

FACT SHEET – Medium-density fibreboard

Issue 12



Description

Medium-density fibreboard (MDF) is an engineered wood product formed by breaking down hardwood or softwood residuals into wood fibres, often in a defibrator, combining it with wax and a resin binder, and forming panels by applying high temperature and pressure. MDF is denser than plywood.

It is made up of separated fibres, (not wood veneers) but can be used as a building material similar in application to plywood. It is stronger and much denser than normal particle board.

The name derives from the distinction in densities of fibreboard.

Large-scale production of MDF began in the 1980s.

Physical Properties

The density is about 700-850 kg/m³, and typically is 720-730 kg/m³ (~45-46 lbs/ft³).

Uses

Builders use MDF in many capacities, such as in furniture, shelving, laminate flooring, decorative moulding and doors. They value MDF for its insular qualities in sound and heat. Also, it can be nailed, glued, screwed, stapled, or attached with dowels, making it as versatile as plank wood.

Reconstituted, engineered wood products like MDF are often covered in a veneer or laminate. These thin layers of vinyl or real timber disguise the MDF, especially along visible edges.

Some people prefer using MDF over regular lumber because it has a lower impact on the environment. MDF is solely made from waste products, the leftover scraps that would otherwise be dumped in a landfill.

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