

Cabinetry – Maintenance Tips

Clients often ask how to take care of their new cabinetry. It's a good question, and there are several things to consider. Wood reacts to environmental changes, such as moisture, temperature and light. The care tips below should help you to preserve your wooden cabinetry as well as any other wood products you may have in your home.

HUMIDITY CONTROL IS IMPORTANT WITH WOOD PRODUCTS

The wood working industry recommends that room environments in the comfort zone of 21°C (70°F) be maintained at a relative humidity range of 25%-55% for wood products.

As the relative humidity in a room increases wood will gain moisture and expand. Wood loses moisture and contracts as relative humidity goes down in a home environment. This natural expansion and contraction of hardwoods can at times become visible at the joints of doors and frame components. Finish stress lines at joints are more visible on painted finishes. This natural characteristic of wood can be expected in a normal home conditioned throughout the year between the 25-55% relative humidity range and is not considered a defect.

The more a home's relative humidity is allowed to exceed 55% the more its wood products will expand to the point of wood failure at extreme moisture levels. Wood failure possibilities include splits, cracks and wood joint expansion and separation. Inset door expansion becomes noticeable with high humidity conditions. If significant expansion occurs, the doors will rub against the cabinet frame as they are opened and closed. Low relative humidity environments can cause wood to shrink and create cracks and related noticeable characteristics.

Moisture content expansion and contraction of wood is a natural occurrence and is not a defect and therefore is not warranted. Moisture related problems can be minimized by maintaining relative humidity in the 25%-55% range for the home's comfort zone of 70 F.

Sunlight's Effect on Wood & Wood Finishes: Wood and wood finishes tend to gradually mellow when exposed to light. Excessive direct sunlight can have a more dramatic effect.

Wear and Tear around Knobs and Handles: Frequent use of cabinet doors and drawers can cause wear around knobs and handles. Chemicals from our skin can break down the finish over time around knobs and handles.

Repetitive fingernail and ring impact will damage the finish over time. This is normal “wear & tear” and is not considered a finish defect. Using the care and cleaning instructions outlined below on a routine basis will help to minimize finish wear and will help keep the cabinet finish beautiful.

Tips on Cleaning:

- ONLY use a clean, soft, lint-free cloth for regular dusting. DO NOT use pre-moistened dusting sheets or any aerosol products.
- Spray an ammonia-free glass cleaner, onto a clean, soft, lint-free cloth or paper towel to clean any glass. DO NOT spray directly onto the glass, as the solution may seep into the wood frame.
- DO NOT use abrasive cleansers or pads on cabinet surfaces! They can cause scratches. On laminate cabinetry, scratches may be irreparable!
- Clean up spills immediately; prolonged exposure to oils, food residue, etc. will cause permanent damage to the cabinet's finish.
- When cleaning your handles and knobs, its best to take them off the door and soak in soapy, warm water for 15 to 30 minutes. Make sure to dry the hardware thoroughly before re-installing them.
- In rare occurrences, cabinets may endure surface damage (e.g. scratches, blemishes, etc.). Many hardware stores offer fill-sticks and touch-up markers/pens, which can easily cover up most surface damages.
- Keep cabinet surfaces dry and free from standing liquids.

Avoid:

- Draping damp cloths or towels over cabinet doors; this can cause peeling and/or discolouration (i.e. permanent damage).

- When your oven is in self-cleaning mode, the heat generated is significantly greater than normal cooking temperatures. If you are using the self-cleaning feature on your oven, remove the doors for the adjacent cabinets to prevent heat damage.
- Exposure to direct sunlight darkens the colour of natural wood products, including painted wood, laminated, and thermofoil surfaces.
- Sponges and dish cloths can contain food particles, oil residue, or remnants of strong cleaning solutions.
- DO NOT wax or polish the wood.
- DO NOT use strong detergents, soaps, abrasive cleaning products (e.g. bathroom cleansers), scouring pads, steel wool, self-polishing waxes, nail polish remover, paint thinner, bleach, ammonia.

STAINED FINISHES: Use a soft cloth and a mild soapy water solution to remove the dirt & grease. Rinse immediately with a clean cloth and dry with a clean soft cloth, using light pressure. Avoid vigorous rubbing, as this tends to raise glossy spots, marring the original effect. Never use strong soaps, detergents or liquid wax cleaners with dirt cutting agents on wood finish. We suggest a mild mixture of two cups of water and two teaspoons of liquid dish detergent in a spray bottle.

OPAQUE PAINTED AND MATTE FINISHES: NEVER use wax on opaque or matte finishes! Simply wipe clean using a soft cloth with a mild soapy water solution. Rinse immediately after with a clean damp cloth and dry with a soft cloth.

CAUTION: Avoid vigorous rubbing as this tends to raise glossy spots, marring the original effect.

STAINLESS STEEL: Use a stainless-steel cleaner. Follow the directions that accompany the cleaner. Never use acids, solvents or abrasive cleaners that would damage the surface and overall appearance.

PLASTIC LAMINATE CABINETS: Clean with a mild soapy water solution, rinse and wipe dry using a soft cloth. If necessary, remove stubborn stains with a grease-cutting agent. Clean afterward with a mild soapy water solution, rinse and wipe dry.

METALLIC LAMINATES or INSERT PANELS: Do not use abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, powders, sandpaper or steel wool. These will permanently damage the surface and appearance! Acids, solvents, alkaline or ammonia-base cleaners or other liquids (other than mild soap and water) may etch, oxidize or otherwise damage them.

REMEMBER: This is a basic guide only. If questions or problems arise and you're not sure how to proceed, contact us.