

Cypress Siding Installation Guidelines

Thank you for choosing cypress siding. You've made the natural choice. With its good looks, dimensional stability, long-lasting durability, and proven performance, cypress can add a lifetime of character and distinction to your home or building when properly installed and maintained.

These general guidelines are minimum standards to be followed in most areas. Because climate conditions vary by location, additional provisions may be necessary. It's highly recommended to consult local building professionals and always follow national and local building code requirements.



SOUTHERN
CYPRESS
MANUFACTURERS
ASSOCIATION



What to Know Before Getting Started



Acclimation

Cypress is a natural wood product that responds to changes in moisture and its surrounding environment, resulting in swelling or shrinkage. Cypress siding must be conditioned to the local in-service moisture content—typically between 8–16%.

	Maximum Moisture Content
Finish grades (Select and better):	15%
Common Grades (#2 common):	18%

Source: Standard Specifications for Grades of Southern Cypress

Site Storage

It's recommended to store cypress siding at least 4 inches off the ground in an indoor, dry climate. Separate pieces using stickers to ensure airflow. If cypress must be stored outside above open ground, first lay a 100% moisture-proof barrier and then follow the same steps. Cover the wood with a 100% waterproof barrier for protection from the elements and direct sunlight.

Face Finishing: Smooth or Rough

Cypress siding is readily available in SIS, meaning it's surfaced or smooth on one side and rough on the other. While it's a personal preference which side faces out, the rough face generally accepts finishes better and requires less frequent maintenance, but soaks up more finish. In contrast, the smooth side may require less finish to coat the surface, but requires more frequent maintenance.

Field Joints

When creating a butt joint, cut the siding ends at a 45-degree angle, which forms an overlapping joint. This is particularly important for vertical applications. Please note that all fresh or factory cut joints should be finished prior to and/or during installation. Be sure to match the joints to studs, blocking, or furring strips. Nails should penetrate at least 1 ¼ inches into the wood.

Finishing

Cypress siding should be finished prior to installation. Factory-applied finishes work best. If finishing on site, first repair all nail holes and surface irregularities, and make sure all surfaces are clean and caulking is in good condition. Finish all sides and edges—including the back—to protect against moisture absorption. Any fresh cut field joints should be refinished or reprimed. Do not finish cypress siding when wet.

Natural Weathering

If it's desirable to leave cypress siding in its natural state and weather to a light gray color over time, it should be brushed on all sides and edges with a high-quality, water-repellent sealer or preservative. Consider a product that includes an ultraviolet light inhibitor to prevent premature graying.

Staining

Oil-based stains are recommended, and it is suggested to consider a product that includes an ultraviolet light inhibitor. Most semi-transparent stains will provide adequate protection for 18–24 months—depending on weather conditions and exposure to sunlight—and require reapplication at regular intervals to protect the wood from warping, checking, shrinkage, and loosening of nails.

Painting

Select a high-quality primer that's compatible with the paint being used. Most paints will require an oil-based alkyd primer. High-quality, 100% resin acrylic/latex paints are recommended. Avoid paints with water-sensitive polymers and/or surfactants.

Fasteners

Hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel siding nails with a ¼-inch head and blunt points are recommended. Nails must be long enough to penetrate 1 ½ inches into studs. Ring or thread shank nails provide increased holding power, and must penetrate 1 inch into studs.

Nail Sizes for Wood Siding Over Sheathing		
Siding/Sheathing Combinations (Use wood siding nails)	Recommended Nail Length	
	Smooth Shank	Ring Shank
¾" siding plus ½" sheathing	10d (3")	8d (2 ½")
¾" siding plus ¾" sheathing	13d (3 ¼")	9d (2 ¾")
¾" siding plus 1" sheathing	16d (3 ½")	10d (3")

Caulking

Use high-grade, non-hardening acrylic or equal caulking to seal gaps along any exposed joints—including windows, doors, and corners. Do not apply caulk to areas that will prevent moisture from escaping the wall cavity (e.g., under windows). Caulking requires regular maintenance.



