

Ipe Decking Installation/Maintenance Tips

Keep all decking material clean and dry prior to treating and installation.

Sealing

Treat deck materials with a penetrating sealer on all 6 sides prior to installation. It is important to understand that treating only one side of the decking material creates an unequal moisture transfer and will actually increase the likelihood of cupping.

For optimal results, a second coat of high quality stain should be applied three to four months after installation.

Consult your dealer as to the best weather treatment for your area. Finishes with fungicides, mildewcides and U.V.inhibitors will keep your deck looking it's best longer.

Installation

Because Ipe Decking is kiln dried, there is almost no shrinkage. Like all woods though, it will **absorb** moisture. Make sure to leave at least 1/4" between boards side to side to avoid buckling as the wood expands. Shrinkage/expansion length wise is nil, so trim the ends neatly and butt together tightly.

For best results, drill pilot holes 3/4" from the end of the boards and at least 3/4" from the sides of the boards to minimize splitting. Boards should be **glued to joists with a high quality polyurethane glue** and fastened with **stainless steel screws**, which should penetrate 1 1/2" or more into the deck joists.

Please make sure to follow your local building codes. **It is very important to leave adequate ventilation under your deck, i.e. at least 18" from the ground.**

Moisture and temperature, which vary greatly with local conditions, are the primary factors that affect the rate of decay. A deck that dries after wetting will last longer than one that stays damp. Wood deteriorates more rapidly in warm, humid conditions than in cool or dry conditions. Higher elevations are less favorable to decay than low elevations.

Maintenance

Keep your deck free of leaf, pine needle and other debris buildup. These can retain water and clog drainage channels resulting in a deck that cannot drain and dry properly after wetting.

Periodically move planters, benches and other deck accessories to allow the deck under them to dry thoroughly.

After a year or so of use, simple maintenance will revitalize your Ipe deck. Spring in particular is a good time to clean and refinish your deck. Use a high quality deck cleaner and follow directions carefully. Be sure to exercise caution in the event a power washer is used as excessive force with a power washer can damage any wood deck.

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Maintenance, continued

Once the deck is completely dry, apply high quality stain according to manufacturer's directions. Application of a higher quality stain will generally result in a longer useful life for your refinished deck.

Disclaimer

Ipe decking is carefully manufactured and inspected to insure quality. However, any natural decking product is 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 and finishes may have a reaction with the wood. These reactions may include and are limited to, drying, adhesion, and color change.

It is recommended that installers test any finishing product over several samples of the wood decking to determine compatibility.