



CHECKING

In a plywood panel, a check is a naturally occurring lengthwise separation between wood fibers parallel to the grain of the veneer. It occurs normally in solid or laminated wood products exposed to weather. Checking is expected on non-overlaid veneered panels, even when the panels are finished with paint or stain. These checks usually blend with the textured surface of veneered siding, but are likely to be more noticeable in sanded veneered panels. For this reason, APA does not recommend sanded plywood for siding applications. Sanded plywood is frequently used, however, for soffits and other miscellaneous exterior uses.

Checking is often erroneously perceived by builders and owners to be the first signs of delamination. Checking is not a product defect and does not affect the structural integrity of the panel or the performance of a properly applied finish.

Panel refinishing usually obscures the checks, but if a check-free surface is desired, an overlaid panel product should be used.

Checking may be minimized on panels through proper edge sealing. Edge sealers retard the movement of moisture, protecting the panel edges from moisture fluctuations, making the panel edges less susceptible to sudden changes in weather. Horizontal edges, especially lower drip edges, should be treated with special care because of the greater exposure to moisture from rain and water. If a stain will be used on the panel's face, a liberal application of a paintable water-repellent preservative compatible with the final finish may be used for edge sealing. If the panel will be painted, use the same exterior house paint primer that will be used on the face. Edge sealing is easiest when the panels are stacked.

Use of a top-quality all-acrylic latex house paint system composed of a stain-blocking acrylic latex primer and an all-acrylic latex topcoat has also been found to help reduce checking in new plywood surfaces. It is important to apply each coat at the correct spread rate, according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Two topcoats will generally provide even better performance.

Other APA References:

Form B360	<i>HDO/MDO Plywood</i>
Form E30	<i>Engineered Wood Construction Guide</i>
Form E300	<i>Performance Rated Siding</i>
Form K435	<i>Sanded Plywood</i>
EWS R465	<i>Checking in Glued Laminated Timber</i>

We have field representatives in most major U.S. cities and in Canada who can help answer questions involving APA trademarked products. For additional assistance in specifying engineered wood products, contact us:

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