

Decking Installation Guidelines

Be sure to complete this checklist:

- ❖ Material stored out of direct sunlight and weather
- ❖ Spacing at 3/16" for 4" and 1/4" for 6"
- ❖ T&G Porch flooring in covered areas only
- ❖ Adequate ventilation under deck
- ❖ Span of 16" max for 1x4, 1x6 (or)
- ❖ Span of 24" max for 5/4x4, 5/4x6
- ❖ Stainless steel fasteners
- ❖ Pre Drilling required on end of boards
- ❖ End cuts are sealed with wax
- ❖ Appropriate oil based finish all four sides

Storage and Handling

For best results, exotic hardwood decking should be kept out of direct sunlight and not exposed to weather prior to installation. Although it is Kiln Dried or Air Dried, it will need a few weeks to equalize to the ambient moisture content.

Once a decking package is delivered to a job site, most of the equalization has already occurred. Keep the material off the ground by placing a few pieces of lumber under the deck package. Cover the material with a tarp to protect it from sun and rain damage.

Material Application

Spacing: 1x4 and 5/4x4 decking should be installed with a 3/16" space between boards; 1x6 and 5/4x6 should be installed with a 1/4" space between boards. This space allows for air circulation, allows room for expansion and provides for the proper spacing as boards become fully seasoned. Approximate shrinking and/or swelling is 3/16" on 4" decking and 1/4" on 6" decking.

Span: You must consult local building codes to be sure you are following local regulations. Generally, 1x4 and 1x6 decking can be installed with joists on 16" centers. 5/4x4 and 5/4x6 decking can be installed on 24" centers. When installing on an angle, joist space should be on 12" centers. Final joist spacing should only be determined after consulting local building codes.

Ground-side Ventilation: Build your deck so that the surface is at least 16" above the ground. There must be adequate air circulation underneath the deck in order to prevent cupping and warping of boards. In wet areas or over water, additional clearance is recommended. In close ground applications a vapor barrier may be necessary to prevent moisture from absorbing in to the underside of the deck boards.

Fasteners: Several different options are available for fasteners and for fastening technique. We recommend stainless steel screws through the face of every board, two screws per joist.

There are several types of stainless steel screws available but may require pre-drilling with the exotic woods. Pre-drilling is always required on the ends of boards. We do not recommend the use of non-stainless steel fasteners as they may cause discoloration near the fastener.

End Sealer: Exotic hardwood decking is always end sealed during manufacturing to help prevent splitting and checking on the ends of boards. We recommend that boards are end-sealed as soon as reasonably possible after cutting during installation. A clear, water resistant wax should be used.

Finishing Options

In order to prevent surface checking, cupping and discoloration, we recommend that all exotic hardwoods be finished on all four sides prior to installation. Especially in dry, sunny conditions finishing should be done prior to exposure to weather. Finishing the underside of your deck will reduce potential cupping by inhibiting moisture from absorbing in to the wood.

If a natural color is desired, finishing can be done with a water seal product. Apply as soon as possible during or after the installation of the deck. For best results, apply the treatment according to the manufacturer's instructions.

To maintain the natural color, a high quality penetrating oil finish with UV inhibitors should be used. There are several coatings available on the market that have been formulated specifically for use with exotic hardwoods – some include up to 99% UV protection. Please consult your local decking distributor or contractor for recommendations.

Exotic hardwood decking can also be pressure washed, but you must be careful to not damage the surface fibers by setting the pressure too high. Pressure washing may be necessary between oil treatments in order to remove surface discoloration.

Porch Flooring: It is recommended that all T&G exterior applications be in a covered environment and be installed with a pitch to allow for proper drainage. Please refer to local building codes for specifics in pitch requirements. Material should be finished on all six sides before application to prevent moisture from collecting on the underside of the project. T&G products do not allow the spacing for ventilation and drainage of S4S products, which is why only covered installations are recommended. Fastening should be done with stainless steel fasteners, preferable ring shank or barbed.

Required Equipment

Exotic hardwood decking can be easily crosscut with a good quality chop saw using a carbide-tipped blade. Ripping can be done on a standard table saw, using a well-aligned high quality fence.

When drilling, always use the highest quality drill bits available. If screwing through the face, a countersink bit with a positive stop should be used so all screw heads end up at a consistent depth. If not pre-drilling, be sure to not let the fastener sink too deep in to the wood.

Routing or planing can be done with both high speed steel or carbide cutters. Feed speed should be fairly slow. Sanding is recommended to complete your project.

Safety Concerns

Safety glasses and a dust mask should always be worn when working with hardwood lumber. Some people may have an allergic reaction to hardwood dust. Remove wood splinters immediately to prevent infection.

Disclaimer

Our tropical decking products are carefully manufactured and inspected to ensure quality. However, these products are natural wood products and as such are subject to variations in weight, density, color, grain and performance. Wood decking is subject to dimensional changes as the moisture content in the wood changes with humidity in the air. Swelling, shrinkage, checking and other movement of individual pieces are normal occurrences in wood decking.

Due to the natural characteristics of wood decking, many oil and water based coatings may have a reaction with the wood. These reactions may include but are not limited to drying, adhesion and color change. It is recommended that installers test any finishing product over several samples of the wood decking to ensure compatibility.

Sizes and specifications are subject to change without notice.

Local building codes must be consulted when building an exterior deck. Most counties require building permits.