Decorative Wall Panel Installation Instructions

Always remember to follow these important steps when installing decorative wall panels:

1. **Condition the panels.**
2. **Prepare the walls.**
3. **Space the panels.**
4. **Use proper nailing and/or gluing patterns.**

Please read the Decorative Wall Panel Installation Instructions in their entirety before proceeding!

These instructions describe the proper methods for installing Georgia-Pacific decorative wall panels. These panels are intended for dry interior use only and require care in handling.

1. **Conditioning Panels**

Condition panels by placing them in the room to be paneled 48 hours prior to installation. Stack the panels on the floor or lean them against a wall, with spacers between each sheet. This allows the room air to circulate around each panel for proper acclimation. Only Lionite® Tileboard has a finish that is moisture, stain, and scuff resistant. All other pre-finished interior wall paneling have finishes that are not considered moisture resistant and should not be installed in areas subject to moisture or high humidity. All Georgia-Pacific decorative wall paneling should be stored flat and off the ground in a dry area prior to installation.

2. **Wall Preparation**

**Hardboard and MDF** Installing panels over existing true walls requires no preliminary preparation. Sanding high spots on the wall is generally about all you have to do. In most homes, studs are spaced 16” on center, but 24” centers and other spacing may exist especially in exterior walls. Stud spacing must be determined, since panels must be nailed through the backing into studs or furring 16” on center for maximum holding.

Measure stud centers and snap vertical chalklines along the wall for each stud. If studs are over 16” on center, install horizontal furring 16” on center following recommendations in section 10. If you’re paneling over a new wall, check your local building codes to see if you’re allowed to install panels 1/4” and thicker directly to studs without a backing. Panels thinner than 1/4” will require installation of a non-combustible backer over the studs, such as gypsum wallboard. Exterior walls must be insulated and have a 4 mil or greater vapor retarder installed on the side of the wall required in local building codes.

**Tileboard** Tileboard must be applied to a continuous solid non-combustible backing. Do not apply panels directly to studs or furring strips. On masonry walls (concrete, brick or cinder block) a framework of furring strips or studs overlaid with water-resistant gypsum wallboard is suitable for tileboard application. Exterior walls must have insulation and a minimum 4 mil vapor retarder installed beneath the solid backing.

**Arrange Panels** If you have chosen simulated woodgrain panels, take a few minutes to stand the panels side-by-side around the room. Arrange them to achieve the most pleasing balance of color and grain pattern, then number the back of each panel in sequence.

3. **Cutting Panels**

**MDF and Hardboard** If measured floor-to-ceiling height is 8’ or less, subtract 1/2” from this measurement to allow 1/4” expansion clearance top and bottom.

**Tileboard** See Spacing, Fitting and Tub and Shower Installation sections.

4. **Spacing Between Panels**

**Hardboard and MDF** A 1/16” gap between adjacent panels is recommended to allow for expansion. Never butt panels tightly. A 3/16” space should be provided around windows and doors.

**Tileboard Installation Without a Divider Strip** For tileboard installation without divider strips, seal 1/8” space between panels with a high-quality silicone caulk. For a pleasing appearance, and a secure seal, carefully caulk around the tub. **Note:** Panel adhesive must be dry before caulking. Wet adhesive may discolor caulk.

**Tileboard Installation With a Divider Strip** For tileboard installation with divider strips, leave a 3/16” gap between panels, including 1/16” between panel edge and the inside of the moulding.

5. **Fitting Panels**

**Hardboard and MDF** Put the first panel in place and bring to adjacent wall in the corner allowing 1/16” space. Make sure it is plumb and both left and right panel edges fall on solid stud backing. The panel may have to be trimmed to allow the outer edge to fall on the center of a stud for nailing. Also, on rough walls, or adjoining a fireplace wall, use a pencil compass to mark the panel on the inner edge, then cut on the scribe line to fit around the obstruction. Before nailing the panels, paint a stripe of color to match the panels groove color on the wall location where the panels will meet.
6. Adhesive Application
Adhesive application should be used to apply Hardboard and 1/4” MDF*. 1/8” and 5/32” MDF requires both adhesive and nails.

**Hardboard and MDF**
Adhesive should be applied to panels directly to studs or over existing walls as long as the surface is level, sound and clean. Once the panel is fitted, apply beads of adhesive with a caulkig gun in a continuous strip along the top, bottom and both sides of the panel. On intermediate studs, apply beads 3” long and 6” apart. Over solid backing, apply adhesive in a zigzag pattern between studs. Some supplemental nailing will be necessary to hold the panel in place until the adhesive sets. Be sure to read the adhesive manufacturer’s instructions carefully prior to installation, as instructions may vary. Use a hammer and padded wood block (or rubber mallet) to set the glued panel in position.

