



This document is intended as a reference guide for the basic care and maintenance of Nichiha siding products including NichiBoard, NichiPanel, NichiShake, NichiStaggered, NichiStraight, NichiSoffit, NichiTrim, and also Sierra Premium Shake and Savannah Smooth. NichiProducts and Savannah are sold as primed while Sierra is offered either prefinished or primed. While Nichiha fiber cement products are very durable and are considered a low maintenance product, the suggestions and recommendations below will ensure long-term performance from your siding for many years to come. The extent of maintenance required will depend greatly on the geographical location, climate, exposure, and other local factors.

AROUND THE STRUCTURE:

- **Vegetation:** A one foot clearance between shrubs, plants, and vegetation and the siding is recommended. Prune back plants that are too close or touching the siding.
- **Gutters:** Ensure that gutters and downspouts are kept clear to prevent overflow onto or behind the siding.
- **Ground clearance:** Ensure the minimum required ground clearance of 6" is maintained by preventing build-up of decorative mulch, stone, etc.
- **Drainage:** Do not allow water to collect against or near the siding by maintaining proper drainage around the building.
- **Sprinklers:** Do not allow sprinklers to spray directly onto the siding. Regular wetting the siding with sprinkler systems may cause discoloration and may also shorten the service life of the paint.

WASHING:

- **Periodic cleaning:** Over a period of time, siding, as with any outdoor building material, will need washing to remove dust, dirt, etc. We recommend cleaning the siding every 12 months to remove dirt and debris to aid in maintaining the siding's appearance. A mild household detergent mixed with tap water in a medium sized bucket, and soft bristle brush (such as a car wash brush) may be used. Do not use a stiff bristle or a wire bristle brush as damage may result. Additionally, do not use harsh cleaners, abrasives, or strong solvents as they can damage the paint and/or the siding surface. Rinse with clean water from a standard garden hose. DO NOT use high-pressure washers as the extreme psi blast can damage paint, loosen or remove caulks and sealants, and even damage the siding surface.
- **Mildew removal:** If basic washing as described above has been completed and the siding still has a dirty appearance, it is possibly mildew. Mildew can grow on any organic surface, including paint, and usually occurs in shaded or damp areas and elevations. Fortunately, mildew can be easily removed with the proper solution. Wash the home in the manner described above with the addition of a moderate amount of household bleach to the cleaning solution. Mildew removing cleaners or additives are also available at most home improvement type stores. To avoid streaking, wash from the top or upper sections down and rinse with a standard garden hose.



PERIODIC INSPECTION:

- **Loose boards:** When properly installed as specified in the applicable installation instructions, the siding should be secure to the structure. If any siding is found to be loose it should be refastened. Please refer to the product installation instructions for fastener and fastening requirements.
- **Recaulking:** Over a period of time, caulk may harden, crack, and lose its seal depending on the type and quality of caulk used and the application method. Use an exterior grade, high quality sealant that complies with ASTM C-920 requirements for all gaps that require sealant. If the old caulk has hardened or cracked, it may be necessary to remove the original caulk prior to recaulking.
- **Chips/Dents:** Any minor surface damage such as small chips, dents, or scratches may be filled with a quality caulk as described above or with a cementitious patch. It is recommended that any board or panel displaying damage larger than a quarter in size be replaced.
- **Damage and replacement:** If a board or panel is physically damaged from impact or other direct damage such as breakage, large holes, cracks, etc., it is recommended the piece be removed and replaced.
- **Touch-up:** On prefinished products, an occasional touch-up may be necessary. Touch up paint for Sierra Shake must be an exterior acrylic latex, color matched with product sample at your local paint store. Apply the touch-up paint with a small artist's brush, much in the same manner as touching up a small chip or nick on an automobile. Less is best and only apply to a small spot or area. Test the color and your technique on a sample piece or hidden area of the siding before proceeding.

REPAINTING:

- **Prefinished products** (Sierra Premium) may require repainting at the end of their finish warranty periods.
- **Primed products** will require repainting depending on various factors including climate and exposure, location, and the type, quality, color, and application method originally used. Normally, paint will weather more rapidly on those wall elevations with the greatest exposure to the sun and moisture. Paint that appears thin, blotchy, and chalky and rubs off easily to the touch are usually indicators that repainting will be needed in the near future.
- **Surface preparation:** Generally, the amount of preparation needed is determined by the condition of the original finish. The finish should be clean and free of dust, dirt, and mildew, and without peeling or flaking. Any loose paint material must be brushed, sanded or scraped. Repriming is usually not necessary providing the original finish is sound. If re-priming is necessary or desired, use a high-quality, exterior grade, acrylic latex primer that is compatible with both the original finish and the topcoat to be applied.
- **Paint selection and application:** Use only high-quality, exterior grade, 100% acrylic latex paints. DO NOT use stains, oil, or alkyd based paints. Follow the paint manufacturer's directions for use and additional application specifics. Apply paint only when siding surface is clean and dry.

**EFFLORESCENCE:**

Causes: Efflorescence is a white crystalline or powdery deposit which can appear on the surface of masonry materials like concrete, brick, or fiber cement sidings. It is caused by soluble salts in the material, and when moisture dissolves the salts, vapor transmissions move them toward the outside surface. This salt water solution migrates to the surface, thus leaving the salt deposit at the surface and resulting in the white color residue, efflorescence. Temperature, humidity, and wind all affect efflorescence. In building materials such as fiber cement, efflorescence usually occurs when there is substantial moisture in the board to turn the salts into a soluble solution. This usually can be traced to the product becoming saturated prior to installation due to being uncovered and unprotected during extended rainfall periods while on-site or unprotected storage. After installation, efflorescence may occur if the back side of the siding is exposed to excessive moisture or water intrusion due to unflashed openings or other undesirable conditions that allow water within the wall cavity.

Removal: Efflorescence can usually be easily removed by washing with the proper solution. There are several commercially available house wash solutions that may be used for the removal of efflorescence. We recommend the manufacturer be contacted to ensure the product is suitable for use on fiber cement. One such product that has been used successfully in the past for efflorescence removal is Mason's Select Safe Solution Concrete Etcher. Safe Solution is biodegradable, non-corrosive to the skin, has low odor and is low fuming. Safe Solution is a water-based product with easy soap and water clean-up.

Directions:

- Apply Safe Solution full strength to the affected area with a soft bristle brush, roller, or sprayer.
- Apply and wash only small areas at a time, no larger than 10'x10'.
- Allow to sit for 10 minutes.
- Do not let the Safe Solution become dry on the wall as it will become ineffective.
- Use a soft bristle brush and lightly scrub the area.
- Allow to sit for another 5 to 10 minutes. Again, do not let the product dry.
- Wipe the siding clean with a damp cloth and rinse the area with a garden hose.
- Allow the area to air dry.
- For tough efflorescence, a second application may be required. Repeat the steps above.
- For more information on Mason's Select Safe Solution, visit www.superdeck.com.

Installation Instructions, Warranties, and additional product information are available at www.nichiha.com.