

Paint vs. Stain

FOR MASONRY SURFACES

Masonry isn't like drywall.

Part of what makes masonry so strong is its porosity— meaning, it's full of holes! This has a big impact on the method of coloring brick and other types of masonry.



Permeability

Masonry needs to breathe, in a certain sense. Water and moisture penetrate masonry surfaces, which expand and contract with the weather. Paint covers masonry with a film that seals off these porous surfaces, trapping in moisture, which in turn degrades both paint and masonry other time.

Nawkaw stain penetrates masonry and colors without sealing off pores, allowing surfaces to breathe.

Durability

Common latex paints form a film that rests on top of the surface of painted masonry. Weather events, dirt, and debris can pull on this film and cause it to peel and chip over time. That's why paint needs to be reapplied and occasionally stripped and replaced at great expense to preserve the desired color.

Acrylic stains such as NawTone penetrate and color masonry surfaces without peeling or chipping, which is perfect for rough masonry. Mineral stains such as NawTone-K are best for smoother masonry surfaces, and form a powerful chemical bond with masonry, leaving no difference between the masonry and the stain itself! There is nothing for the elements to pull on, as the color is part of the masonry! That's why stains last 25 years or longer in most cases.

The chart below shows how the cost of paint and stain on concrete varies over time!

Cost Comparison Over 25 Years

(1500 sq. ft. of Exterior Masonry)

	ACRYLIC LATEX PAINT	NAWKAW STAIN
Product + Labor Costs ¹	\$2,018 — \$4,218	\$5,000 — \$8,000
Reapplication (5-8 Times Over 25 years) ²	\$10,090 — \$33,744	\$0
Stripping (Required Every 2 Repaints; 1-2 Times Over 25 years) ³	\$6,827 — \$13,654	\$0
25 Years of Annual Cleaning ⁴	\$11,625	\$11,625
TOTAL	\$30,560 — \$63,241	\$16,625 — \$19,625

References:

1. "How Much Does It Cost To Paint Brick?" (2025). Porch.com, Inc. <https://porch.com/project-cost/cost-to-paint-brick>. Cost calculated at zip code: 30622
2. "Painting Brick Masonry" (2018). Brick Industry Association. <https://www.gobrick.com/media/file/6-painting-brick-masonry.pdf>. Sourced in 2025.
3. "Cost to Remove Paint." (April 2025). Technical Services Digest. Homewyse. https://www.homewyse.com/services/cost_to_remove_paint.html
4. "How Much Does Pressure Washing Cost?" TaskRabbit. <https://www.taskrabbit.com/blog/how-much-does-pressure-washing-cost>