smooth wall creates a real challenge for getting clean lines. The texture makes it nearly impossible to tape effectively because the uneven surface lets paint bleed underneath. Experienced Vancouver painters handle this in one of several ways. The most common professional technique is to use an angled brush to carefully cut in along the ceiling line, accepting that a small amount of wall colour will get onto the bottom edge of the texture. Since the texture catches light differently, this slight overlap is virtually invisible once dry. Another approach is to run a thin bead of paintable caulk along the ceiling-wall junction, smooth it with a damp finger, and paint over it while still wet — this fills the texture gaps and creates a much cleaner line. If you are planning a more thorough renovation, many homeowners in the Lower Mainland are choosing to have the textured ceiling removed or skimmed over entirely before painting. This modernizes the look significantly and makes future painting much easier. Before removing any ceiling texture in a pre-1990 home, it is critical to have it tested for asbestos by a qualified BC testing lab, as asbestos was commonly used in texture coatings until the late 1980s. Homes built after 1990 in Richmond are generally safe, but testing is inexpensive and provides peace of mind. As a next step, discuss with your painter whether they recommend cutting in freehand or using the caulk method for your specific ceiling texture.

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**Q17**

## **How much should I budget for skim coating all the walls in a 1,200 square foot Vancouver apartment before painting?**

Skim coating is the process of applying a thin layer of joint compound over entire wall surfaces to create a perfectly smooth canvas for painting. It is often needed in older Vancouver apartments where walls have accumulated decades of patching, nail holes, roller stipple, and minor damage. For a 1,200-square-foot apartment, a full skim coat on all walls and ceilings typically costs between \$4,500 and \$8,000 in the Metro Vancouver market, depending on the current wall condition, ceiling height, and whether ceilings are included. The price breaks down to roughly \$2.50 to \$4.50 per square foot of wall surface. Walls in very rough condition may need two passes of skim coat, which pushes costs toward the higher end. The process involves applying a thin, even layer of compound with a wide taping knife or a specialized roller, letting it dry, then sanding it smooth before repeating if necessary. It is dusty, labour-intensive work that requires significant skill to get right. After skim coating, the walls need to be

primed with a high-quality primer before the finish paint goes on. Many painting contractors in Vancouver offer skim coating as part of a complete paint preparation package. The total timeline for a 1,200-square-foot apartment with full skim coat and two-coat paint finish is typically five to eight working days. While it is a significant investment, skim coating transforms the final paint result — walls look noticeably smoother and more refined, and paint applies more evenly with a consistent sheen. As a next step, have two or three painters visit in person to assess your wall condition, as quotes can vary significantly based on how much preparation they determine is needed.

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**Q18**

## **Can I paint just one wall in my stairwell myself or should I hire someone? The stairwell goes up two storeys in our Surrey home?**

Two-storey stairwells are one of the most challenging areas to paint in any home, and they are extremely common in Surrey, Langley, and other Metro Vancouver suburbs with newer two-storey construction. The combination of height, awkward angles, and the open stairwell below makes this genuinely dangerous for DIY painters. The main wall in a two-storey stairwell typically reaches 16 to 20 feet at its highest point, and there is no flat floor below to set up a standard ladder safely. Professional painters use specialized stairwell scaffolding systems or adjustable ladder systems designed specifically for stairs, such as plank-and-ladder setups where one ladder sits on the upper landing and another on the lower stairs with a scaffold plank bridging between them. This requires proper equipment and training to set up safely. WorkSafeBC statistics consistently show that falls from ladders and scaffolding are among the most common serious workplace injuries in British Columbia, and stairwells are a particularly high-risk area. Beyond safety, getting even coverage on a tall stairwell wall is difficult without the right tools and technique — roller marks, lap lines, and uneven coverage are common DIY results on large unbroken wall surfaces. For a single stairwell wall, most Metro Vancouver painters charge between \$400 and \$800 depending on height, prep work needed, and accessibility. This is a case where the professional result and safety factor strongly justify the cost. As a next step, take photos of your stairwell from multiple angles, including measurements of the highest point, and send them to local painters for accurate quotes before anyone visits in person.