*Use only a latex water based adhesive with MDF panels. Solvent based adhesive may cause discoloration of finishes on MDF panels.*

7. Cementing — Tileboard only
First, thoroughly clean the surface—sanding if necessary—to ensure a smooth, tight bond. Clean any dust from the back of the panels. Do not nail panels in place.

Use a good-quality adhesive and spread according to manufacturer’s instructions. With a 3/16” notched trowel, scrape the panel so that you leave only ridges of adhesive covering the entire back surface of the panel. If you are using moulding, insert prior to setting panels and allow nails to be placed in the grooves on standard 16” stud centers. Some supplemental nailing will be necessary to hold the panel in place until the adhesive sets. Be sure to read the adhesive manufacturer’s instructions carefully prior to installation, as instructions may vary. Use a hammer and padded wood block (or rubber mallet) to set the glued panel in position.

Now carefully set the panels in place and press them firmly against the wall. After 15 minutes press panels again to ensure proper adhesion.

8. Tub and Shower Installation (Tileboard only)
In addition to the recommendations in section 7, securely seal all edges and joints with a silicone caulk to prevent water entry. Caulk all gaps where water or moisture can enter and cause damage to the product or structure. Apply according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

**Installation With a Divider Strip**
For tileboard installation with divider strips, leave a 3/16” gap between panels, including 1/16” between panel edge and the inside of the moulding.

**Installation Without a Divider Strip**
For tileboard installation without divider strips, seal 1/8” space between panels with a high-quality silicone caulk. For a pleasing appearance, and a secure seal, carefully caulk around the tub. Note: Panel adhesive must be dry before caulkig. Wet adhesive may discolor caulk.

9. Nailing Panels
**Hardboard and MDF**
Panel grooves are usually located every 16”, allowing nails to be placed in the grooves on standard 16” stud centers. Panel matching colored ringshank nails are recommended. Use 1” nails to apply paneling to studs alone, 1-1/2” nails to apply paneling to a solid backing or plaster. Space nails 6” along panel edges and 8” on intermediate studs. Wear eye protection when nailing.

**Tileboard**
Do not nail tileboard. See Cementing and Tub and Shower Installation instructions.

10. Installing Paneling over Masonry
**NOTE:** Not all panels are approved for below-grade use or over masonry walls. Please consult the instructions printed on the back of each panel to determine suitability for this application. Excessive moisture conditions and high humidity will require correction prior to paneling installation.

**NOTE:** If installing panels that are less than 1/4” thick, a solid non-combustible backing such as gypsum wallboard must be placed over the furring strips before application of the panels.

Quarter inch (1/4”) panels can be applied direct to furring. The construction of a lightweight wood frame system (furring strips) will allow paneling to be applied to masonry walls (concrete, brick and cinder block) or walls in bad repair. Furring strips are 1” x 2” lumber or 1/2” plywood cut into strips 1-1/2” wide. Strips should run horizontally 16” apart (based on 8” ceiling) with vertical members spaced 48” on center where panels meet. Allow 1/2” space at the floor and ceiling with the horizontal strips. Check with a level to make sure each furring strip is flush with the first strip. Use wood shingles or wedges between the wall and strips to assure a uniformly flat surface. Furring strips may be applied to a masonry wall with specially hardened masonry nails. A badly damaged masonry wall may require the construction of a 2” x 3” stud wall, with 16” stud centers, before applying panels.

Masonry walls partially or fully below ground level (below grade) may present a serious dampness problem. Exterior walls must be insulated and have a 4 mil or greater vapor retarder. Holes or cracks in masonry walls must be patched with concrete patching compound and weeping or porous walls must be waterproofed before installing paneling. In either case, consult the masonry product manufacturer for specific application instructions.

11. Wainscot Application
For a unique look use wainscoting to combine panel types. An eight-foot panel cut into thirds will wainscot a 12” wall to a height of 32”. Apply wainscoting along lower wall by following instructions for panel installation. Repeat same steps with the upper wall. Hide the horizontal seam with a chair rail moulding.