Site Drainage

Slope ground away from structure for a minimum of 3 feet.

Roof Drainage

Incorporate an overhang or drainage system into the structure's design to prevent water from running down sidewalls.

Drip Caps and Flashing

Drip caps and flashing must be used over doors, windows, masonry, other types of siding, siding returns at dormers, trim boards, and fascia. Flashings help prevent moisture from entering walls or roof spaces, and direct it away from the structure. It's recommended to maintain ¼-inch space between flashing and siding material.

Siding Return at Roof (Dormers)

Use flashing, allowing at least a 2-inch clearance between siding and roof line. Cut edges of siding must be finished in accordance with finishing instruction described in this guide.

Roof and Ground Clearance

Any siding that extends down to a roof surface (dormer, etc.) or a deck requires at least a two-inch gap between the siding and other material to avoid wicking. Skirt or water table board trim requires a minimum of six inches of space above the grade.

Ventilation

Both attics and crawl spaces require adequate ventilation. Clothes dryers must be vented outside; kitchen and bathroom fans are recommended to vent localized moisture outside.

■ Attics

Attic vents should provide a minimum of 1 square foot of net-free vent area for every 150 square feet of attic space. Use a combination of soffit vents and ridge or roof vents.

■ Crawl Spaces

Crawl space vents should provide a minimum of 1 square foot of net-free vent area for every 25 lineal feet of exterior wall. Place vents to allow for cross-ventilation.



Wall Construction

■ Stud Walls

It's important to fasten cypress siding to a suitable frame to garner the best performance. Cypress siding must be securely nailed to framing members, furring strips, or to blocking between frames. Horizontal siding patterns require little additional considerations other than stud walls. Vertical applications will require additional preparatory steps. If an air space is desired between siding and sheathing (such as a rainscreen application), nail siding to furring strips, sheathing, and framing.

It is recommended to install cypress siding over standard sheathing material with maximum stud spacing of 16 inches on center. A suitable building felt paper should be used as a moisture barrier behind cypress siding. Foil-faced sheathings should not be used in hot and dry climates.

■ Insulated Concrete Forms

Insulated Concrete Forms (I.C.F.) do not contain wood and have no capacity for nailing. This wall system requires additional framing securely fastened to the concrete. Framing must be at least 1 ¼-inches thick with spacing of 16 inches on center outside the foam.

■ Foam and Foil-Faced Sheathings

Both rigid-foam and foil-faced sheathing can be vapor barriers. Rigid-foam sheathings, offer little to no resistance to sag caused by the weight of the siding on the nails. If using rigid-foam sheathing, use angular threaded ring-shank nails long enough to penetrate at least 1 inch into framing members.

Note: Cypress siding installed over foam sheathing may take on a wavy appearance if nailed with too much force.

Vapor Barrier

Walls should be designed to restrict moisture from entering and condensing within the exterior wall cavity. Extra attention should be paid to areas with high humidity, such as kitchens, laundry rooms, and bathrooms. Proper design will ensure the insulation's thermal efficiency and overall structural performance, and may include the use of breathable housewrap, along with building paper and vapor barriers. Design must provide continuous vapor retarding equivalent to a rating of 1 perm or less installed on the living space side or as directed by local building codes. Vapor retarders also are required on the ground in all crawl spaces and under concrete slabs.

Acceptable products include: 6-mil polyethylene, asphalt-impregnated kraft or foil-backed insulation (tabs must be stapled to the narrow face of the studs, not the wide face), vinyl-faced or foil-backed gypsum, sandwich-type kraft with an asphalt or polyethylene core, or equivalent. Vapor retarding paints also are available for interior walls.