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Q19

## **We're considering a limewash finish for our living room in North Vancouver. Is it suitable for our climate?**

Limewash is a beautiful, breathable paint finish made from limestone that creates a soft, chalky, mottled appearance with wonderful depth and movement. It has become increasingly trendy in Metro Vancouver, particularly in North Vancouver and West Vancouver homes going for a modern organic or European farmhouse aesthetic. The good news is that limewash is actually well-suited to the BC coastal climate in several important ways. Because limewash is vapour-permeable, it allows moisture to pass through rather than trapping it behind the paint film, which is a genuine advantage in our humid Lower Mainland environment. Traditional oil or latex paints can sometimes trap moisture in walls, potentially leading to mould or paint failure, while limewash lets walls breathe naturally. Limewash works best on porous surfaces like plaster, unpainted drywall, brick, or masonry. If your North Vancouver living room has standard painted drywall, the existing paint needs to be removed or a special bonding primer must be applied for the limewash to adhere properly. This preparation adds cost and complexity. The finish itself is not as durable as conventional paint — it can be rubbed off and is not washable in the traditional sense, making it better suited to living rooms and bedrooms rather than kitchens, bathrooms, or hallways with heavy traffic. Touch-ups are simple though, as you just brush on more limewash and it blends naturally with the existing finish. The colour palette for limewash tends toward earthy, muted tones — warm whites, soft terracottas, pale sage greens — which complement the natural landscape visible from many North Shore homes beautifully. As a next step, look for a Vancouver-area painter who has specific experience with limewash application and ask to see completed projects, as the technique is quite different from standard painting.

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Q20

## **What paint finish should I use in different rooms of my home? I keep hearing conflicting advice about matte versus eggshell versus satin?**

Choosing the right paint sheen for each room is one of the most practical decisions you will make during a repaint, and the answer depends on balancing aesthetics with durability for each space. Here is a room-by-room guide that most professional painters in Metro Vancouver would recommend. For living rooms, dining rooms, and bedrooms, a matte or flat finish offers the most sophisticated, velvety look and hides wall imperfections beautifully. Modern premium matte paints from brands like Benjamin Moore and Sherwin-Williams are far more washable than matte paints of a decade ago, making them practical for most living spaces. Eggshell has a very subtle soft sheen and is the most popular all-purpose finish in Vancouver homes. It works well in virtually any room, offers good washability, and is forgiving on imperfect walls. Many painters default to eggshell for main living areas as a safe, crowd-pleasing

choice. Satin has a noticeably smoother sheen and is ideal for kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and children's rooms where walls need regular wiping. The slight gloss makes it easier to clean splashes and fingerprints. However, satin does highlight wall imperfections more than flatter finishes, so walls need to be in good condition. For trim, doors, and baseboards, semi-gloss is the standard in most Metro Vancouver homes. It is highly durable, easy to wipe clean, and the contrast between semi-gloss trim and flatter walls creates a polished, finished look. For ceilings, a dead-flat ceiling-specific paint is almost always the best choice, as it minimizes visible roller marks and does not draw the eye to imperfections. As a next step, discuss sheen choices with your painter during the quoting process — they can recommend specific products they trust and explain the trade-offs for your particular walls and lighting.

