

NON-STRUCTURAL PLYWOOD INSTALLATION & HANDLING GUIDE

FEBRUARY 2026

Skape non-structural plywood is designed to deliver the natural warmth and appearance of real timber in situations where a non-structural plywood panel is appropriate for interior building applications.

The following guidelines provide general best-practice advice for installing Skape Non-Structural Plywood. These recommendations may be followed unless alternative instructions are provided by a suitably qualified professional or engineer.

1.0 DECORATIVE PLYWOOD

Skape offers a range of interior plywood products suitable for use in both residential and commercial buildings.

1.1 NON-STRUCTURAL PLYWOOD

Manufactured as a non-structural plywood panel where the strong, natural, desirable aesthetics of a wood panel product are required without the structural performance or strength characteristics required by plywood.

1.2 DURABILITY

Proper clearances and detailing that prevent moisture buildup are essential to ensuring the intended performance of non-structural plywood panels.

When specified and installed in line with sound design and construction practices—and treated to the appropriate levels required under NZS 3602—the following products: Grooveline, Radiata BB, Eliteline and Radiata CpD can form part of an Acceptable Solution that meets the requirements of NZBC B2/AS1.

These products will continue to meet the relevant performance expectations of the New Zealand Building Code as a non-structural interior lining, provided the product is used within the specific design parameters of the project.

1.3 UNTREATED PLYWOOD

Untreated plywood used in interior dry situations (protected from weather or dampness) does not need to be treated as defined in NZS3602.

Where situations for plywood are used for exterior / interior damp situations, plywood shall be H3 preservative treated.

The use of untreated plywood panels in internal damp applications is subject to specific design and design consideration with E3 internal moisture of the New Zealand Building Code clause.

1.0 DECORATIVE PLYWOOD

1.4 PRESERVATIVE TREATMENT

H3 preservative treatment levels as noted in AS/NZS1604 is suitable for “outside, above ground, subject to periodic moderate wetting”.

H3.1 plywood products are treated in white-spirits (organic) based preservatives containing fungicides and insecticides and H3.2 plywood products are treated in water based preservative carrier H3.2 CCA (Copper Chrome Arsonate) or H3.2 MCA (Micronized Copper Azole) preservative treatment in accordance with NZS1604.1:2021.

Where H3 treated plywood is cut, drilled, rebated or otherwise machined, the protective treatment envelope must be reinstated. All exposed end grain and cut faces must be re-treated with an appropriate brush-on remedial preservative compatible with the original treatment type and according to the manufacturer’s recommendations. This requirement is consistent with industry guidance for maintaining durability performance and ensuring compliance with NZBC B2 durability provisions. Failure to reinstate preservative treatment may affect the serviceable life of the structural plywood and impact on its durability and ability to perform as intended.

1.5 PRE-INSTALLATION INSPECTION

Prior to installation, examine and inspect the panels for any visual defects. It is the specifiers responsibility to ensure the plywood panels meet the aesthetic requirements for the individual project. The panels may be subject to minor imperfections and natural characteristics that is associated with engineered veneer-based wood products. Ensure the surface is free from dirt and loose wood fibres.

2.0 CARE & MAINTENANCE

2.1 STORAGE AND HANDLING

The plywood product is recommended to be stored under cover or shelter, in a well-ventilated area that is away from sources of heat, flames or sparks, protected from the weather elements such as the sun, rain, wind or snow, and placed where it will not be exposed to mechanical damage while awaiting installation.

Plywood should be stacked flat, clear of ground and be supported at minimum, on three to four evenly spaced supports as good practice. Failure to support the plywood panels may result in distortion and induce undesirable curves in the plywood panels.

2.2 MAINTENANCE

The plywood products will not normally require maintenance. However, if damage occurs to the plywood panels, repair or replacement should be carried out to ensure the integrity of the plywood.

Should a coating system be utilised for the final finish, the coating should be maintained in accordance with the coating manufacturer's instructions and their maintenance requirements.

2.3 COATING MAINTENANCE

It is recommended to consult the coating manufacturer for guidance on product suitability for plywood panels, correct application methods, and any maintenance requirements associated with the coating system.

2.0 CARE & MAINTENANCE

2.4 MOULD ON PLYWOOD DISCLAIMER

Moulds and algae can develop on both treated and untreated plywood products. This growth is influenced by environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, moisture, and the presence of airborne mould spores.

