

# Plywood Earns Popularity With Low Cost

Plywood, one of the most popular building materials available, is also one of the most economical. The American Plywood Association offers tips for the selection and handling of the wood.

Two types are available. Group 1. Exterior Type, is for outdoor use, and Group 2. Interior Type, is for indoor use. Within each type are different grades.

For example, there are grades with two good sides to be used where both sides of the panel will be seen, and grades with only one good side for applications where only one side will be in view in the finished job.

Plywood is manufactured in large-size panels. Usually, laying out of the parts for cutting is the only step required before starting actual construction. Be sure to allow for saw kerfs between adjacent pieces.

**SAWING.** For hand-sawing, use a 10 to 15 ft. cross-cut. Support panel firmly with face up. Use a fine-toothed coping saw for curves. For inside cuts start hole with drill, then use coping or keyhole saw. For power sawing, a plywood blade gives best results but a combination blade may be used.

Panel should be placed face down for hand power sawing. Use panel face up for table power sawing. With first cuts, reduce the panel to pieces small enough for easy handling. Using scrap lumber underneath the panel prevents splintering on the back side.

You should plan to cut matching parts with the same saw setting. If available, you may use a jigsaw, bandsaw, or sabre saw for curved cuts. In any case, be sure the blade enters the face of the panel.

**DRILLING.** Support the plywood firmly. Use brace and bit for larger holes. When the point appears through the plywood, reverse and complete hole from the back. When drilling, finish slowly to avoid splintering.

**PLANING.** The edge grain of plywood runs in alternate directions, so always plane from ends toward the center. Use a shallow-set blade.

**SANDING.** Most sanding should be confined to edges with 1-0 or finer sandpaper, before sealer or flat undercoat is applied. Plywood is sanded smooth in manufacture, so only minimum surface sanding is necessary. Use 3-0 sandpaper in direction of grain only, after sealing.

**NAILING.** Nail size is generally determined by thickness

of plywood used. With glue, the following sizes will produce strong joints. For 3/4-inch, and 1/2-inch plywood, use 6 d finish nails. For 3/4-inch, 3 d or 4 d is recommended. For 1/2-inch, use 1-inch brads or (for backs where there is no objection to heads showing) 1-inch blue lath nails. Substitute casing for finish nails wherever a heavier nail is needed. For exterior work, use galvanized or hot-dipped, zinc-coated nails to avoid rust.

**OTHER FASTENINGS.** Screws, bolts, and other special fastenings may be used. Always pre-drill for screws. Minimum screw sizes for each thickness of plywood are recommended as follows: 3/4-inch plywood, 1 1/2-inch No. 8; 1/2-inch plywood, 1 1/2-inch No. 8; 3/4-inch plywood, 1 1/2-inch No. 6; 1/2-inch plywood, 1-inch No. 6; 1/2-inch plywood, 3/4-inch No. 4.

**GLUING.** Glue may be used on both edges and faces. Apply to clean surfaces only. Press firmly together until "bead" appears. Maintain pressure with clamps, nails or screws to allow glue to set. For exterior exposure use resorcinol type waterproof glues. Gluing is recommended for strongest, permanent fastening.

For interior finishing, use only top-quality materials, and follow the manufacturer's directions. According to the A.P.A., the only surface preparation required is "touch sanding" to smooth any filler or spackle applied to minor openings in the panel face or to remove blemishes. "Touch sanding" should always be done with the grain, using fine

grade sandpaper. Do not paint over dust spots of oil, or glue.

**PAINT FINISHES.** Either water-base or oil-base paints can be used to get flat, semi-gloss or gloss finishes. When water-base paints are used, seal the plywood first with clear resin sealer or oil base primer. To apply interior paint, apply one coat of the primer recommended by the paint manufacturer. Then, apply one or two coats of a compatible paint or enamel, allowing each coat to dry before the following coat is applied.

**NATURAL FINISHES.** Grain contrasts and the neatly-made mechanical repairs in plywood panels can be pleasantly subdued with transparent, non-penetrating sealers and companion stains. Tones of light gray, brown or tan appear most compatible with wood colors.

Companion stain-sealers can be applied as follows: (1) Tint a small amount of sealer with color stain and apply to sample. When the desired tone is obtained, mix enough stain and sealer in the same proportion to do the entire job. (The sealer may also be applied as a first coat, followed by application of the stain.) (2) Apply by brush or spray to the full length of the panel to avoid laps. To avoid brush marks with darker tones, it may be desirable to apply several

resin sealer; sand lightly when dry. This step can be omitted if greater color penetration is desired.

(3) Add color using tinted undercoat, thin enamel pigmented resin sealer, or light stains. Apply thinly and carefully and wipe to the proper depth of color; sand lightly when dry.

(4) Apply one coat of satin varnish or brushing lacquer. Exterior finishing is also simple. Edges of plywood with exposed end grain absorb moisture rapidly unless sealed. This can be done by coating the edges thoroughly with a top-quality house coat primer, normally before the panels are installed.

**ANOTHER METHOD** of applying a natural finish, which does not require special companion stains and sealers, is as follows:

(1) Whiten the panel with pigmented resin sealer or white undercoat thinned one to one with turpentine or thinner. Wipe with dry cloth before it becomes tacky; sand lightly when dry.


(2) Seal wood with clear

**MORE THAN 100** suggestions for things to make with plywood, including items for the garden, toys, camping, pets, and furnishings, are included in a free P.A.A. catalog picturing each project and including information on ordering plans.

Plans themselves are available for 10 cents each for postage and handling and include layout patterns for making the best use of plywood panels, material lists, construction details, and step-by-step instructions.

Free catalog is available from the American Plywood Association, 1119 A St., Tacoma, Wash. 98401. Ask for Form 589-620.

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