Horizontal Siding Patterns



Bevel Siding (also known as clapboard or rabbeted)

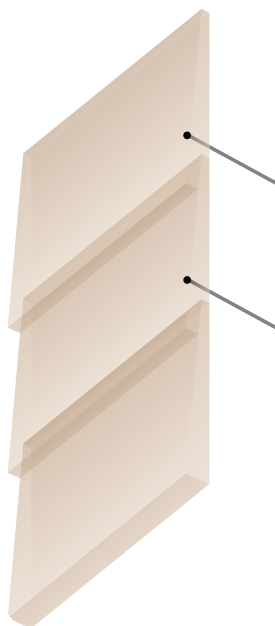
Bevel siding is one of the most popular cypress siding patterns. The first step for proper installation is to preplan spacing and overlap requirements from the soffit down to the bottom of the lowest piece of siding. The recommended overlap for each nominal width can be found in the table below. Use larger overlaps for unseasoned siding.

When installing bevel siding, start with the bottom row and work up. Use a furring strip to support the lower edge of the first course. Each succeeding course of siding will overlap the previous one by at least 1 inch (see table for exact recommendation). Bevel siding with a rabbeted pattern is self-spacing, but it is necessary to leave a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch gap for expansion. Stagger butt joints and make sure they meet at studs.

Bevel siding should be face nailed to studs with $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch penetration, spaced at a maximum of 24 inches on center. Nails should be positioned just above the overlap, but should not go through the overlap.

Recommended Overlap

Nominal Width	Overlap (inches)
4	1
6	1
8	1 to $1\frac{1}{8}$
10	1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$
12	1 to 2





Vertical Siding Patterns

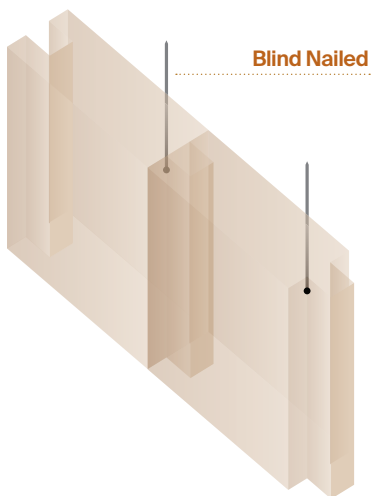
Tongue-and-Groove Siding

While tongue-and-groove siding lends itself to both vertical and horizontal installation methods, vertical tongue-and-groove applications are recommended for cypress siding. Either method is suitable for interior applications.

For vertical installations, begin at one corner with the grooved edge facing the adjacent wall. A level or plumb line should be used to ensure the first board is plumb. Trim the grooved edge as necessary to ensure a flush fit. Nail siding to horizontal blocking between studs or to furring strips.

If installing horizontally, start at the bottom course—with the grooved edge facing down—and work up. Make sure the first course is level.

Nailing methods vary depending on the siding width. Nominal 4- and 6-inch siding can be blind nailed with a single nail per bearing, toe-nailed at the base of each tongue. Wider siding, 8- to 12-inch, should be face nailed with two nails per piece of siding. Nails must penetrate 1 ¼ inches into solid wood.





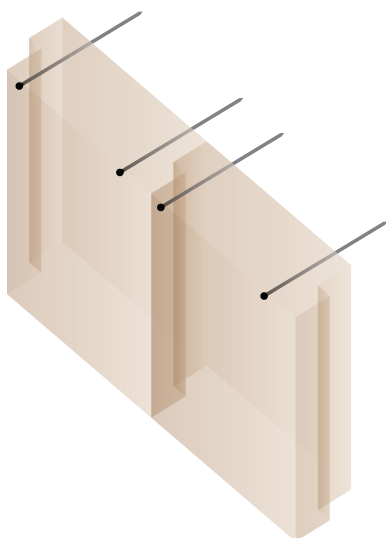
Lap Siding (also known as shiplap or channel rustic)

Lap siding can be installed vertically and horizontally. However, vertical installation is recommended for exterior use. When working with air- or kiln-dried material, leave a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch space to allow for expansion.

Vertical applications require horizontal blocking or furring strips for nailing. The first board should be installed at one corner, with the channel pointing toward the next corner. Make sure the first board is plumb.

For horizontal applications, start at the bottom course, with the channel pointing up, and make sure the course is level.

Nailing methods vary depending on the siding width. Nominal 4- and 6-inch boards should be nailed with a single nail, applied one inch from the lap. Wider material can be face nailed with two nails per board, but at least 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart to prevent splitting. Do not nail through overlaps.





