



Choosing the Right Stain

When choosing the right stain for your job, keep in mind the following factors.

Latex vs. Oil- Latex stains, also known as Acrylic, are stains that are water based. These stains clean up easily with warm, soapy water and give off little odor during application. These are an excellent choice in interior applications or where there is little exposure to the elements. Oil stains, also known as Alkyd, contain oil instead of water. Oil based stains are more durable than latex stains and are mainly used in exterior applications. They require mineral spirits for clean up and have a strong odor during application, so be sure to apply in a well ventilated area.

Interior vs. Exterior—Interior and exterior stains differ in their composition. Each contains additives specifically formulated for their intended use. For example, exterior stains will have additional mildew blockers and fade resistors that allow them to withstand the elements and constant sunlight. Exterior decking stains contain scuff resistors that will keep your deck finish from wearing off. For best results, be sure to use the stain that is intended for your project.

Stain Grades—Not all stains are made to the same specifications. Different chemical compositions can affect how stains absorb into the wood and how long they last. When choosing a stain, be sure you are choosing a quality product. Curtis Lumber only carries top quality stains, so you can be sure that you are getting a great product!

Semi-Transparent, Semi-Solid, & Solid—Stains come in different opacities. Semi-Transparent stains will allow the grains and textures of the wood or surface to show through, semi-solid stains contain more pigment and alkyd for UV resistance and durability, while solid stains will finish to a smoother surface, but yet still show some texture. In general, Semi-Transparent provides for a casual look while solid finishes to a cleaner, more formal appearance.

Color Choice—When selecting a color, it is important to remember semi-transparent stains will allow the surface's original wood grain and coloring to come through, while Solid stains are more opaque and cover the majority of the original surface. Because of this, solid stains tend to have a larger range of available colors, while semi-transparent stains are more limited. When choosing a stain color, it is important to not only consider the color of the house, deck or other surface it will be next to, but also the natural surroundings and other homes in the area.

Curtis Lumber can custom match virtually any color with a small swatch. Be sure to bring in your color choice for an exact match every time.

Durability—Consider where you are applying your stain. Depending on the surface and location, your choice of stain should be suited to the application. Siding stains are best used for exterior walls and fences. However, when staining a deck, it is important to make sure the stain is suited for decking. Deck stains have stronger binding agents that hold the stain together and make it more resistant to wear. Your friendly Curtis Lumber salesperson will guide you to the right stain for your project, so you can spend fewer days staining and more time doing what you love.