



A GUIDE TO MAINTAINING YOUR NEW RAMP

To help preserve the life of your ramp, it should be treated with a quality water repellent. Before applying a product for the first time, the pressure treated wood should be allowed to weather at least 30 days. However, some products can be applied immediately. Any of the local Home Improvement stores carry a number of products that will work. Always check the label, and follow the directions of the product you select.

Refinishing is required (*should be done*) every 1-2 years and is best done in spring. Before staining, clean ramp with Oxygen type bleach and water, or deck cleaner. A good stiff bristled broom or brush with your choice of deck cleaner will work just fine. This will remove mildew, dirt and gray residue caused by sunlight degradation (age). Rinse thoroughly with clean water and let the wood dry for several days before applying finish.

****Do not use a pressure washer on your ramp** unless you know exactly what you are doing. Too much pressure and/or the wrong nozzle can cause serious, permanent damage to the wood. If you must pressure wash, keep pressure below 500 psi. When in doubt follow the directions from the manufacturer.

Always try to choose a product that has UV sun block protection (*which is the most harmful to the wood*) to treat your ramp. Also look for extra protection against growth of mildew and algae. Some natural water repellent products are actually food for mildew and algae.

Use of a brush, pad or roller is recommended over a sprayer. Always work with the grain of the wood. Remember to seal the open end grains of the wood to help moisture from getting into the lumber. If a sprayer is used, it is recommended that you back roll.

A water repellent preservative (*clear coat*) provides the best finish for your ramp, and can be applied immediately. If you choose to use a clear coat, apply a second coat 6 to 8 months after weathering.

An oil based penetrating stain (*semi-transparent*) has the best appearance and durability. It has a somewhat shorter life span than a solid color stain. However, it is more easily renewed, doesn't peel or require scraping or sanding.

Light colored penetrating stains, whether oil or water based, last longer than dark ones on exposed surfaces like decks and ramps, especially if ramp is most often in full sun. They also show the least contrast in grain color as traffic happens over time. Dark stains make the wood get hotter. Shadier areas tend to have mildew staining and green moss- this is a black staining or green fungus. ***Avoid oil based products if ramp is in shadier areas.***

Recap on Applying Finishes to New Wood:

Clear Coat: Immediately

Oil Based Stain: 2 months

Water Based Stain: 1 year

TIPS FOR FALL AND WINTER MAINTENANCE

1. Keep the ramp free of leaves. They become slippery when wet and can potentially stain the surface.
2. Keep ramp clear of sticks, as well. They can get lodged in or under your wheels and be a tripping hazard if you are walking.
3. Always use a plastic shovel or broom for snow removal. A metal shovel can dig in and tear up the surface of the ramp.
4. Use a Quick Melt type product to get rid of ice.
5. **DO NOT USE ROCK SALT.** Rock salt hastens the corrosion of screws and other metal fasteners. It also adds to the degradation of the wood fibers.