



Treatment & Prevention of Mould on Engineered Timber



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1 Introduction

1.1 What is mould

Mould is a common annoyance and mostly appears on exterior timbers. Mould lives on the surface of these timbers and feeds on wood extractives such as sap sugars over time. Although mould does not decay or weaken the timber in any way, it creates an unappealing surface, and for decking or flooring it can create a slippery safety hazard. Mould is commonly confused with fungi, which decays the timber, rather than just affecting the surface. For mould to grow on the surface of timber, warmth and moisture must be present. Mould is able to grow on the timber without being seen for some time, but after a while will stain the timber, so it is best to control it from the early stages or prevent it from the start. Techlam use treated Radiata Pine for the majority of their products. Because of the light colour of the species, mould will show easily. Mould will show up on both treated and untreated glulam products, it's presence relates to the temperature, humidity, wetting and the presence of atmospheric mould spores. These moulds can spread rapidly depending on the circumstances but do not effect the wood structure. In the case of mould on framing, close in and dry out the timber to eliminate, although discolouration may still be present.

2 Prevention

To prevent mould from growing on glulam product, the most important thing is to keep it clean. Although some treated timbers will have good short term mould resistance, after about 3 months, some mould and sapstain may start to appear. If glulam is stored on site wrapped and the timber becomes damp, mould will develop quickly. For best results on site – keep glulam product in a dry condition and not stacked on the ground. For installed exterior glulam products, wash regularly, at least once a year with warm water & a mild detergent or timber cleaner. Apply this with a brush and rinse off with a hose. For better results, do this before applying a coating to prevent mould growth underneath the coating.

2.1 Products

There are a range of timber cleaning products available in New Zealand. Try to pick an option that doesn't have too many chemicals that could stay in the timber. Good options are Sodium percarbonate-based oxygenating cleaners such or oxalic acid cleaners. Recommended products include, 'Hit the Deck, Timber Rejuvenator', 'Spray & Go, Moss/Mould killer' or 'Wet & Forget Moss Mould Remover'.

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3 Control

For mould that has already appeared and is persisting, a long acting mouldicide product would be the best option. A water-based solution containing quaternary ammonium compounds such as benzalkonium chloride work well. These solutions can be applied to dry clean glulam and allowed to dry. Reapplication is recommended every 6 months and a coating can still be applied over top once it has dried. Glulam should then be kept as clean as possible, with products regularly re-applied for best results.

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