

CUPPING

IN SOUTHERN YELLOW PINE TREATED LUMBER

Cupping, warping and twisting are considered natural “weathering” characteristics of Southern Yellow Pine. Unlike the plastic alternatives, wood absorbs and releases moisture continuously resulting in movement. For that reason, it is important that certain factors are considered when building your deck such as design, fasteners and directional positioning.



TIPS FROM THE PROS TO REDUCE (NOT ELIMINATE) CUPPING:

- Screws take longer to drive than nails, but hold boards securely and will allow for easier removal if necessary. Use 3 1/4" fasteners on nominal 2" decking (Use two at each joint with 2x4s laid flat; use three for 2x6s laid flat.) 3" fasteners are recommended for 5/4" decking.
- Directional positioning matters: decks built with the majority of direct sunlight will age faster than those covered by shade.
- Separate deck boards as follows to allow for expansion and contraction. If heavy and wet, separate boards no more than 1/16" as some shrinkage will occur. If light and dry, separate boards about 1/8" to allow for swelling.
- Avoid long spans in joist spacing. The greater the distance between supporting points, the more the board will tend to warp and twist as it dries. Also avoid designs with long cantilevers unsecured at one end.
- Lumber wider than six inches should not be used as a flat surface. Wide, flat boards are subject to ponding of rain water, which can lead to cupping problems.

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