Mould growth often appears as unsightly black or green patches, spreading quickly under favourable conditions, such as warm and humid weather. While moulds affect the surface, they do not penetrate the structure of the plywood. However, decay fungi are capable of penetrating and growing within the wood.

Moulds can develop on untreated plywood, as well as on H3 treated plywood. If the plywood becomes damp, whether in storage or in the field, and environmental conditions are ideal, mould growth may occur. Plywood exposed to the elements can also develop mould in wet and warm conditions.

Prevention and Termination:

To prevent mould growth, it's essential to control the moisture content. Mould growth ceases when the plywood's moisture content falls below approximately 18%. Brush off any visible mould, and similarly, surface algae will disappear when dried.

Recommended Action:

If mould appears on treated plywood, no specific action is needed during the building process. However, it is advisable to cut out bottom plates near doors and windows early and ensure proper drainage for floors exposed to wet weather. Swiftly closing in the structure is also important to prevent prolonged exposure. Should the plywood remain exposed for an extended period due to construction delays, further investigation may be necessary. Depending on local conditions, an extended exposure may necessitate specialist assessments to check for decay fungi.

Remediation Options:

While mould does not affect the structural integrity of plywood, cleaning products such as '30 Seconds Outdoor Cleaner' can restore the appearance of the surface.

3.0 INSTALLATION

Skape provides the following general installation guidance for plywood used in interior environments within residential or commercial buildings.

3.1 INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS

Untreated plywood sheets must only be installed once the building has been fully enclosed, and the moisture content of the supporting timber framing does not exceed 18% moisture content.

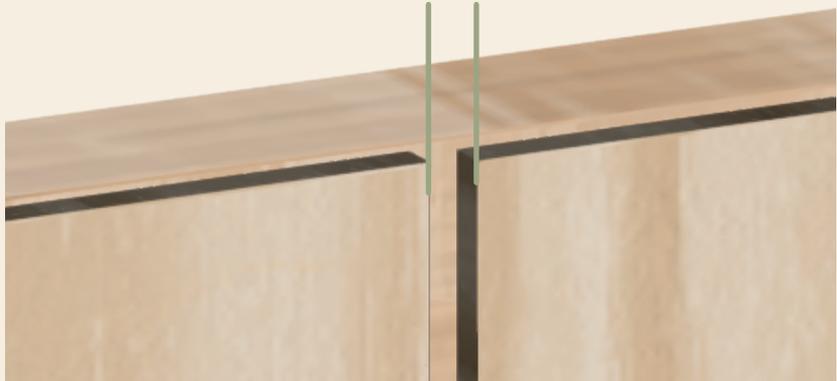
3.2 PLYWOOD SHEET LAYOUT

Plywood sheets are strongest in the vertical orientation or parallel to the grain of the plywood panels (the long side of the panel).

Sheets are recommended to be installed vertically to the timber framing and be supported on all edges, and through the body of the panel.

Allow for a 2 – 3mm expansion gap between sheets where there is risk of moisture / dimensional change.

2 - 3mm expansion gap
3 - 5mm if negative detail is required



3.3 FASTENERS AND ADHESIVES

Non-bracing wall plywood panels may be fixed and fastened to walls or ceilings with a range of combinations of nails, screws, glues, adhesives or panel pins.

At minimum, all fasteners used must be corrosion resistant to the appropriate treatment levels depending on the intended use and compatibility of materials in contact. H3 preservative treated plywood requires hot dip galvanized fasteners or better.

It is recommended to seek advice from the glue or adhesive manufacturer for installation methods suitable for the intended installation of the non-structural plywood panels on walls or as non-structural ceiling linings.