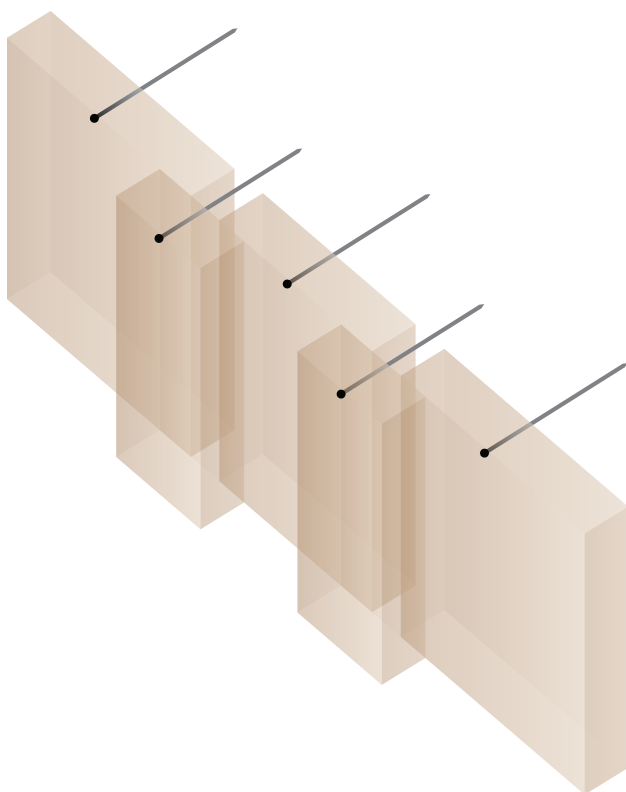
Board-and-Batten Siding

Board-and-batten siding is a vertical pattern consisting of boards that are overlaid with a batten strip (typically narrower than the board). There are overlap parameters depending on the nominal width of each board. For nominal 6-inch wide boards, standard spacing between each board is $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, with an overlap of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch for each

batten. If working with wider boards, increase the batten overlap proportionately.

While board widths can vary depending on the desired appearance, a popular combination is 10-inch boards with 3-inch battens.

To install, nail boards to horizontal blocking lines or furring strips. Boards that are 6-inches wide or narrower should be nailed in the center of the board, with one nail per bearing. Battens also should be affixed with one nail per bearing, ensuring the nail passes through the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch gap between boards. For boards 8 inches or wider, two nails per bearing are required, and should be positioned between 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 inches apart.



Rainscreen Application



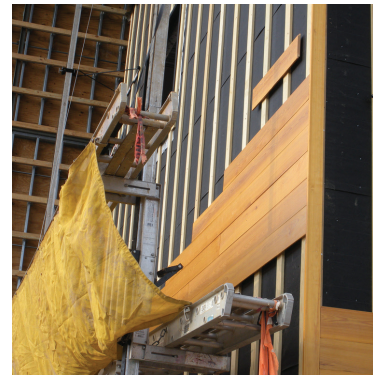
Rainscreen is an installation method that's gaining popularity for its ability to control and drain moisture that may build up behind siding, making it effective for both horizontal and vertical siding patterns. Much like other siding installation methods, rainscreens are applied over sheathing material, such as dimpled housewraps or plastic mesh. To provide additional air space, nominal 1x3-inch vertical or horizontal furring strips are commonly installed over the sheathing material (pictured to the right).

Typically, rainscreen applications fall into two categories: closed or open systems.

Closed-jointed systems are for siding patterns that overlap, such as bevel, or that use a lap joint, like shiplap. If the structure uses a housewrap or felt paper as a water-resistive barrier (WRB), then furring strips are installed over the WRB (lined up with wall studs) and the siding boards are nailed to the furring strips.

In open-jointed systems, plank siding gets nailed to the furring strips with an airspace between the planks. Because the gaps between the planks would allow sunlight and ultraviolet rays to reach the sheathing, building felt paper is first installed over the sheathing to protect it from premature degrading. Furring strips are nailed over the felt paper (lined up with wall studs) and the siding boards are nailed to the furring strips.

