

Woodmart Hardwood Decking Installation and Maintenance Recommendations

1. Introduction

Proper installation, care and maintenance will ensure you get the best performance and lifespan from your deck. These recommendations should be read in conjunction with NZS3602, NZS3604, NZS3605, NZS3640, NZS4203 and any relevant Territorial/ Local Council requirements.

2. Storage and Handling

Hardwood decking should be kept dry and out of the weather until installation. On site each pack should be kept off the ground by placing it on bearers preferably over concrete to minimise water absorption. Fully cover the product to protect it from sun and rain until laying. Always recheck sizing before laying and if the timber has expanded by a mm or 2 allow for this in the laying calculations (eg Shrinkage).

3. Installation

Ventilation Air circulation under the decking is **very important** to help minimise cupping and warping of any timber. Proper ventilation ensures the potential difference in moisture levels between top and underside of the board is reduced and extends the life and performance of the deck. **The sub deck should have at least 450mm clearance from the ground** and should also have adequate drainage. This, in conjunction with suitable spacing, will allow for adequate ventilation. NB: It is important that the perimeter of the deck is not fully enclosed by a surround and remains open to airflow if the deck is enclosed suitable implanted vents are recommended. Completely enclosing the sides of the deck will inhibit proper ventilation and compromise the performance of the decking. In wet areas or over water, additional clearance is recommended. **Failure to provide suitable ventilation is a major cause of early decking failure.**

Span

Hardwood Decking **19mm** thick should be installed at maximum **450mm joist centres**. For **32mm** thick decking this can be increased up to **600mm** joist centres. Given that Radiata pine joists are softwood and the decking is hardwood, the joists should be clean, and sound and the screws should penetrate at least **40mm into the joists** to achieve good holding. Pre-drilling and counter-sinking is Recommended for all Hardwood decking and essential to avoid end splits.

End sealing

End sealing will help minimise splitting and checking at the ends of the boards. We recommend the boards be end-sealed with a quality penetrating oil or a specialised end sealing product as soon as possible after cutting and before final installation.

Coating

In order to minimise surface checking, cupping, and discolouration it is recommended Hardwood decking be coated on all four sides prior to being laid. (To prolong the silvering process), you may use a tinted coating which generally contains the UV component. The darker the tint the more effective this will be and last although this will also eventually silver. Coating will also moderate water transference into and out of the wood, Proper coatings can vastly decrease the maintenance required on your decking. NB: Boards should be

free of all surface marks and stains before coating, cleaning with a recommended deck cleaning product beforehand will assure this. It is recommended that a “clear” decking oil is used. Please note a clear coated oil will offer protection to the timber but will not slow the silvering off process.

Spacing

In average New Zealand climatic conditions, Kiln Dried (KD) (i.e. under 18% moisture content) decking will need extra spacing or gaps to allow for expansion as the decking takes in ambient moisture. If laid too closely the deck will swell and possibly lift off the joists. In average New Zealand climatic conditions **90x19mm** KD decking should be spaced **4mm** apart. **140x19mm** decking should be spaced **6mm** apart. The specified gap for each size will allow the deck to drain and allow air circulation under and around the decking. **NB: These are recommendations only. An allowance for regional climate conditions/ specie should also be factored in.**

Fastening

Screws are essential for 140x19mm decking. We recommend **10g 65/75mm** stainless steel (**316**) screws through the pre-drilled (even for self-tapping screws) and countersunk face of each board, two per joist 20 mm from the ends and edges. **Care should be taken not to over-drive screws or to counter sink too deep, screw heads should be flush with deck.** For 90x19mm decking screws are also recommended.

4. Maintenance

Cleaning & Washing Hardwood decks should be cleaned with a stiff brush at least once a year to clear gaps and remove surface mould which can be a slip hazard in wet weather. It is also important for the life of the deck to keep it clear of leaf litter/debris, place pot plants or other large objects on raised “feet” to allow the decking under them adequate airflow. Hardwood decking can be water blasted but is not recommended. BUT it is important to note if you do, to do so at a low pressure so as not to damage the fibres of the board by going too hard and/or too close. Care must be taken not to stop at the end of the stroke but to lift the nozzle away when changing direction. Washing/brushing the deck down with a recommended deck cleaner available from any Building Retailer. There are various chemical cleaning agents available, from detergents through to acids. The amount of runoff/Bleed will depend on the specie, how dry it is before the decking is laid and how exposed the deck is to the weather and elements.

Re-coating Always follow the manufacturer’s specification for re-coating.

Disclaimer

Hardwood Decking is manufactured with care and inspected to ensure quality, but it is a natural wood product and subject to variations in weight, density, colour, grain and performance. Care must be taken at installation and maintenance to allow for movement.

Some swelling, shrinkage, movement, Pin hole and checking are normal occurrences in timber decking.

Woodmart takes no responsibility for accuracy or for any damage caused directly or indirectly through their use.