12. Panel Maintenance
Georgia-Pacific pre-finished panels are suitable for normal dry interior use environments. Georgia-Pacific pre-finished paneling should not be used in environments where accumulation of grease, smoke, or other contaminants will require frequent cleaning to remove accumulations. To remove surface accumulations such as dust, wipe with a soft cloth dampened with a furniture polish containing no waxes or silicones. More stubborn accumulations may require wiping with a soft cloth dampened with a solution of lukewarm water and a mild liquid detergent. Wipe dry immediately following this procedure with a clean dry cloth. Tileboard is practically maintenance-free. It never needs wax and can be cleaned with a mild soap on a damp cloth or sponge. Never use abrasive cleansers on panels as it will scratch the finish and dull the panel gloss. Self-adhering tapes may contain solvents in their adhesives. Applying to panels may dissolve the protective coating and damage the panel.
Note: The user is responsible for proper installation of this product. The product must be installed in strict conformity with Georgia-Pacific’s instructions and all applicable building code requirements and other regulations. In addition, if not specifically covered by Georgia-Pacific’s installation instructions, the product must be installed in accordance with generally accepted good design and construction practices. When installing this product, the user also should consider the effects of local climate and geography. Georgia-Pacific does not warrant and is not responsible for any damage caused by such installation, including but not limited to damage caused by moisture, humidity, condensation, water, wet conditions or weathering. Georgia-Pacific disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for damages or defects resulting from or attributable to mold, mold growth, mildew, fungi, algae, moss, bacterial growth, decay, rot or similar conditions affecting (this product) whether caused by improper handling, storage, installation or maintenance; exposure of this product to (excessive) humidity, moisture, dampness, condensation, water or wet conditions; or any other cause whatsoever.

Do not install Hardboard or MDF direct-to-studs in Mobile Homes.

Do not install MDF panels in Mobile Homes as full wall paneling.

CAUTION: These products, except tileboard and hardboard, contain a urea formaldehyde resin and may release formaldehyde vapor in low concentrations. Formaldehyde can be irritating to the eyes and upper respiratory system, especially to susceptible persons such as those with allergies or respiratory ailments. Use with adequate ventilation. Do not use MDF wall paneling in mobile homes as full wall paneling. If symptoms develop, consult your physician. A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) containing potential physical and health hazard information is available on the Georgia-Pacific Web site at www.gp.com or by contacting: Product Safety and Health Information Department, Georgia-Pacific LLC, P.O. Box 105605, Atlanta, GA 30348. For more information on GP products, call 1-800 BUILD GP (284-5347).

CAUTION: Georgia-Pacific pre-finished paneling is a wood based product and is combustible. Care should be taken when installing panels to allow for space between panels and heat producing appliances and ignition sources. Consult your local building code authority for guidelines and requirements. Georgia-Pacific disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for damages or defects resulting from or attributable to mold, mold growth, mildew, fungi, algae, moss, bacterial growth, decay, rot or similar conditions affecting (this product) whether caused by improper handling, storage, installation or maintenance; exposure of this product to (excessive) humidity, moisture, dampness, condensation, water or wet conditions; or any other cause whatsoever.

Tools and Supplies for Installation

Assemble all your tools and supplies before you begin the job. Here is what you will need for most common wall panel installations:

- tape measure
- level
- pencil compass
- hammer and nail set
- nails
- padded wooden block (or rubber mallet)
- power or handsaw (with short fine-toothed blade)
- carpenter’s square

Additional tools and supplies are needed for Tileboard:

- tileboard mouldings
- plane or wood rasp to dress panel edges
- file (for use with mouldings)
- hacksaw (for mouldings)

- chalkline
- drill
- adhesive caulk gun
- adhesive
- eye goggles (must be worn when using any power or hand tools)
- keyhole saw
- mitre box
- tub and shower caulk
- mineral spirits or turpentine
- and cloths for clean-up
- notched trowel
- tileboard adhesive

How Much Do You Need?

Georgia-Pacific decorative panels measure 48” x 96” and wainscot panels measure 48” x 32”. This estimating guide will help determine the number of panels you’ll need, whether you’re working with full-size panels or wainscoting panels.

1. Measure the area of the room you’d like to panel. Write down the measurement in feet. (round up to the nearest half foot)

   Length _______ × Height _______ = _______ Wall Area

2. Full Panel: Divide Wall Area (1) by 32.

   Wall Area (1) / 32 = _______ Number of Sheets.

3. Wainscot: Divide Wall Area (1) by 96.

   Wall Area (1) / 96 = _______ Number of Sheets.

4. Add (2) and (3) together to determine Number of Sheets.

   _______ + _______ = _______ Number of Sheets

5. To allow for cutting waste, multiply Number of Sheets in Step 4 by five percent.

   Total Number of Panels = _______ x 0.05 = _______ Number of Panels

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