

Step-by-Step Application

Choosing Lumber

Most of the lumber used on a jobsite will be identified by a grade stamp. However, within any stack of identically graded lumber it is possible to find a wide variation in appearance. It is always good to give each board a quick look before you use it. This will help you to choose the best board for a particular purpose. It will also help you to avoid unsuitable boards.

Step 1 Sight down the length of the board. This will help to identify a board that is warped or crooked. Warped or crooked boards must be cut with great care. Also, such lumber would not be suitable for use in door framing.

Step 2 Look at the face (widest surface) of the board. If the face shows pronounced, arched grain patterns, this is a flatsawn board. Most of the dimensional change will be across its width when the board shrinks or swells. Flatsawn lumber tends to cup but this is mostly a problem when wood is used for decking and outdoor railings.

Step 3 Check the end grain of the lumber. Most framing lumber is flatsawn, with growth rings that run anywhere from 0° to 45° to the face of the board. The growth rings of quartersawn lumber run at angles of 45° to 90° to the face. This is a premium cut found only occasionally in a stack of framing lumber. Quartersawn wood is more stable than flatsawn lumbars, and should be set aside for door framing.

Step 4 Check the edges and faces of the board for flaws such as knots and cracks. If severe, they can reduce the strength of a board. A board with many flaws can often be cut into smaller pieces. This would be suitable stock for blocking.

Step 5 Check the edges of the board for wane. Wane reduces the surface area of an edge. This is generally not a problem with framing. However, a waney edge does not provide much support for a drywall joint. The board should not be used where such a joint is likely.