

Ask Jon Eakes

"Sealants", caulking and other confusing vocabulary

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Sealants, caulking and other confusing vocabulary There are all kinds of "sealants" used in construction. What we normally call a "caulking" is properly called a sealant -- a thick material that cures to a flexible solid designed to "seal" the space between two materials -- particularly two materials that may move. Their function is to seal out rain and sometimes to make a joint air tight. Then there are "sealants" designed to seal off or waterproof a surface. There are sealants for grout in tiles, sealants for stone surfaces, sealants for paving stones, sealants for asphalt driveways and of course sealants or "water repellents" for decks. There are even "primer/sealers" for drywall designed to seal the drywall so it won't drink in excess paint. Some sealers are designed to block water but not vapour, like sealants for bricks or even waterproofing liquids for canvas. So remember, caulking is just a thick sealant.

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