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Q21

## **Our strata council says we need approval before painting our condo interior - is that actually required in Vancouver?**

It depends on your strata corporation's bylaws, but many Metro Vancouver stratas do require approval for interior modifications, including painting. Under the BC Strata Property Act, strata councils can establish bylaws governing alterations to strata lots. While most stratas allow owners to repaint interior walls in neutral colours without formal approval, some have strict colour palettes or require written permission before any work begins. This is especially common in newer developments in areas like Yaletown, Coal Harbour, and Metrotown where uniformity is part of the building's brand. Before you start, review your strata's bylaws — specifically any sections on "alterations" or "modifications to strata lots." You can request a copy of the bylaws and any registered colour schedules from your strata management company. If approval is needed, submit a written request to your strata council describing the scope of work, colours chosen, and timeline. Most councils respond within two to four weeks. Painting without approval when required can result in a bylaw contravention notice and fines, typically \$50 to \$200 per infraction under the Strata Property Act's penalty provisions. To keep things smooth, start by emailing your property manager to ask whether interior painting requires strata approval and if there is an approved colour list you need to follow.

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Q22

## How much does it cost to paint a one-bedroom condo in Vancouver? The place is only about 550 square feet?

For a typical 550-square-foot one-bedroom condo in Metro Vancouver, professional interior painting generally costs between \$1,800 and \$3,200, depending on the scope of work and finishes chosen. A straightforward repaint of walls and ceilings in a single colour with standard latex paint usually falls in the \$1,800 to \$2,400 range. If you want accent walls, multiple colours, or upgraded paint like Benjamin Moore Aura or Dulux Diamond, expect to be closer to \$2,600 to \$3,200. That pricing typically includes surface preparation, patching minor nail holes and scuffs, two coats of paint on walls, one coat on ceilings, and cleanup. Trim and door painting is sometimes quoted separately and can add \$400 to \$800 depending on how much millwork you have. Smaller condo spaces actually require more care per square foot because painters are working in tighter quarters with less room to manoeuvre equipment. Furniture also needs to be moved and protected in a compact layout, which adds time. Some Vancouver painters offer condo-specific packages that bundle everything including strata coordination and elevator booking. Get at least three quotes from painters experienced with condo work in your building's area, and ask whether they include paint and materials or quote labour only.

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Q23

## Do I need to book the elevator with my building before painters can bring their equipment up?

Yes, virtually every condo and apartment building in Metro Vancouver requires elevator booking for any trade work, including painting. Most strata management companies and building managers need at least 48 to 72 hours' notice to reserve a service elevator, and some larger buildings in downtown Vancouver, Burnaby, or Richmond require a full week's notice. When you book, you will typically need to provide the painting company's name, insurance certificate, estimated start and end dates, and the hours they will be using the elevator. Many buildings restrict move-in elevator use to specific windows — commonly 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays, though some allow Saturday bookings. Your painter will need to bring in ladders, drop cloths, paint cans, and possibly a sprayer, all of which require the padded service elevator rather than the passenger elevator. Some buildings charge a refundable elevator deposit of \$100 to \$500 to cover potential damage. Failing to book the elevator can mean your painting crew shows up and cannot get their equipment to your floor, which wastes everyone's time and may result in rescheduling fees. Ask your painter if they handle elevator booking as part of their service — experienced Vancouver condo painters often take care of this coordination directly with your building manager on your behalf.

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## Can I paint my condo balcony in Vancouver or is that considered common property?

In most Metro Vancouver strata buildings, balconies are designated as "limited common property" under the BC Strata Property Act, meaning they are common property that you have exclusive use of but do not own outright. This distinction matters because painting or altering limited common property typically requires strata council approval. The exterior-facing surfaces of your balcony — including railings, exterior walls, and the ceiling above — are almost always common property and cannot be altered without formal approval, often requiring a three-quarters vote at a general meeting for significant changes. Interior balcony walls and floors may have slightly more flexibility depending on your building's bylaws. Weather is another factor in Vancouver's climate. Balcony painting needs to be done during dry periods, ideally between May and September, when rain is less likely to ruin fresh paint. The surface preparation for balconies exposed to Vancouver's moisture is more involved than interior work, often requiring pressure washing, mould treatment, and a primer suitable for exterior conditions. If your strata does approve balcony painting, they will likely require you to use colours that match the building's exterior palette. Check your strata plan to confirm whether your balcony is limited common property, then submit a formal alteration request to your strata council before hiring a painter.

