



design guide

and product information sheet

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data providing related information to assist with correct product selection, application and specification

External Maintenance

the need for maintaining exterior timbers
the cold hard facts



to maintain a satisfactory appearance and optimum performance from most natural products, some degree of ongoing care is required - and timber is no exception -

the benefits of timber

When timber is chosen for visual applications externally, it is usually for its superior appearance as well as its many other physical and environmental properties. Collectively, these benefits are unmatched by any other building material. The use of timber externally should not be undertaken without acknowledgement that some degree of maintenance will be required.

to coat OR not to coat

Technology relating to the coating of external timber has advanced significantly over recent decades. As new products and new formulations have emerged, so has the understanding that leaving external timber unfinished to retain its natural characteristics is not a good idea. The single biggest contributor to degradation of timber is the ingress of moisture. ***The application of a suitable coating can eliminate that problem but the need for ongoing maintenance of the selected finish needs to be understood and acknowledged.***

other options which provide the 'weathered' look

The appeal of a 'naturally weathered grey look' on external timbers has been evidenced by the number of articles featuring such buildings in architectural publications over many years. However, the unevenness of the weathered surfaces and their long-term pitfalls, particularly in environments prevailing throughout most of Australia, are seldom if ever mentioned.

Finishes with a similar appearance can be achieved through the application of a coating designed specifically to provide that end result. The benefits of applying that coating commence immediately by eliminating moisture ingress.

Periodic re-coating will maintain the protective properties and retain the fresh, crisp appearance of a recently completed structure.



coloured coating provides a more practical weathered look

coating purely for colour

Apart from the need to protect external timber from moisture, one of the other most common reasons for applying a finishing coating is to either maintain or change the timber's natural colours. Timbers like Western Red Cedar which has a wide range of natural grain patterns and colour tones are enhanced with the application of either clear or lightly pigmented coatings. In other cases, Western Red Cedar may have more heavily pigmented finishes applied to soften the natural colour extremes



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while retaining all of its other natural properties. Timbers which are chosen for less striking grain patterns are often coated with strong colour finishes to be compatible with adjoining materials.

Irrespective of the purpose intended and the colour of the coating applied, all finishes which are applied purely for colour enhancing also require periodic re-application.

a well structured programme of maintenance can retain the original freshness of timber



a mix of clear and pigmented finish



a clear finish on joinery & cladding



maintenance retains a fresh look building



a mix of clear and pigmented finish

how often should re-coating be applied

The degree and frequency of maintenance required on external timbers will vary depending on a number of factors :

- # properties & quality of coating material
- # number of coats initially applied
- # colour / tone of coating chosen
- # orientation of surface
- # whether horizontal or vertical surface
- # degree of protection from overhangs
- # average weather conditions of location
- # proximity to coastal conditions
- # age & porosity of the timber
- # sawn or dressed finish to timber

Essentially, observing the following Golden Rules will ensure lifelong satisfactory performance and appearance from good quality coating products :

- # re-apply as frequently as necessary to retain the natural beauty and colour of the timber.
- # re-coat when boards show signs of :
 - # weathering or drying
 - # loss of water repellence
 - # the start of bleaching or greying
 - # initial development of surface checks

In some cases, re-coating may be required annually, in some cases a little more frequently and in other cases, acceptable performance can be expected for periods of 5 to 10 years.

the optimum external mix

Western Red Cedar rates highly for exterior timber applications. Due to its unique natural properties, it is also classified as one of the best timber species for the retention of applied finishes.

Penetrating oils also rate highly for exterior applications. Renown for their ease of application and re-application, they are unmatched by most film forming coatings.

Putting these factors together, a Western Red Cedar product finished with penetrating oil will provide the optimum exterior timber product. TIMBECK Cedar Products specialises in the manufacture and pre-coating of these products.

However, while Western Red Cedar and Penetrating Oils provide the optimum external timber package, ***acceptance of some ongoing care as detailed in this guide should form part of the material selection decision.***



buildings as striking as this can retain their natural charm and warmth with a well programmed maintenance schedule