BBS™ TIMBERS

Exterior Timber Weatherboard Cladding

Maintenance Guide

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BBS Timbers - Exterior Timber Weatherboard Maintenance Guide

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

- Every timber-clad building requires regular maintenance to maintain its appearance and extend the lifespan of its components. Several key factors influence maintenance intervals:
- **Site Location:** Coastal or high-exposure zones (e.g., high wind or salt spray) typically require more frequent maintenance due to environmental stresses.
- **Building Orientation:** North and west-facing elevations receive more intense sun and weather exposure than southern and eastern sides.
- **Environmental Conditions:** High humidity, vegetation proximity, airborne particles like dust or pollen, and UV exposure can accelerate wear.
- **Design & Aesthetic Choices:** The intended appearance (e.g., natural weathering versus uniform coated finish) must align with practical maintenance expectations and schedules.

BBS Timbers recommends a full building inspection and clean at least once annually, including roofs, gutters, walls, joinery, and trafficable surfaces. Removing contaminants like dust, pollen, or mould before they become ingrained helps maintain the timber's integrity. Light brushing and hosing off debris such as leaves and soil is beneficial for cladding cleanliness and fungal prevention.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE

Uncoated & Clear-Coated Timbers

Timber naturally changes colour when exposed to ultraviolet light. Greying ("silvering off") is a normal and expected part of weathering, particularly in clear-coated or uncoated finishes. The rate and intensity of colour change will depend on the level of exposure and type of protective finish used.

Timber Movement

Timber expands and contracts in response to environmental conditions. Design allowances must accommodate movement to prevent issues such as splitting or cupping.

Environmental Factors

- Low humidity
- Direct sunlight
- Elevated substructure moisture (e.g., fresh concrete or subfloor airflow into the cavity)

Product Selection

- Timber type (Thermally Modified Timbers offer greater stability)

- Grain orientation (Quarter-sawn/vertical grain is more stable than flat/crown sawn)
- Profile design (e.g., centre-grooved profiles are more susceptible to distortion)
- Board width and thickness (narrower and thicker profiles are more dimensionally stable)
- Coating quality and type

At BBS Timbers, profiles are designed with a minimum 2mm expansion allowance and recommended fixing systems to enable movement. Over-fixing, such as double-nailing, may restrict natural movement, leading to defects and potential weathertightness issues.

Cupping

Cupping arises from imbalanced moisture and temperature conditions between the back and face of the boards. Common contributing factors include:

- Dark-coloured coatings
- Thin, wide profiles
- Centre-grooved boards
- Inadequate fixing

Surface Checks

Fine surface cracks may appear after initial exposure to weather, especially on some timber species. These minor checks are generally superficial and pose no issue if a regular maintenance and recoating program is followed.

Black Spots

Surface blemishes such as black spots may result from airborne contamination including soot, pollen, or metallic dust. High-quality exterior-grade finishes help minimise their occurrence. While these marks often fade over time, periodic washing aids in their removal.

Mould

- Mould thrives in damp, shaded, and poorly ventilated areas. Key causes include:
- Warm, humid conditions with restricted airflow
- Poor on-site storage and handling
- Sheltered, south-facing walls

CLADDING INSPECTION

- Regular inspections are vital. Timely detection and maintenance prevent deterioration of surrounding elements and protect the building envelope from moisture ingress.

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CLEANING

- Routine cleaning helps maintain appearance and prevents degradation.
- Clean annually at minimum
- Trim vegetation close to weatherboards to maintain ventilation
- Regularly remove leaves, dirt, and other debris
- Address any surface damage promptly
- Clean with a soft-bristled or car washing brush and mild detergent
- Pre-soak the surface, wash in manageable sections, brushing top to bottom
- Do not use high-pressure water blasters—these can damage both the coating and the timber surface.

COATING SYSTEMS

- Selecting an appropriate coating and following proper application methods will significantly improve the durability of timber cladding. Even the best coatings require maintenance.
- Exposure to sunlight, rain, pollution, and sea spray can impact coating lifespan. Areas with greater exposure will need more frequent recoating.

Coating Compatibility

- Use stainless steel fixings with Thermally Modified Timber to avoid corrosion and staining
- Check compatibility between coatings and timber prior to use
- Dark colours retain more heat and may cause additional timber movement. Thermally Modified Timbers generally tolerate dark coatings better than traditional softwoods.

Stain Finishes

- Clear or lightly pigmented stains age faster and require more frequent maintenance. BBS Timbers recommends:
- Coating all four sides of each board before installation
- Applying a second coat to visible surfaces post-installation
- Double-coating cut ends during installation
- Use UV-inhibiting wood oils to help preserve the natural tone and reduce surface checking. Recoat intervals will vary depending on exposure and product used.

Paint Finishes

- For painted finishes:
- Use a high-quality primer and undercoat on all sides and cut ends before installation
- Follow with topcoats as per the manufacturer's guidelines

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- Apply extra coats in high-exposure or coastal environments
- Best practices include:
- Thorough surface preparation
- Selecting paint colours with an appropriate Light Reflectance Value (LRV)

Recoating

- All coatings will eventually degrade and require reapplication. Timing will depend on original application, exposure conditions, and product durability.
- Recoating Considerations:
- Northern and western walls typically degrade faster than southern and eastern elevations
- Perform a detailed inspection before any recoat project
- Follow coating manufacturer advice on surface preparation and compatibility
- Heavily weathered cladding may benefit from a more pigmented finish to even out appearance (though this may increase thermal stress)
- Carefully monitor painted surfaces for early signs of deterioration (e.g., peeling, blistering) and address issues immediately to maintain weathertightness.

DISCLAIMER

This document serves as a general guide to maintaining exterior timber weatherboards supplied by BBS Timbers. For specific product and coating system instructions, always consult the relevant manufacturer or speak with the BBS Timbers team. Suitability must be confirmed by the user for each project.