

BENCH TOP INSTALLATION GUIDE



The correct installation of ASH benchtops is vital to their performance. The bench tops are pre-sanded and plastic wrapped to ensure that they are suitable for you to use in high quality appearance applications like furniture and joinery.

Timber will naturally expand and contract due to its changing environment. Natural humidity (dry and wet), air conditioning, machines that dispel heat or moisture (eg. dishwashers, cooking appliances etc.) will effect the movement of the timber. As moisture in the air increases, it is absorbed by the timber and will expand. The timber contracts as moisture in the air decreases.

ASH benchtops will expand and contract in width when there are changes to the humidity. This movement is quite normal. It is usually only minimal and can be allowed for in the installation (see figure below).

Storage

After receiving your bench tops, it is important that they are stored flat, protected from the weather, wind and direct heat; and not exposed to extreme changes in humidity. It is recommended that the panels be stored fully wrapped in plastic until such time as the bench top is required.

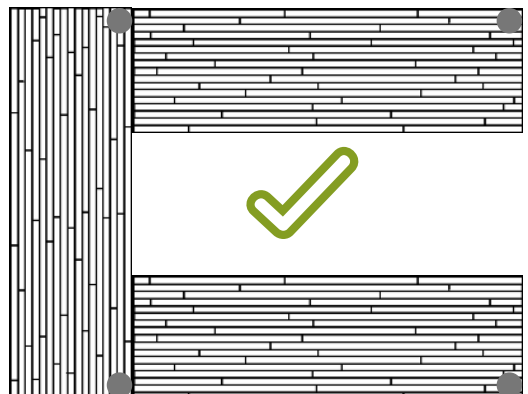
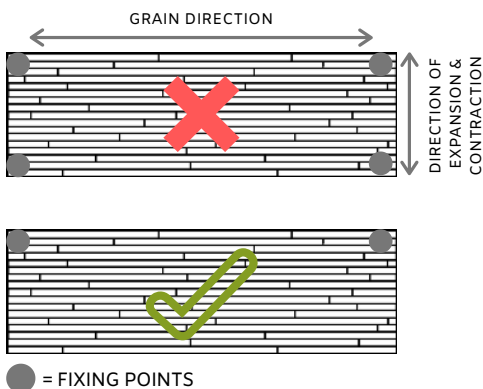
Sealing

Sealing the bench tops is essential to prevent excessive movement. When exposing the end grain by cutting, drilling or profiling, it is good practice to temporarily tape the exposed end grain until a finishing sealant is applied. ASH benchtops must be envelope sealed ie. top, bottom, edges and ends. Pay particular attention to the inside of cutouts especially the end grain. If you cut on site – reseal the cut area with at least four coats of sealer.

Fixing Positions

Minimal fixing only is required as the piece will be held down by self weight, plumbing etc. Ideally, fix into the same strip of timber.

The following diagrams show examples of correct & incorrect fixing.





Screw Holes

Fixing through framework into the underside of bench should be via a 12mm clearance hole and an 8 gauge screw with washer, allowing movement between fixing points. Holes should be pre-drilled. ASH benchtops should never be glued down.

Note: Ensure screw is centralised within clearance hole.

ASH benchtops are suitable for interior use only.

Dishwashers, floor mounted vents & hot water systems.

Where Appliances have heat acting on the benchtop, polystyrene or similar, insulation should be installed to cut down heat transference. Provide adequate ventilation.

Sinks, cooktops, cutouts for posts etc.

The fitting of sinks, basins, cooktops etc. must not restrict the benchtop from expanding and contracting. Ensure that there is at least 5mm clearance all around the appliance. Insulation should be installed around cooktops. Rubberised joint sealant should be used in sink and basin applications.

Ventilation.

Particle board or MDF tops fixed to cabinets should be removed or have large holes cut into them to assist with even & adequate ventilation.

Brick walls.

A moisture barrier such as plastic should be utilised in situations where ASH benchtops are located adjacent to brickwork or rendered walls to prevent moisture transference. A slight air gap should also be left.

Overhangs.

If overhangs exceed 200mm then some form of bracketing should be used for support.

Wide tops & stair landings.

With wide tops and stair landings, expansion and contraction is directly proportional to the width: therefore sealing, fixing to allow movement, allowances for moisture and heat are even more important.

External use.

ASH benchtops are not suitable for exterior use. If an ASH benchtop has to be used in external situations the maintenance of the seal coats become even more critical. If surface looks worn or bare then recoating should be done immediately.

Common types of seal coatings are:

Exterior paint – definitely the best as the finish is slow to break down.

Clear Polyurethane – even coatings with UV inhibitors break down and flake. Requires full sanding and recoating at least every 12-18 months.

Exterior oil finish – does not last as long but does not flake and is easy to re-apply. Recoat at least every 9-12 months.