



Sunbelt
Shutters

● HANDCRAFTED IN THE USA

OWNER'S GUIDE

Shutter Care & Maintenance

Keep your custom exterior shutters beautiful for decades

FINISHING • CLEANING • SEASONAL CARE • WOOD • COMPOSITE • HARDWARE

Protecting your investment & your warranty

www.sunbeltshutters.com • 888-778-4774

WELCOME

Caring for Your Shutters

Your Sunbelt shutters are hand-built from furniture-grade materials to last for years on the front of your home. Like any fine exterior woodwork, they reward a little routine attention — a proper finish, an occasional wash, and a seasonal once-over will keep them looking their best and operating smoothly for decades.

This guide walks through everything you need: finishing and painting, routine cleaning, seasonal maintenance, notes for each wood species and for composite, and how to care for your functional hardware.

A note on your warranty. Our warranty covers defects in material and workmanship on shutters that are **properly finished, installed, and maintained**. Following the steps in this guide — especially sealing every surface before installation and keeping the finish intact — is the best way to protect both your shutters and your coverage. Report any manufacturing concern before finishing or installing.

Care at a Glance

How often	What to do
On arrival	Inspect for damage or defects before finishing or installing. Acclimate unfinished shutters indoors 24–48 hours before painting.
Before install	Seal/paint all six sides including edges, ends, and cut-outs. Let cure fully. Primed shutters need their topcoats within 30 days of delivery.
2× per year	Wash gently with mild soap and water; rinse. Inspect the finish and touch up any chips.
Annually	Check hardware for tightness, lubricate pivots, inspect caulk and end grain, treat any mildew.
Every few years	Recoat or repaint as the finish shows wear — sooner on sun- and weather-exposed elevations.

Full warranty terms: www.sunbeltshutters.com/warranty.asp

THE FOUNDATION

Finishing & Painting

A complete, well-applied finish is the single most important thing you can do for exterior wood shutters. It seals out moisture — the main cause of warping, splitting, and paint failure — and it is a condition of your warranty.

Know what you ordered

- **Primed (recommended for painting):** primed in our shop with an exterior water-based primer, tinted gray. Your shutters are protected and ready for your finish coats — add topcoats within 30 days of delivery.
- **Final Paint:** finished in our shop with an exterior water-based satin topcoat. Ready to hang; simply maintain the finish over time.
- **Unfinished:** you must prime and paint before installation. Do not leave unfinished wood exposed to the weather.
- **Stain-Grade:** built from hand-selected pieces for a stained look. Apply a quality exterior stain and clear UV-protective topcoat — note we do not offer staining services.



A crisp, fully-sealed finish is what keeps shutters looking new

Finishing best practices

- **Coat all six sides** — front, back, top, bottom, and both edges — plus any cut-outs and end grain. Unsealed end grain wicks water.
- Use quality **100% acrylic exterior** paint. Two topcoats over primer.
- Follow the temperature and cure times on the paint can; let each coat dry fully.
- Lightly scuff-sand between coats for adhesion; wipe dust before recoating.
- **Lighter colors** reflect heat and reduce movement on sunny elevations; very dark colors run hotter.
- Keep touch-up paint on hand so small chips can be sealed before they spread.

Install louvers facing out. When closed, a louvered shutter's slats should angle **away from the house** so they shed rain — not channel it toward the wall.

Tall operable shutters need three hinges. Hinged shutters **60 inches or taller** must hang on three hinges per shutter to keep them from sagging or twisting. This is a condition of the warranty.

Primer and paint applied in our shop are warranted against cracking and peeling for 1 year from the date of sale. See our full Warranty & Returns policy at www.sunbeltshutters.com.

ROUTINE CARE

Cleaning Your Shutters

A gentle wash twice a year — spring and fall — keeps dirt, pollen, and airborne grime from dulling the finish and holding moisture against the surface.

The simple method

1. Mix a bucket of **mild soap** (dish soap or a gentle cleaner) with cool water.
2. Dust or dry-brush loose debris from the louvers and corners first.
3. Wash with a **soft cloth or soft-bristle brush**, working along the louvers and panels.
4. Rinse thoroughly with a garden hose at normal pressure.
5. Let air-dry, and wipe any pooled water from ledges and louver edges.

Removing mildew

In shaded or humid spots, wipe mildew with a solution of one part white vinegar to three parts water, or a mild oxygen-based cleaner. Rinse well and let dry. Persistent mildew usually signals the area stays damp — improve airflow or trim back foliage.



Soft brush along the louvers, then rinse — no pressure washing

Do

- Use mild soap, water, and a soft brush
- Rinse from the top down
- Spot-clean spills and bird droppings promptly

Don't

- Pressure-wash — it drives water into joints and strips finish
- Use bleach, solvents, or abrasive pads
- Let sprinklers hit the shutters daily

SEASON BY SEASON

Seasonal & Annual Maintenance

A yearly inspection — easiest to pair with your fall cleaning — catches small issues before they become repairs.

Season	Check & do
Spring	Wash off winter grime and pollen. Inspect the finish for chips or cracks from freeze-thaw and touch up. Confirm shutters and arms operate freely.
Summer	Watch sun-facing elevations for fading or chalking. Rinse coastal salt spray more often. Make sure open shutters are secured so wind can't slam them.
Fall	Deep-clean, then do the annual once-over: hardware tightness, caulk lines, end grain, and any mildew. Recoat where the finish is thin.
Winter	Before freezes, ensure water isn't pooling on ledges. Secure operable shutters against storms. Keep snow and ice from sitting against the wood.

