

Advantages of MDF v. Plywood

MDF v. Plywood – What's the Difference?

Medium-density fibreboard (MDF) is engineered from wood fibers obtained by breaking down hardwood and softwood with a defibrator. The wood fibers are then glued together with a wax and resin adhesive and made into panels by applying high heat and pressure. The result is a smooth wood product ideal for interior applications, including feature linings and furniture.

Plywood is manufactured from thin layers of wood veneer that are glued and pressed together to form a flat sheet. In a process called cross-graining, each layer is rotated up to 90 degrees to give the product strength and stability. Plywood can be rough or smooth depending on the grade. Higher grades look smoother and can be stained (i.e., cabinetry grade). This engineered wood product is widely used in exterior projects, flooring, doors, stairs and internal panelling.

Why Choose MDF for Your Design Project?

MDF and plywood both have their pros and cons. Despite popular belief, plywood is not always the best choice for a design project, and in many situations, MDF is the better material.



10 Advantages of MDF

- 1 Colouring and Grain**
Veneered or laminated MDF offers a consistent grain appearance, even colour and is defect free. Plywood shows variations in grain and sometimes shows stains and imperfections.
- 2 Machining**
MDF produces clean holes and slots with smooth edges. With plywood, chipping can occur around the hole or slot edge.
- 3 Stability**
MDF is more stable and requires fewer fixings. Plywood tends to warp and requires more fixings.
- 4 Durability**
MDF is highly durable and resists dents better than plywood.
- 5 Fire Rating**
MDF is available in Fire Group 1, 2 and 3. Plywood is generally Group 3.
- 6 Sustainability**
MDF is environmentally friendly. FSC and PEFC certification is available for MDF.
- 7 Low VOC and Formaldehyde emissions**
MDF has evolved and is available in low VOC and Formaldehyde levels. Green Star requirements can easily be attained.
- 8 Moisture Resistance**
MR grade is available. A Wet-sealed product is available when polyurethane finishes are used.
- 9 Costs**
MDF is a more budget-friendly option than plywood.
- 10 Availability**
MDF is readily available while plywood often takes longer lead times



Supawood MDF decorative wall and ceiling panels combine the beautiful look of timber with superior quality and performance. Our versatile panel systems provide endless design options and are suitable for a variety of project types including schools, retail, hospitality, office and commercial.

Contact Supawood for more tech information or to request a budget price.