

Bellingham Painting Co.

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Interior painting in Bellingham, a homeowner cost and prep guide

Real price ranges, winter drying times, plaster walls and the lead rules for pre-1978 homes

WHAT IT RUNS HERE

Interior painting in Bellingham, WA runs \$4,950 to \$9,900 for a typical 3-bedroom home, starting around \$4.40 per square foot of painted area. Most homes take 2 to 3 days. Price moves with wall condition, ceiling height, how many colors you pick, and whether trim gets sprayed. Bellingham Painting Co. covers workmanship for 2 years. Estimates are free, call (360) 383-5454.

Free estimate, written scope

<https://bellingshampaintpros.com/guides/interior-painting>

(360) 383-5454

START HERE

What matters most

- A typical 3-bedroom interior in Bellingham runs \$4,950 to \$9,900, starting around \$4.40 per square foot of painted area.
- About 43 percent of Bellingham housing units were built before 1980, so lead-safe work rules apply on a lot of jobs here.
- January averages near 83 percent relative humidity in Bellingham, which stretches indoor recoat times.
- Homes built before about 1950 usually have plaster over wood lath, which patches very differently than drywall.
- Washington charges retail sales tax on the full contract price including labor, at a combined 9.2 percent in Bellingham.

THE NUMBERS

Interior painting price ranges in Bellingham, WA

SCOPE	WHAT IT COVERS	BELLINGHAM RANGE
Typical 3-bedroom interior	Walls, ceilings, trim, doors and closets, two coats	\$4,950 to \$9,900
Painted area, per square foot	Standard prep and two coats over sound walls	From \$4.40 per sq ft
Kitchen cabinets, same mobilization	Doors and boxes degreased, sanded and sprayed	\$2,750 to \$6,600
Cabinet doors and drawer fronts only	Priced per door where the boxes stay as they are	\$85 per door
Exterior in the same year	Wash, scrape, prime bare wood, two coats on siding and trim	\$4,200 to \$9,350

Prep drives the number far more than paint does, and plaster repair, ceiling height and the number of colors can move a Bellingham interior thousands of dollars inside the same square footage.

The number to start from

A typical 3-bedroom Bellingham interior runs \$4,950 to \$9,900, starting around \$4.40 per square foot of painted area. Most take 2 to 3 days.

The spread is prep and detail, not paint. Sound drywall and one color sits at the bottom. Plaster repair, vaulted ceilings, four colors and sprayed trim sits at the top.

- Typical 3-bedroom interior: \$4,950 to \$9,900
- Painted area: from \$4.40 per sq ft
- Cabinets at the same time: \$2,750 to \$6,600, or \$85 per door
- Exterior the same year: \$4,200 to \$9,350

What the climate does to the schedule

Bellingham takes about 36 inches of rain a year and averages near 83 percent relative humidity in January. Indoor recoat times stretch with it.

Benjamin Moore Advance recoats at 16 hours at 77 degrees and 50 percent humidity and should not be applied above 85 percent humidity. Heat and moving air are what make a winter interior work.

- Wet season runs roughly October 11 to April 22
- Keep the heat on and move air through coated rooms
- Use a dehumidifier on trim and cabinet work
- Expect longer recoat windows in December and January

Old houses versus newer ones

Seventeen percent of Bellingham housing units date to 1939 or earlier and the city median build year is 1986.

Homes older than about 1950 have plaster over wood lath. Plaster cracks diagonally off door and window corners and needs cutting out, mesh tape and a skim in several passes. That repair is the single biggest cost difference against a 2005 build.

- Plaster cracks are cut out and skimmed, never caulked
- Lettered Streets, Columbia, Sehome Hill and South Hill carry most of the old stock
- Newer Barkley and Cordata homes are mostly drywall patch and paint

Lead paint rules

The EPA RRP rule covers pre-1978 housing and triggers at more than 6 square feet of disturbed paint inside a room. Window replacement and demolition are covered at any size.

The national survey behind the rule found lead-based paint hazards in 67 percent of pre-1940 homes, 51 percent of 1940 to 1959 homes and 10 percent of 1960 to 1977 homes.

- The firm must be certified, not only the worker
- Containment, HEPA vacuums and cleaning verification are the standard
- Bellingham Painting Co. is an EPA Lead-Safe certified firm
- About 43 percent of Bellingham housing predates 1980

Reading a bid

Three honest bids can land thousands of dollars apart on the same house. The difference hides in four places: coat count, prep description, trim method and product line.

- Two coats stated in writing, with the color change rule spelled out
- Prep described in verbs, not adjectives
- Brushed or sprayed trim named explicitly
- Product line named, not just the brand
- L&I registration active, \$15,000 specialty bond, insurance to state minimums

Washington paperwork and tax

Contractors must register with Labor and Industries and carry a bond plus liability coverage. Verify any of it free with the L&I Verify a Contractor lookup.

RCW 18.27.114 requires a signed disclosure statement on residential jobs of \$1,000 or more. Without it a contractor cannot lien your property.

- Specialty bond \$15,000 as of July 1, 2024
- Liability at least \$200,000 plus \$50,000 property damage, or \$250,000 combined
- Bellingham sales tax is 9.2 percent on the full contract price
- A quoted price is presumed to exclude tax unless itemized

After the crew leaves

Wall paint cures in roughly 2 to 4 weeks. Wash gently or not at all until then, and keep one labeled quart per color stored somewhere that will not freeze.

- Touch up with the same nap and technique used originally
- Run the bath fan 20 minutes after every shower all winter
- Workmanship is covered 2 years on the application itself
- Manufacturer product warranties are separate documents

What to check before you sign an interior painting contract

- ☐ The bid states two coats in writing and says what happens on a dark to light color change.
- ☐ Prep is described in verbs: fill, sand, caulk, tape cracks, spot prime.
- ☐ Trim is listed as brushed or sprayed, and the price reflects which one.
- ☐ The exact product line is named, not only the brand Benjamin Moore or Sherwin-Williams.
- ☐ Ceilings are either included or clearly excluded, with a price to add them back.
- ☐ The L&I registration number is on the paperwork and shows active with a current bond.
- ☐ You received and signed the RCW 18.27.114 disclosure statement before work started.
- ☐ Washington sales tax is itemized rather than folded quietly into the total.
- ☐ If your house predates 1978, the firm is EPA Lead-Safe certified and the bid names containment and cleaning verification.
- ☐ The payment schedule is written down, with a final payment held until your walkthrough.
- ☐ The 2 year workmanship warranty is in the contract, not just in conversation.
- ☐ Someone tells you where furniture goes and who moves it before day one.

Want a real number for your place?

We walk the job, measure it, and put the scope in writing. Free, and there is no pressure attached.

(360) 383-5454

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Prices shown are the ranges published on our website at the time of writing and are a starting point, not a quote. Every property is different. Figures update when the site does.