



The Industry of Pressure Washing

by Shane Hester

The industry of pressure washing or power washing has never been considered, by most, to be a serious profession. With typically low start up costs, many fly by night companies come and go leaving a bad taste in the mouth of many unsatisfied customers. It happens in all industries, but the pressure washing industry seems to attract almost anybody out of a job or sick of working for the man.

A couple hundred dollars and a trip to the local home improvement store to purchase a pressure washer, and they are in business. They hit the road running with the attitude that they are going to be the next millionaire. On a shoestring budget, they print up their own fliers to hang on telephone poles and go knocking door to door asking for work only to be let down by an enormous wave of no's.

To combat their lack of marketing and sales knowledge, many of these companies fall into the trap of offering a lower price than the competition, or low balling in a desperate attempt to get work. They offer ridiculously low prices and then have to take short cuts in order to make a profit. Many of them can't afford general liability insurance or workman's compensation insurance so they operate without it.

With their less than mediocre equipment and knowledge, they damage your property and give you a horrible service. Some of the horror stories my customers have told me about their past experiences with one of these types of companies are disturbing to say the least. From blowing out people's window screens to leaving wand marks all over their vinyl siding or scarring up their expensive decks to putting an inferior sealer on it.

I've heard it all and the scarier part is; what have these kinds of companies done to their property that they didn't see? Things like forcing water in behind the vinyl siding by using too much water pressure or using only water to clean the home, meaning the mold and mildew would return in a few months because it was never killed and because they did not apply a protective wax to prevent re-growth. I've heard of some unethical contractors cutting their customers deck stain 50% with mineral spirits to cut down own their costs.

Some even skip the important step of wood brightening or neutralizing during the wood restoration process. All this boils down to giving the pressure washing industry a bad image, which breeds more fly by night companies with the misconception that pressure washing is easy and that anybody can start up with a few dollars and do it. It also forces a lot of homeowners to result to doing their own pressure washing which can be dangerous and definitely painstaking.