

Important Finishing Instructions For Stain Grade Wood Doors



Fimbel Architectural Door Specialties (FADS) warrants that its door sections are manufactured to meet or exceed industry standards at time of shipment. Failure to follow the recommended finishing instructions MAY lead to premature failure and void the factory warranty.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION APPLIES TO THE FOLLOWING FADS PRODUCTS:

Early American Meranti-Mahogany Beadboard and V-Groove Batten Carriage House Doors (AMB, AMV), Early American Western Red Cedar V-Groove Batten Carriage House Doors (AWV), and Deluxe Estates Meranti Mahogany Stain Grade Carriage House Doors (DMH)

STAIN GRADE WOOD DOORS

Wood door sections are very durable and can last a lifetime if properly protected from moisture or they can deteriorate in a very short period if neglected or improperly treated. Wood absorbs moisture. When doors leave the factory the moisture content is 8-10%. Improperly finished doors can absorb moisture and reach a moisture content of 20 to 25%. This leads to swelling, warping, and raising of the grain. When they dry out, splits, checks or cracks can develop.

Wood door sections must be finish coated inside and out including the rabbets and ends, either prior to, or immediately following installation. Any door that is allowed to absorb significant moisture from any source either internal or external will swell and/or bow, and the joints will open up when the door ultimately dries out. Cracks or splits that occur after installation are caused by expansion and contraction and are not considered defects.

CAUTION NEW CONSTRUCTION: The interiors of most new buildings are very damp and high humidity is absorbed by the interior face of the door which causes warping, and in some cases the absorption is so great that it penetrates to the outside surface and causes finish failure. The worst conditions occur in the winter in new buildings that have been insulated and closed tight. Under these conditions moisture condenses on the inside of the door and is absorbed into the inside face unless the face is properly coated. It usually takes a full heating season before the excess moisture in the building is dissipated. Tracking water or snow into the garage only aggravates the situation.

A Stain Grade door can be a beautiful addition and can compliment or enhance the appearance of a building. Because of the materials of construction and the finish systems available that are chosen to enhance the natural appearance of the wood, Stain Grade doors require more careful consideration in finish selection and adherence to a strict routine of yearly maintenance than Paint Grade doors. Improper finish selection and lack of proper yearly maintenance will cause the door to fail prematurely. It is not uncommon for improperly selected finishes and lack of maintenance to cause a door to fail within its first year. To ensure years of service, the following guidelines must be strictly adhered to:

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1. Consideration of the building site and hence the exposure of the door to the elements is very important! Variables such as the amount of overhang above the door to protect it from the rain and sun, the orientation to southern or southwest exposures to the sun, the amount of driveway or concrete and color of the driveway in front of the door, and the physical location of the door on the house all play a role in the proper selection process. To illustrate this, consider the following examples:

Worst case scenario: A Stain Grade door stained a very DARK color installed on an INTERIOR corner of an “L” shaped house with direct SOUTHERN exposure with no shade and a large BLACK paved driveway or DARK pavers or DARK stamped concrete (which will absorb and radiate an extreme amount of heat back to the door). The finish on this door WILL FAIL!! We are not aware of any finishing system that would adequately protect a stain grade door under these conditions due to the extreme heat that the door will be exposed to. The door will get baked and the finish will fail. Our paint grade doors will survive beautifully under these conditions.

Best case scenario: A Stain Grade door stained NATURAL color installed on the FLAT face of a building with a NORTHERN exposure with a LIGHT colored driveway and plenty of natural shade. Properly maintained on an ANNUAL basis, this door will give a lifetime of beautiful service.

Obviously there are a multitude of variations between the two extremes listed above that will give a lifetime of satisfactory service, they are provided as illustrations only to educate one as to how the variables in each unique job site can affect the life of the door.

2. A good quality exterior grade stain must be chosen for the initial coat if the door is to be stained and not finished natural. Follow the instructions from the stain manufacturer for proper application. Using stain alone, or using an all in one combination stain/topcoat finish is unacceptable and will not adequately protect the door and will void the warranty. Remember to consider the color of the door with respect to its exposure to the sun. The darker the color, the more heat will be absorbed from the sun and the more difficult it will be for the entire finish system to adequately protect the door.

3. At least two (2) coats of a good quality GLOSS marine grade varnish must be applied following the manufacturer’s instructions. A minimum of two (2) finish topcoats should be applied to ALL surfaces of the door. Failure to coat all surfaces will void the warranty due to moisture absorption thru the unprotected surfaces. Homeowners need to be aware that a garage can be a very damp place, so properly finishing all edges, rabbets and inside surfaces are as important as finishing the outside. We recommend the use of “EPIFANES CLEAR GLOSS MARINE VARNISH”, “EPIFANES WOOD FINISH GLOSS”. Distributors for EPIFANES can be found on the WEB at [HTTP://WWW.EPIFANES.COM](http://www.epifanes.com) Local boat and marine supply stores also may carry EPIFANES or know how to contact them as well.

4. ANNUAL maintenance of the door is critical. At least two (2) coats of varnish with sanding in between each coat is required on an ANNUAL basis to maintain a protective finish. Improper maintenance of the finish will severely decrease the life of the door and lead to warping, opening of joints and cracking/checking of solid wood overlays.