

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%.

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 S1S, 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.

Maximum Moisture Content

Finish grades (Select and better):	15%
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Common Grades (#2 common):	18%
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Source: Standard Specifications for Grades of Southern Cypress



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 <i>(Use wood siding nails)</i>	Recommended Nail Length	
	<i>Smooth Shank</i>	<i>Ring Shank</i>
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 1/4-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.

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