

Maintenance

Although ProWood pressure-treated lumber is protected against rot (fungal decay) and termites, periodic maintenance must be performed to maximize protection against weathering. This maintenance will let you enjoy your new outdoor project for many years.

In some cases ProWood treated lumber has water repellent already applied during the pressure treating process. Make sure to read and understand the end tag on your new lumber to determine whether a factory-applied water repellent has been added. The information on the treated lumber tag or end tag will help you understand when to apply a topical wood sealer.

Apply Stain or Sealer to Dry Wood

The time it takes for wood to dry out depends on the climate and the wood's exposure to the sun. During the summer pressure-treated lumber under full sun can dry in a few days. In cool, damp weather or when shaded by an overhanging roof or tree, it will take much longer for wood to dry.

Use the water test to see if it's time to seal (or re-seal). Drizzle some water onto the wood. If the water beads, the wood is still sealed and protected. If the water is absorbed into the wood within a few seconds, it's time to apply a sealer. Test a few different areas of a deck, fence or wood project. Note: High-traffic spots on a wood deck are likely to wear down before corners and railing balusters.

Seal Kiln Dried Lumber

In some areas you can buy treated wood that is Kiln Dried After Treatment (KDAT). With KDAT lumber, moisture is removed from the wood before shipment to a lumberyard. KDAT will be marked on each piece of wood with an end tag or an ink stamp. It is recommended that you seal KDAT lumber immediately unless it has been pressure-treated with a water repellent additive.

Add Color and Water Repellency with a Wood Sealer

Start by applying a topical sealant to your new project for surface protection. We do not recommend using a conventional multi-coat paint system or varnish. The performance is nearly always disappointing and scraping and sanding and often must precede repainting. Instead, choose an outdoor wood sealer. A wood sealer offers a degree of water repellency and color to treated lumber without forming a thick coating on the surface. It will also allow any remaining moisture to slowly leave wood after the coating has been applied. Wood sealers come in three versions: solid stains, semi-transparent and clear.



Solid Stains

It is recommended that “solid” wood sealers, which have more pigment, be used only on vertical projects such as fences and siding. If used on decking, weather and foot traffic will wear through the pigment unevenly.

Semi-transparent Sealants

This type of wood sealant is suitable for vertical or horizontal surfaces such as deck boards, rails, siding and playground equipment. There are several brands available in many colors.

Clear Sealants

This type of sealant has no pigment or color. It still offers some protection from the weather, although wood fading will occur more rapidly than color with sealants. Eventually, the wood will fade to gray, which may or may not be the look you desire.

NOTE: We recommend using wood sealers that contain an ultra-violet stabilizer. The stabilizer will not prevent eventual discoloration to a weathered gray appearance, but it will slow the process down. Whatever sealant you choose, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

Periodic Maintenance

Apply cleaner/brightener every one to three years, depending on the appearance of the outdoor project, followed by a coat of sealer to rejuvenate the color of the wood.

If you decide to wait more than three years to perform your next cleaning, you may want to use a power washer as your first step in the cleaning process.

Restoring Gray, Weathered Wood

To restore gray, weathered wood, use a power washer, then clean with a cleaner/brightener to help bring the wood back to its natural appearance. This prepares the wood for better penetration of a wood sealer. Work the brightener in with a stiff bristle brush, followed by a thorough rinsing with water.

After the wood is completely dry, apply a wood sealer. If the sealer you use is colored, be sure to use a comparable color or darker color than your original wood project.

Add color to all your pressure treated projects:

- Decks
- Fencing
- Porch and patio covers
- Trellis
- Window screening
- Picnic tables
- Gazebos
- Mobile home skirting
- Lattice
- Flower bed edging
- Storage areas

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