SYDNEY TIMBER SUPPLY

Decking Storage, Handling & Installation Guide

For the Stagwood hardwood decking we list: Ironbark, Spotted Gum, Forest Red Gum and Gympie Messmate

01 On-site storage and handling

Timber decking packs are wrapped in plastic to protect them during transport. Once delivered to site, the product should be installed within 48 hours.

If installation cannot occur within that timeframe, the decking must be stored in a cool, dry and undercover location.

- Stack boards off the ground on evenly sized bearer supports
- Position supports at least 75–100 mm above ground level
- Space supports at maximum 600 mm intervals

Do not leave decking fully exposed to the elements before installation. Exposure may cause dimensional changes that lead to installation issues, and on pre-coated decking it may damage the coating.

02 Structural and bushfire compliance

It is the responsibility of the builder or installer to confirm that the decking size and structure meet the applicable Australian Standards for the project.

Our supplier publishes that Stagwood decking is manufactured in accordance with the requirements of AS 1684 (Residential Timber-Framed Construction) and AS 1720 (Timber Structures – Design Methods).

Always check with your local authority to confirm whether your site is subject to the requirements of AS 3959 (Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-Prone Areas).

This guide is general product information. It is not a structural certification and does not replace project-specific engineering, building-surveyor or compliance advice.

03 Ventilation and drainage

Proper ventilation and drainage are critical to the performance and longevity of hardwood and softwood decking. Because deck height and design vary, ventilation must be assessed for each project to ensure adequate airflow beneath the structure so moisture can dissipate, particularly through periods of consistent rainfall.

A minimum clearance of 400 mm from ground level to the underside of the decking is recommended. Reduced clearance can restrict airflow and may lead to cupping, warping, expansion and, in severe cases, twisting of boards.

In regions prone to heavy rainfall or extreme weather, ventilation and ground drainage matter more again. Avoid water pooling by ensuring:

- Adequate fall or slope away from the structure
- Free-draining ground conditions, for example gravel or crushed rock
- No obstructions blocking crossflow ventilation

04 Spacing between decking boards

Seasonal expansion and contraction must be allowed for, alongside ventilation and drainage.

Boards up to 90 mm wide	Minimum 5 mm gap between boards
Boards up to 140 mm wide	Minimum 8 mm gap between boards
Parallel to a wall or fixed structure	Minimum 10 mm gap, to allow for expansion and airflow

- Check spacing at the time of installation — moisture content affects final board width
- In wet or high-humidity environments, slightly larger gaps may be required
- Keep gaps consistent along the full length of the boards to prevent water pooling
- Do not install boards tightly together: this restricts airflow and can cause swelling, cupping or long-term damage

05 Fixings

Decking screws should ideally be stainless steel Grade 304 for inland applications, or Grade 316 where the decking is installed in coastal areas, near saltwater or exposed to chlorinated environments. Alternative fasteners meeting Class 3 corrosion resistance may also be suitable depending on exposure.

Electroplated fixings are not recommended — the coating can deteriorate quickly, leading to corrosion and premature failure.

- For decking up to 20 mm thick, use a minimum 50 mm screw length
- Boards between 65 mm and 140 mm wide require two screws at each joist
- Maintain a minimum 12 mm edge distance for all fixings
- Install screws flush with the decking surface
- Pre-drilling is recommended, particularly for hardwoods, to prevent splitting
- Countersinking may be required depending on timber density and screw type
- Use fixings compatible with treated timber to prevent corrosion
- Avoid fixing too close to board ends to reduce the risk of splitting

06 Coatings and maintenance

Steel, iron and other metal particles must not contact the decking surface: they can become embedded in the timber before or after coating. Remove any contamination immediately. Metal particles react with the timber's natural tannins in the presence of moisture and cause dark stains that are difficult to remove. Where staining occurs, an oxalic acid solution may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

- Hardwood decking is typically supplied with a smooth, dressed finish, which can limit coating adhesion
- Lightly sand the exposed surface with 80-grit sandpaper to improve coating bond
- Ensure the deck is clean, dry and free of dust, oils and contaminants before coating
- Coat all exposed surfaces, including board edges and ends where possible, to reduce moisture ingress
- Follow the coating manufacturer's instructions for application rates, drying times and number of coats
- Avoid coating in extreme temperatures, high humidity or direct sunlight where possible
- External clear or natural coatings alter the timber's appearance and typically require recoating every 8–12 months, depending on exposure
- Pigmented coatings generally allow longer maintenance intervals due to increased UV protection
- Clean and inspect regularly to maintain appearance and performance

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All information is correct at the time of publication and may be subject to change. Confirm critical requirements with us at order stage: **0440 137 068** or **info@sydneytimbersupply.com.au**.