Your annual checklist

- Inspect every face and edge for chips, cracks, or peeling — sand and touch up promptly.
- Reseal end grain and any exposed cut edges.
- Check caulk where hardware meets the wall; renew if cracked.
- Look for early mildew in shaded areas and treat it.
- On tall operable shutters, confirm all three hinges are tight.

When to recoat

Repaint or recoat when the finish looks thin, chalky, or faded, or when touch-ups no longer blend — typically every few years, and sooner on hot, sunny, or coastal elevations. Recoating on schedule is far easier than stripping failed paint later.

Catch problems early. A chip the size of a dime, sealed this weekend, prevents a swollen, split rail next year. Moisture intrusion through unsealed spots is the leading cause of exterior shutter failure.

BY MATERIAL

Caring for Each Wood

All of our woods are furniture-grade and, when fully sealed and maintained, perform beautifully outdoors. A few species-specific notes:

Southern Yellow Pine

Strong and economical, but the least naturally weather-resistant of our woods — it carries a 1-year material and workmanship warranty and depends most on a complete, well-maintained finish. Prime and paint all sides; never leave it exposed. Best painted rather than stained.

Incense Cedar & Rough Sawn (Western Red) Cedar

Naturally stable and rot-resistant with a classic grain. Excellent painted or stained; if staining, use a UV-protective exterior finish and refresh it periodically to prevent graying.

Red Grandis

A sustainably grown hardwood that is dimensionally stable and takes paint and stain exceptionally well — a great all-around choice. Maintain as you would any painted hardwood.

African Mahogany

A premium, dense hardwood prized for stained finishes. Keep a clear UV-protective topcoat fresh to preserve the color and guard against sun and moisture.



Cedar board & batten holds a rich painted or stained finish

Wood moves — that's normal. Solid wood expands and contracts slightly with humidity. Minor seasonal movement and hairline surface checks are characteristic of natural wood, not defects. A sound finish keeps this movement minimal.

BY MATERIAL

Composite & Hardware

Extira® / Rockbridge Composite

Composite resists moisture, rot, and termites, so it is our lowest-maintenance material and ideal for painted shutters in humid or coastal settings. It still needs paint for appearance and UV protection:

- Keep it **painted** — composite arrives primed; maintain the topcoat as you would on wood.
- Clean the same way: mild soap, water, and a soft brush; rinse.
- Touch up paint chips so edges stay sealed and crisp.
- No special rot treatment is needed — just finish care.



Composite louvereds — keep the paint fresh, and they shrug off the weather

KEEP IT OPERATING

Hardware Care

- **Tighten** hinge, pintle, and tieback screws once a year — vibration and wood movement loosen them over time.
- **Lubricate** hinge pivots and Bahama arm joints yearly with a light dry or silicone lubricant so they swing freely.
- **Rinse** hardware when you wash the shutters, especially near the coast where salt accelerates corrosion.
- **Powder-coated** steel and iron: touch up any chips or scratches to prevent rust; **stainless** needs only a wipe-down.
- **Operate gently** — open and close by the stiles, and always secure open shutters with the shutter dog or slide bolt so wind can't slam them.
- Adjust **telescoping Bahama arms** smoothly; don't force a bound arm.



Keep fasteners snug and pivots lubricated

QUICK REFERENCE

Troubleshooting

If you notice...	Try this
Cracking or peeling paint	Scrape and sand the loose area to a sound edge, spot-prime bare wood, then repaint. Address the moisture source (unsealed edge, failed caulk). On a finish we applied, cracking or peeling in the first year is covered — contact us before repainting.
Mildew or green film	Wash with 1:3 white vinegar and water or a mild oxygen cleaner; rinse. Improve airflow and sunlight where possible.
A shutter that sticks or won't sit flush	Check for loose or bent hardware and tighten; confirm even spacing at the wall. Seasonal swelling from a thin finish can also bind edges — reseal.
A tall hinged shutter sags	Shutters 60 inches or taller must hang on three hinges. Add the third hinge and tighten the others.
Loose or wobbly hardware	Tighten fasteners; if a hole has stripped, fill and re-drill or move to sound material. Re-caulk wall penetrations.
Surface checking or a hairline crack	Light checking is normal in wood. Sand smooth, seal, and repaint. For a split that grows, send us photos.
Fading on one elevation	Sun-exposed sides fade first — plan to recoat those elevations sooner, and consider lighter colors.

Still stuck? If something doesn't look right — especially a possible manufacturing issue — **contact us before altering or installing** the shutter. File a claim with photos at www.sunbeltshutters.com/warranty-claim.asp, or call us with your order number.

We're here to help

Questions about caring for your shutters, touch-up paint, or replacement hardware? Reach our team.

Call toll-free: 888-778-4774

Email: sales@sunbeltshutters.com

Web: www.sunbeltshutters.com

Warranty claims: www.sunbeltshutters.com/warranty-claim.asp

Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Central

This guide offers general care recommendations for exterior wood and composite shutters. Always follow the directions on your paint or stain. See our full Warranty & Returns policy at www.sunbeltshutters.com/warranty.asp. Updated September 2026.