

AN INTRODUCTION TO TIMBER

There are four main types of wood products:

Wood for Construction

Most wood for construction is made from Spruce and Pine trees. These are similar to the ones we use for Christmas trees – just bigger. Hardwoods and other softwood species play an important but more specialist role in construction.

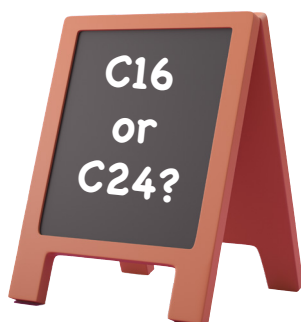
Wood is cut in a sawmill to make rectangular pieces in a set of standard* sizes. The most common of these for construction wood are:

THICKNESS	WIDTH						
22mm x	50mm	75mm	100mm		150mm		
47mm x	50mm	75mm	100mm	125mm	150mm	200mm	225mm
75mm x			100mm		150mm		225mm

There are also a standard set of lengths, such as:

2.4m	3.0m	3.6m	4.2m	4.8m	5.4m	6.0m
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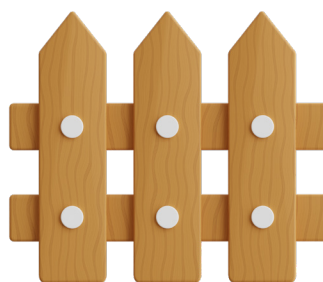
* Finished sizes of timber are usually smaller than the indicated nominal size.



Because trees contain a lot of water, wood must also be dried in large ovens before it can be used in warm dry places like our houses. This Kiln Drying process takes place at the sawmill.

Dimension timber is common in two strength grades:

- C16 products for general work
- C24 where higher strength may be required.



Wood for Exteriors

There are many wood products for use outside, such as:

- Cladding to make great walls
- Decking for practical patios
- Fencing to stop the dog escaping
- Landscaping to sit and admire.



Wood for Interiors

This category includes Skirtings, Architraves and small wood trim, as well as window boards, panelling and interior cladding. These products need special care with storage and often have special racks or end-feed storage spaces as they can be easily damaged.

Wood-Based Panels

Wood can also be made or recycled into big flat Wood-Based Panels sometimes called sheet materials:

- Particleboard flooring is made from wood chips
- OSB for construction is made from wood strands
- Plywood for many different uses is made from wood slices called veneers
- MDF for furniture is made from wood fibres

Common sizes for wood-based panels are 1,220mm wide by 2,440mm long, or sometimes cut lengthways to 600mm x 2,440mm like Particleboard flooring. Panels vary in thickness with the most common dimensions being 6mm, 9mm, 12mm, 18mm, 22mm and 25mm.



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Preservative treatment

Wood sometimes needs help to have a longer life when used outside – this is called preservative treatment. There are three different levels of help:

- Use Class 2 products are for low-risk areas like inside buildings so are best not used outside
- Use Class 3 products are for use outside but never when touching the ground, like cladding or decking
- Use Class 4 products are the only ones that can be in the ground, like a fence post or sleeper.
- All cut ends need to be retreated by brushing on preservative.



SAFETY and STORAGE

- Wood products can be rough around the edges so always wear gloves when handling.
- Single pieces of wood can also be heavy so you will be provided safety boots to protect your feet and toes
- Packs and larger quantities of wood are always moved with mechanical equipment like forklifts.
- Take care when cutting bands to open packs. Wear goggles to protect your eyes and be ready to step back in case pieces fall.
- In a yard there are often things above so wear a hard hat or bump cap to protect your head
- There is often sawdust around wood products especially when cutting. Always wear a dust mask in these circumstances and make sure you vacuum rather than sweep.
- Wood and panels are dried at the Sawmill so it is always best to store them inside a shed or protect them from the weather with covers
- Wood can bow and twist if it is not properly stored. This is why specially designed racks are best for storage.
- Where racks are not available use extra pieces of wood as bearers to provide support, keep wood level and away from the ground.
- Never store wood near puddles or potential sources of water like drain pipes.
- To keep wood at its best it's important to regularly tidy racks and make sure pieces are straight and sheets are lying flat.