3.0 INSTALLATION

3.5 PROTECTIVE COATING SELECTION AND APPLICATION

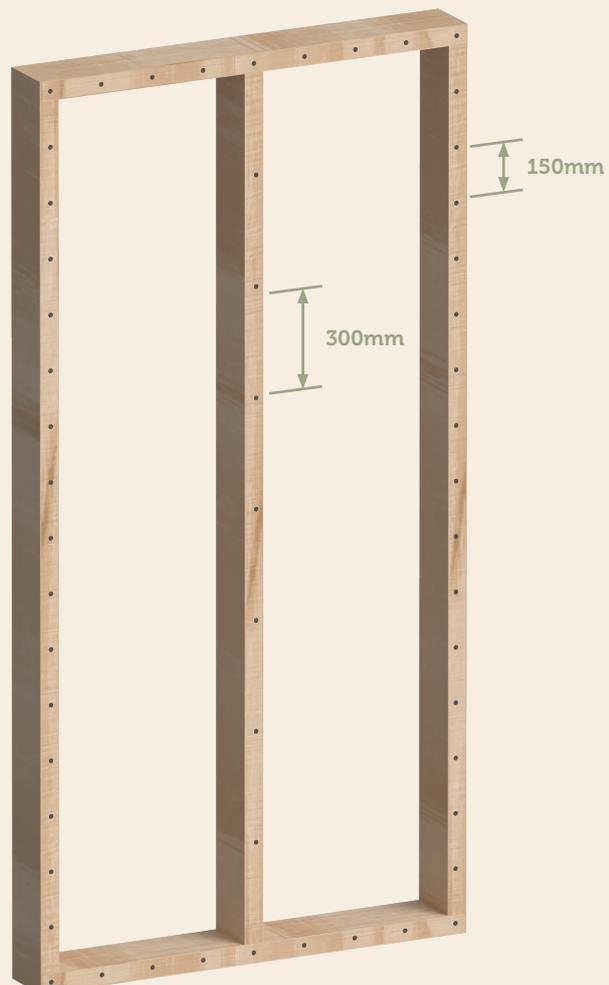
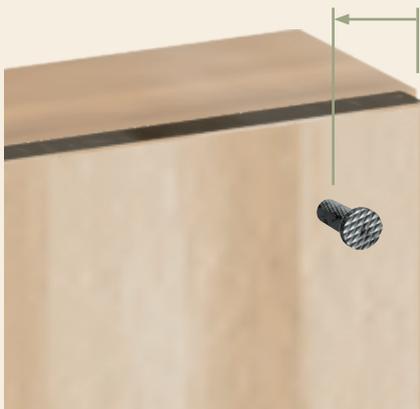
It is recommended to apply a protective coating to all the visible surfaces, including sheet edges of the plywood panels.

The coating selection, application and maintenance is the responsibility of the specifier or owner to ensure the desired appearance and compatibility of the coating system is suitable for the intended application. It is recommended to seek advice from the manufacturer of the coating system for guidance on the suitability of their product applied to the plywood panels, the application of the coatings and the maintenance requirements of the coating system.

3.4 FASTENING AND FIXING PATTERN

Unless as otherwise specified, it is recommended to fasten the edges and ends of the sheet (perimeter) at 150mm centres, and within the panel (body of sheet) at 300mm centres on the intermediate stud/supports with nails or screws.

Mechanical fasteners must be at least 3 fastener diameters or 7mm from the edge of the sheet.



3.0 INSTALLATION

3.6 FINISHING REQUIREMENTS

Edge Sealing:

All plywood panels experience faster moisture penetration through panel ends and edges. As a result, edges and ends should be sealed. Edge sealers help to minimise sudden changes in panel moisture content due to normal climatic changes after installation.

Surface Preparation:

All finishes should be applied as soon as possible after panel installation. Apply finishes during favourable weather conditions and always follow the finish manufacturer's specific application recommendations for plywood products. Use only first-quality finishes and apply according to the application rates recommended by the finish manufacturer. The initial coat should be applied by brush. Sprayed on finishes should be either back brushed or back rolled while wet. Additional coats may be applied conventionally.

Recommended Finishes:

All visible surfaces, including edges must be finished with three coats of a high quality coating/paint system comprising of a primer/sealer, and two topcoats*. High film build offers the highest protection. If you are using a pre-finished polymer coated plywood you must take extra care when sealing edges to ensure that no coatings are applied to the face of the sheet. This is factory coated and not recommended to be re-coated.

3.7 NEGATIVE DETAILING

To achieve a negative detail place sheets on the frame with a minimum of 3mm between the sheets edge.

When using a negative detail we recommend a small aris on the plywood edges, just enough to take the sharp edge off. This can also be achieved with a soft sand.

Options to darken negative details include black tape, paint or foam for larger negative details.

3.8 PREVENTION OF FIRE OCCURRING

Separation or protection must be provided to Skape® plywood from heat sources such as stoves, heaters, flues and chimneys. Part 7 of NZBC Acceptable Solutions C/AS1 to C/AS6 and NZBC Verification Method C/VM1 provide methods for separation and protection of combustible materials from heat sources.