



## Maintaining Your Wood Products

Natural wood products can be found throughout your new home. From basic construction materials to beautiful wood finishes, it is important to understand wood's natural characteristics and how to best care for it.

Natural wood products are the oldest material used by humans for construction after stone and an ideal green building material, providing sustainability, design versatility, low environmental impact, carbon sequestration and energy efficient. It does, however, have some drawbacks.

The number one drawback to using natural wood products is their reaction to moisture. Wood is hygroscopic in that it picks up or gives off moisture to equalize with the relative humidity and temperature in the atmosphere. In doing so, it can change in strength, shrink or swell. There is no practical way to prevent moisture changes in wood, therefore, vapor barriers, adequate ventilation, exclusion of water from wood, or preservative treatments are absolutely essential.

The finishes and protective coatings found on wood products such as flooring and cabinets, help to counter wood's natural tendencies to swell or shrink. Proper care and maintenance is also a vital component to preservation.

### Cleaning Cabinets

- Use a soft cloth dampened with warm water; if a more thorough cleaning is required, use a fresh solution of mild liquid dish soap and warm water.
  - Never use an abrasive cloth or the kitchen dish cloth which may have traces of grease or harsh detergents
  - Never use harsh detergents, bleach, solvent or petroleum based products, strong soap, ammonia, or wax polishes
- After cleaning, wipe all surfaces with another clean, soft cloth
- Always clean spills up and any standing water immediately. Pay special attention to the areas around your sink, range, dishwasher, tow spaces and baseboards
  - Prolonged exposure to spills can cause permanent discoloration and damage such as delamination and cracking to your cabinet's finish
- Use a clean, soft, lint-free cloth for regular dusting
  - Never use pre-packaged dusting sheets (damp or dry) and do not apply aerosol dusting products, which soften the finish or cause a buildup of film
- To avoid moisture damage, never drape damp clothes or dishtowels over cabinet doors. Moisture will cause permanent damage to the finish

- Remove the doors and drawers of all cabinets adjacent to and above the oven during the cleaning cycle of self-cleaning appliances. The cleaning cycle generates heat that could affect the finish and surface of the cabinets.
- When cleaning cabinets with glass doors or mirrors, use a glass cleaner applied directly to the cleaning towel
  - Never spray directly on glass area since drips and overspray may reach and harm the wood surfaces of the door and/or surrounding cabinets

### Maintaining your hardwood floors

- All hardwood floors should be cleaned regularly to remove dirt and grit from between the floor boards
- Avoid using a wet mop which can dull the finish. Instead, sweep with either a dust mop or broom that features exploded tips, or vacuum the floors using a vacuum with special hardwood floor attachments or one with the beater bar turned off
- Wipe up any spills immediately, using a soft, dry or slightly damp cloth
  - Allowing spills to remain on hardwood floors could damage the finish as well as the wood
- Avoid walking on hardwood floors with sports cleats or high heel shoes which can scratch the finish or even dent the floor
  - Place felt pads on the bottom of furniture legs to minimize dents and scratches
- Use rugs at all entrances to help minimize scratches from stones and debris.
  - Choose rugs wisely, some rugs have rubber backings that can discolor wood floors. Special rugs can be purchased to protect from discoloration
- Know what type of flooring you have as different hardwoods have different kinds of care considerations
  - Be familiar with the manufacturer's recommendations for care and maintenance of your specific flooring
- Only use wood-approved cleaning products and if you are unsure, contact the supplier or manufacturer for more details.
  - Never use wax or petroleum based products on a surface finished floor, they will damage the finish and the wood

Proper care and maintenance is instrumental in the preservation of your home's wood finishes. For more information about the specific products in your home, consult your manufacturer's owner's manual or website.