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Q25

## What hours can painters actually work in my Vancouver condo without violating noise bylaws?

Noise regulations for painting work in Metro Vancouver condos come from two sources: your municipal noise bylaw and your strata's own rules, and the stricter of the two applies. The City of Vancouver's Noise Control Bylaw permits construction and renovation noise between 7:30 AM and 8:00 PM on weekdays and 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM on Saturdays, with no construction noise allowed on Sundays or statutory holidays. Burnaby, Surrey, Richmond, and other Metro Vancouver municipalities have similar but slightly varying hours. However, most strata corporations impose tighter restrictions — a common window is 8:30 AM or 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays, with some allowing Saturday work until 4:00 PM. Painting is generally quieter than most renovation work, but surface preparation involving sanding, scraping, or using power tools like orbital sanders does generate noise that falls under these restrictions. Spray painting equipment also produces a steady hum that can travel through shared walls. Your strata may require you to notify adjacent units before work begins, especially in concrete buildings where sound carries through floors and ceilings. Some buildings post notices in elevators and common areas. Before scheduling your painting project, check both your municipality's noise bylaw and your strata's renovation rules, and share the permitted hours with your painting contractor so they can plan their work schedule accordingly.

Q26

## We're selling our condo in New Westminister and want to repaint to help with staging - what colours work best for Vancouver-area buyers?

For resale preparation in the Metro Vancouver market, neutral tones consistently perform best with buyers and their real estate agents. The current preferences among New Westminister and Greater Vancouver buyers lean toward warm whites and soft greiges — think Benjamin Moore's Cloud White, Edgecomb Gray, or Revere Pewter, or Dulux equivalents. These colours photograph well for MLS listings and appeal to the broadest range of buyers in Vancouver's competitive condo market. Avoid stark pure whites, which can feel cold in Vancouver's grey winter light, and steer clear of any bold or trendy accent walls that might polarize buyers. A consistent colour throughout the unit makes smaller condos feel larger and more cohesive, which is particularly important in New Westminister's condo market where many units are in the 600 to 900 square foot range. Professional pre-sale painting for a two-bedroom condo in New Westminister typically runs \$2,500 to \$4,500 and is widely considered one of the highest-return improvements you can make before listing. Many Vancouver-area real estate agents recommend it as a top-three staging investment. Use a satin or eggshell finish on walls for durability and easy cleaning, and semi-gloss on trim and doors. Coordinate with your realtor on colour selection before committing — they know what local buyers

respond to and can guide you toward the right shade.

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**Q27**

## **Is there anywhere in my Vancouver condo where painters can park their van without getting a ticket?**

Parking is one of the biggest logistical challenges for painting crews working in Metro Vancouver condos. Most condo buildings have limited visitor parking, and street parking in areas like downtown Vancouver, Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant, and Metrotown is heavily restricted with two-hour limits and residential permit zones. Here are your best options: First, check if your building has a designated loading zone or trade parking area — many newer buildings have short-term loading bays near the service entrance. Second, ask your building manager if a visitor parking spot can be reserved for the duration of the project, usually requiring advance notice and sometimes a small daily fee. Third, if street parking is the only option, your painter may need to purchase a temporary parking permit from the City of Vancouver, which costs around \$6 per day for metered areas. In some municipalities like Burnaby or Surrey, street parking near condos is more readily available. The reality is that experienced Metro Vancouver condo painters factor parking logistics into their planning. Some use smaller vehicles or make early-morning supply drops before parking restrictions start. When getting quotes, ask the painter how they handle parking at condo jobs — this tells you a lot about their experience working in multi-unit buildings. Discuss parking logistics with both your painter and building manager before the project start date to avoid day-of complications.