At the bottom of both systems, install plastic mesh or screen material to allow for water drainage and ventilation, as well as prevent critter infestation.





Corner Treatments

Mitered Corners

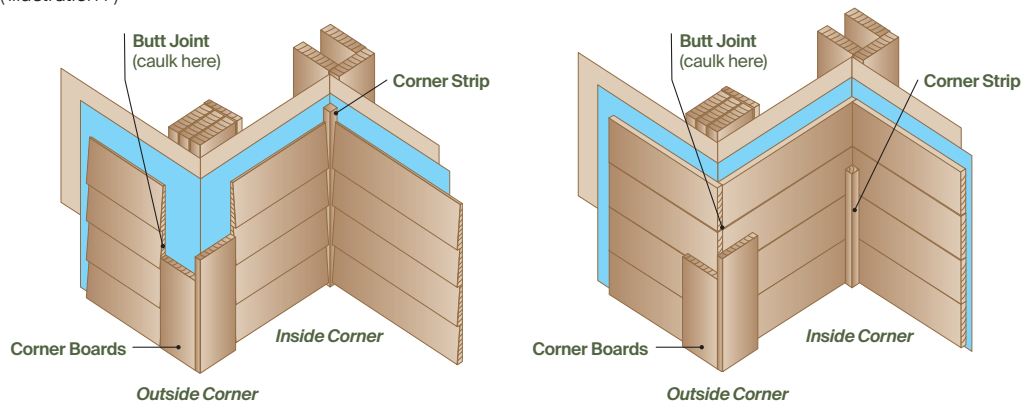
Mitered corners are the most attractive and provide the most professional appearance. This treatment works best with horizontal patterns. Mitered corners require the joints to fit together tightly for the full depth of the miter. Good carpentry skills are needed.

Corner Boards

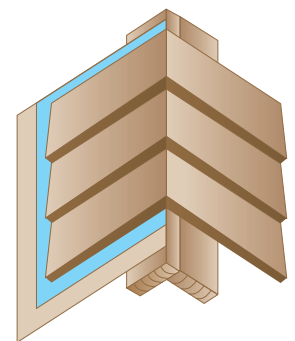
Corner boards are a common alternative to a mitered treatment. Outside corner boards may be applied next to or on top of the siding boards (see illustration 1). The thickness of corner boards correlates with the siding thickness. Nominal ¼- and ⅝-inch thickness are most prevalent. Width typically depends on the desired look and proportion. Affix corner to the sheathing, ensuring a tight fit against the narrow edge of the boards and allowing for expansion and space for adequate caulk. Corner boards and siding board ends should be nailed to corner studs. Consider incorporating overhanging roof eaves that protect the corner joints from the elements.

Outside and Inside Corner Boards

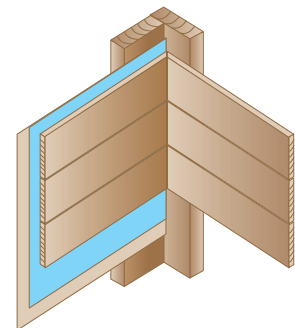
(illustration 1)



Outside Mitered Corner



Inside Mitered Corner



Inside corner treatments are generally easier. Siding is typically butted against a 2x2 inch trim strip, or it can be butted directly against the adjoining wall with a trim strip covering the joint.

Legal Notice

The Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association (SCMA) is not a manufacturer, seller, or installer of cypress products; makes no representations or warranty—expressed or implied—with regard to any cypress products or the accuracy of the information contained in this publication; and makes no implied representation or warranty as to merchantability or fitness of any cypress products for any particular purpose. The SCMA and its representatives shall not be responsible or liable for any cause of action, loss, damage, injury, or death in any way connected with the information provided in this document.

About the SCMA

The SCMA is a non-profit organization comprised of sawmills, remanufacturers, and wholesale/distribution companies that are dedicated to the promotion of cypress buildings products. Visit CypressInfo.org for more information.

