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Don't Guarantee Caulking Failure

By AssociationHelpNow®

Featuring: Raymond Dickey (AssociationHelpNow) & Todd Vignola (Add Ventures)

When it comes to re-caulking projects on buildings, too many boards and managers walk away with a cosmetic fix—only to face premature failure of the joint repairs a year or two later. Why? Because essential quality control steps were skipped.

During a recent segment of an AssociationHelpNow livestream, **Raymond Dickey** asked the key question:

“What quality control measures—like backer rod use, substrate preparation, and proper cure time—should boards and managers insist on during re-caulking projects?”

His follow-up drove the point home: boards want more than just “a better appearance.” They want a long-lasting repair. But for that to happen, they need to know what to look for—and what to demand.

Enter **Todd Vignola**, president of Add Ventures, who broke it down in practical terms:

✓ **First: Know What a Backer Rod Is**

“A backer rod is simply a tubular form of insulation,” Vignola explained. It’s used to **fill voids before caulking is applied**, especially when joints are wider than ideal. “You don’t want to put a thick bead of caulk into a deep gap,” he warned. Instead, fill the space with backer rod first, then apply a smaller, more effective bead of caulk on top.

✓ **Substrate Prep Is Critical**

Of all the factors that can determine whether a caulking project succeeds or fails, **preparation of the surface (the “substrate”) is the most important.**

“If you don’t remove the previous caulk, don’t remove chipping or flaking paint, and don’t make sure the underlying material is in good condition, then caulking will be a complete failure,” Vignola stated.

✓ **Don't Ignore Cure Time**

Another commonly overlooked step is **allowing the caulk enough time to dry**—especially when working with acrylic or latex caulks. “You don’t want to apply caulk knowing it’s going to rain two hours later,” Vignola cautioned.

While some products dry in a couple of hours, optimal conditions call for **24 to 48 hours of dry weather** to ensure a proper cure.

Final Word to Boards & Managers:

When budgeting for or overseeing a re-caulking project, it’s not just about product selection—it’s about process. Insist on:

- Proper surface preparation
- Use of backer rod for larger gaps
- Scheduled work based on weather forecasts for optimal cure time

Skipping these steps might save time up front—but it practically guarantees failure later. And that’s a guarantee no one wants.

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