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# Cabinetry Care Guide

## Laminates

Laminates are durable surfaces made from decorative papers which are impregnated with a hard melamine resin and bonded to kraft papers to give it a high impact resistance.

## General Cleaning

Most laminates are highly resistant to staining from normal household substances. Typically cleaning requires nothing more than a wipe with a damp cloth or sponge. For tougher marks, an all purpose cleaner may be used, such as Fantastik, Formula 409, or Pine-Sol. It is best to clean up spills as quickly as possible, and if you use a chemical cleaner, make sure to rinse thoroughly with clean water to ensure no chemical buildup occurs.

Water is generally all you need for cleaning, but be careful not to flood or immerse the laminate in water because it can damage the glued joints and cause warping. Always wipe up any excess water immediately.

## Stubborn Stains

If there are stains on the laminate that will not come off with the methods stated in the "General Cleaning" section, then try the following cleaners in the order listed.

- Methylated Spirits
- Acetone
- Paint Thinner

*Caution:* Don't use excessive amounts of these products especially around joint areas. They can breakdown the adhesive used to bond the laminate to the underlying wood.

If the stain continues to persist, rub the area with a soft brush (e.g. nail brush) and try using a mild abrasive such as toothpaste or baking soda.

*Caution:* Only use these abrasives as a last resort. If used too often, these cleaners can wear away the surface of the laminate.

Never use strong alkaline or acidic cleaners such as CLR (Calcium, Lime, Rust Remover), Toilet Cleaners, Draino, Oven Cleaners, Sugar Soap, or Bleach in any concentration. These substances can quickly etch into the surface causing permanent damage.

Do not use abrasive tools on the laminate for cleaning, or any other purpose. Sand paper, steel wool, or gritty cleaners such as Ajax Powder will scratch the surface of the laminate which will damage the appearance and stain resistance of the material. Do not use knives and similar tools on the laminate. Put a cutting board/chopping block down on the laminate first for food preparation. This will reduce the chances of scratching or chipping the laminate.

## **Heat**

Laminate can typically withstand temperatures as high as 150°C without any signs of damage. However, precautions should be taken to ensure that laminate is kept clear from nearby sources of heat, such as freestanding fireplaces and space heaters. High temperatures cause laminates to expand and glue to soften which can often lead to warping and ultimately delamination.

Damage usually occurs only when exposed to prolonged heat. For example if boiling water was spilt on the counter, no damage would be done, but a hot pan setting directly on the laminate would burn it. If laminate is subjected to prolonged exposure to high heat it will most likely warp or blister and cause delamination. Therefore, it is best to place all hot objects on mats or heat pads.

## **Moisture**

Laminates are not suitable for use in high humidity or wet areas, such as saunas or showers. The high humidity could adversely affect the glue holding the laminate in place, the underlying particle board, and the laminate itself. Any one of these situations could lead to delamination.

## **Sunlight**

Prolonged exposure to direct sunlight is known to cause a laminated surface to fade or yellow. Direct sunlight can also open laminate joints, therefore, make sure joints are not placed in the sunlight. For these reasons, laminate is not recommended for outside use.

## **Delamination**

Delamination can sometimes be repaired by gluing the laminate back to the wood assuming that the wood nor the laminate is severely warped. Use a putty knife to scrape any dry glue off the back of the laminate and the supporting surface. Apply a contact adhesive evenly to both surfaces. Let this dry until the adhesive is sticky, and then press laminate firmly down onto the supporting surface. If possible, clamp or hold the laminate down onto the surface with a heavy non-abrasive object for 24 hours.

## **Note:**

This information was summarized from several different laminate companies. For more specific care instructions on the type of laminate you have, please visit one or more of the sites listed below.

Wilsonart – [www.wilsonart.com](http://www.wilsonart.com)

Nevamar – [www.nevamar.com](http://www.nevamar.com)

Pionite – [www.pionite.com](http://www.pionite.com)

Formica – [www.formica.com](http://www.formica.com)

## **Particle Board**

In most cases the particle board should be covered by laminate or edge banding, but if for some reason the bare board is exposed it should be protected from moisture. If the particle board does get wet, wipe it off immediately. Otherwise it has a chance of expanding/swelling, which could cause deterioration of the particle board itself or delamination to surrounding areas of the board that are covered in laminate.

## **Hinges, Drawer Guides, Pulls, and other Misc. Hardware**

These items should be cleaned with a damp cloth only. Harsh abrasive cleaners may damage the finish on these items.

The hardware should not need any additional lubrication throughout its life span under normal use in a controlled environment.