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Q28

## **Our strata has a list of approved paint colours - can I use any brand or do I have to use the exact one they specify?**

Most Metro Vancouver strata colour palettes specify colours by name and code from a particular paint manufacturer, but you are generally not required to use that exact brand as long as you match the colour accurately. Paint stores across Vancouver can colour-match virtually any shade using spectrophotometer technology, so if your strata specifies a Sherwin-Williams colour but you prefer Benjamin Moore or Dulux, a paint retailer can mix a precise match. However, there are some important caveats. If your strata bylaws specifically mandate a brand — which is uncommon but does happen in some luxury buildings in Coal Harbour or West Vancouver — you must comply. Also, the finish matters as much as the colour. If your strata specifies eggshell or satin, using a flat or high-gloss finish in the same colour could still be considered non-compliant. For exterior-facing surfaces or limited common property, stratas are typically stricter and may require the exact specified product for warranty and maintenance consistency. When in doubt, bring a physical colour chip from the strata's approved palette to your paint store and have them do a spectrophotometer match rather than relying on a colour name alone, as the same colour name can look slightly different across brands. Before purchasing paint, confirm with your strata manager whether the approved list specifies brand requirements or just colour codes, and keep your paint receipts as proof of compliance in case questions arise.

Q29

## **How do painters deal with the smell in a small condo? My unit doesn't have great ventilation and I have a cat?**

Paint fumes in a small, enclosed condo are a valid concern, especially with pets. Cats are particularly sensitive to volatile organic compounds found in conventional paints, and poor ventilation in many older Metro Vancouver apartment buildings makes this worse. The best solution is to use zero-VOC or low-VOC paint, which is now widely available from major brands at Vancouver paint retailers. Zero-VOC formulations from Benjamin Moore (Natura line), Dulux (Lifemaster), or other premium brands have virtually no odour and are safe for occupied spaces. They cost slightly more — typically \$55 to \$75 per gallon compared to \$40 to \$60 for standard interior paint — but the difference is well worth it in a small condo. Your painter should also set up cross-ventilation by opening windows on opposite sides of the unit when possible, and use box fans to create airflow. In Vancouver's rainy months when opening windows is not practical, a portable air purifier with a carbon filter can help manage residual odours. For your cat, the safest approach is to keep them in an unpainted room with the door closed and a towel along the bottom gap, or arrange for them to stay elsewhere on painting days. Most zero-VOC paints are touch-dry within one

to two hours and fully cured within a few days with minimal off-gassing. Ask your painting contractor what paint lines they carry with zero-VOC options and whether they can accommodate pets during the work.

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Q30

## I want to paint my Vancouver condo kitchen cabinets instead of replacing them - is that worth it and what does it cost?

Cabinet painting is one of the most popular condo upgrades in Metro Vancouver because full cabinet replacement in a typical condo kitchen costs \$15,000 to \$30,000, while professional cabinet painting runs \$3,500 to \$7,000 depending on the size of your kitchen and the number of cabinets. For a standard Vancouver condo kitchen with 15 to 25 cabinet doors and drawer fronts, expect to pay \$4,000 to \$6,000 for a professional spray finish. This includes removing all doors and hardware, degreasing, sanding, priming, applying two to three coats of cabinet-grade paint, and reinstalling everything with new hardware if desired. The key to a durable cabinet finish is proper preparation and using the right products — a hybrid alkyd or acrylic urethane paint designed specifically for cabinets, not standard wall paint. Colours trending in Vancouver condos right now include soft whites, warm greys, and deep navy or forest green for lower cabinets in two-tone designs. Cabinet painting in a condo requires careful coordination because doors are often removed and sprayed off-site or in a designated area, which means your strata may need to approve use of a parking garage or storage room for drying. Your kitchen will be without cabinet doors for three to seven days during the process. The finish should last 8 to 15 years with proper care. Get quotes specifically from painters who specialize in cabinet refinishing rather than general interior painters, as the technique and materials are quite different.

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