

Interior Door Care & Finishing

Proper care and finishing is very important to gain the maximum benefits from your interior doors. When finished properly your new doors should exceed your aesthetic and operational expectations. Below are a few key points everyone should know when it comes to the care and finishing of interior doors.

Initial Care

- Interior Doors need to be acclimated to the environment where they will be installed. This process normally takes two days.
- Doors stored for more than a few days should have the top and bottom rails sealed with a pre-stain wood conditioner.
- Single (not pre-hung doors) should be laid flat on a dry, clean surface.
- Do not subject them to extreme or rapid changes in humidity or heat.
- Avoid finishing in high humidity conditions.

Finishing

- No finishing process exists today that totally eliminates the transmission of water vapor or moisture into and out of wood doors. The key to proper finishing is to slow down the transmission process so the door performs within tolerances.
- All doors have six sides--not two, not four, but six--front, back, two edges, plus the most ignored and most vulnerable, the top and bottom. Failure to finish all six surfaces uniformly is the number one cause of door failures.
- Sanding is critical--the first rule to remember is the importance of field sanding all wood door products. Every wood door, regardless of manufacturer or style, requires some surface preparation before finishing. The key component of this surface preparation is thorough sanding to remove naturally occurring surface blemishes, handling marks, dirt, etc. Each basic type of wood door requires a slightly different procedure. The following are sanding instructions from our key suppliers:

Molded Doors

Before finishing, lightly sand a primed molded door with 220-grit sandpaper. Blow off all dust, sand lightly between finish coats with 320-grit sandpaper. Remove sanding dust with tack cloth before applying your finish.

Wood Flush Doors

Lightly sand the face of the door just enough to remove handling marks using 100-grit sandpaper. Avoid spot sanding and using too fine of sandpaper. This can close the grain and cause staining problems such as light spots. Note the veneer is approximately 1/100 of an inch thick on a 4-ply skin. **DO NOT OVER SAND.** Remove sanding dust with tack cloth before applying your finish.

Wood Panel Doors

Before finishing, sand the entire door thoroughly with 150 or 180-grit sandpaper. This will remove handling marks, surface blemishes, cross grain scratches, drag marks, surface oil and dirt, thus allowing a more consistent finish. When sanding, always follow the direction of the grain to avoid cross-grain scratches. Remove sanding dust with tack cloth before applying your finish.

How to Paint an Interior Door

Supplies Required:

- High Quality Primer - Approx. 1 Quart (For wood doors - oil based primer only, for molded and MDF doors - latex primer is OK.)
- High Quality Paint - Approx. 1 Quart (For wood doors - oil based paint only, for molded and MDF doors - latex paint is OK.)
- High Quality, Synthetic Bristle Paint Brush
- Painter's Tape
- Sandpaper (Molded Doors 220 & 320 Grit, Wood Flush Doors 100 Grit, Wood Panel Doors 150 or 180 Grit)
- Cotton Cloth

- Elastomeric or Polyurethane Caulk (To ensure that the door unit is properly caulked and all fastener holes are filled.)

Step #1

Ensure the door unit is properly caulked per installation instructions. If necessary, set and fill all fastener holes. Ensure all caulking is fully cured before proceeding to the next step.

Step #2

Remove or mask off all hardware prior to painting.

Step #3

Lightly scuff sand the door and jamb per above sanding instructions.

Step #4

Wipe the door with a clean cotton cloth.

Step #5

Apply a quality primer according to manufacturer's instructions. Note: Make sure all six sides - front, back, edges, top and bottom - receive the same uniform coverage.

Step #6

Apply 2 coats of a quality paint according to manufacturer's instructions. For wood and molded panel doors, always follow the grain of the door. Paint the panels first then the stiles and rails. Allow the door to dry completely between coats Note: Make sure all six sides - front, back, edges, top and bottom - receive the same uniform coverage.

Step #7

Allow the paint to dry completely before unmasking and installing hardware.

How to Stain an Interior Door

Supplies Required:

- High Quality Oil Based Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner
- High Quality Oil Based Stain* - Approx. 1 Quart

- High Quality Oil Based Polyurethane* - Approx. 1 Quart
- (Oil based products are recommended for interior wood veneered doors. Water based products can raise the grain and cause multiple moisture related problems.)
- White China Bristle Paint Brush
- Painter's Tape
- Sandpaper (Molded Doors 220 & 320 Grit, Wood Flush Doors 100 Grit, Wood Panel Doors 150 or 180 Grit)
- Cotton Cloth
- Tack Cloth
- Elastomeric or Polyurethane Caulk (To ensure that the door unit is properly caulked and all fastener holes are filled.)

*You may substitute an Oil Based Stain/Clear Top Coat 1 Step Product for the Stain and Polyurethane.

Step #1

Ensure the door unit is properly caulked per installation instructions. If necessary, set and fill all fastener holes. Ensure all caulking is fully cured before proceeding to the next step.

Step #2

Remove or mask off all hardware prior to staining.

Step #3

Lightly scuff sand (220 Grit Sandpaper) the door and jamb per above sanding instructions.

Step #4

Wipe the door with a clean cotton cloth.

Step #5

Apply an oil-based pre-stain wood conditioner to promote uniform stain coverage and minimize sharp color contrasts that can occur in wood veneer doors. Allow to dry per manufacturer's instructions. Note: Make sure all six sides - front, back, edges, top and bottom - receive the same uniform coverage.

Step #6

Apply oil-based stain and allow to dry per manufacturer's instructions. Note: Make sure all six sides - front, back, edges, top and bottom - receive the same uniform coverage.

Step #7

Apply polyurethane top coat and allow to dry per manufacturer's instructions. Note: Make sure all six sides - front, back, edges, top and bottom - receive the same uniform coverage.

Step #8

Lightly sand (320 Grit Sandpaper) and wipe clean with tack cloth per manufacturer's instructions before applying second coat.

Step #9

Apply second coat of polyurethane and allow to dry per manufacturer's instructions. Note: Make sure all six sides - front, back, edges, top and bottom - receive the same uniform coverage.

Step #10

Allow the polyurethane to dry completely before unmasking and installing hardware.