

Specifying Elements

Division 6 (6400 Architectural Millwork)

Interlam has a standard lead time of 1 to 4 weeks for the majority of Elements Carved MDF wall panel orders. Specific lead times are determined upon receipt of both the deposit and approved shop drawings. Lead times are based on a "first come first served" basis and are solely dependent upon our current work load. Interlam does not charge nor accept additional charges to rush orders. All orders will be manufactured as fast as possible in the order they are received.

The Elements Carved MDF wall panel product offers the customer an extremely broad variety of patterns, materials, finishes and installation choices. In order to translate a customer requirement into an accurate product specification, it is important to understand all of the product options and terms used to describe these options. Product specification terms and options are discussed below along with helpful illustrations.

It is important to first select a core material based on specific project needs, such as contribution towards "Leed" credits, FSC Certified fibers with COC, Class A fire rating, radius applications, interior or exterior applications, formaldehyde emissions or moisture resistance. Core materials are available to fit most special needs such as radius or serpentine installations, opaque wall dividers or exterior applications. Not all core materials are available in all sizes, finishes and or patterns. Consult the specific pattern page to determine available thickness and sheet size for each individual core. Lead times will be increased if a non-standard sheet size or thickness is required for any given job.

Flame Spread Performance of MDF / IDF Wood Panels:

Unless otherwise stated, Interlam's IDF or Carved MDF wood panels are not certified for a specific flame spread rating. Untreated [2] MDF has been tested for flame spread by a number of different manufacturers and the results met the Class III or C rating. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in their Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (Section 3280.203) accepts MDF 3/8 inch and thicker as having a flame spread rating of 76 to 200 for general use. The American Wood Council (AWC) of the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA) has published information in their "Design for Code Acceptance" series (DCA1) relating to Flame Spread Performance of Wood Products. The document can be found at www.awc.org. Table 1 in that document places MDF in the Class III or C rating. Likewise, Table 2 in that document places factory finished products (i.e. printed or with overlays) containing untreated particleboard and MDF substrates in the Class III or C flame spread rating. Smoke data specific to every product is currently not available; however other manufacturers have found typical values of 100-200 for smoke developed. The AF&PA document states that "a smoke-developed index was measured for some of the wood products listed in Tables 1 and 2". None of the products tested exceeded 450, a limiting value commonly used in building code regulations. Interlam's MDF treated with fire-retardant [3] (FR) additives are certified by Underwriters Laboratories to have a Class A or Class I flame spread rating and must be specifically ordered as an available option with an up charge.

[2] Without a fire-retardant additive

[3] Trade names: Premier® FR, VESTA FR MDF

Color Consistency of IDF, MDF, SDF, FR & Valchromat Products:

Our Carved MDF wall panel products are manufactured from recycled/recovered forest products; therefore due to the color of the raw material, the raw unfinished Elements products will have variations in color and fibre. This condition is relevant when the designer wishes to clear coat the raw product. The end result will be a natural variation of color and fibre found naturally within the fibre used for the manufacturing of the board products. Interlam will not guarantee a color match of raw boards. Interlam currently utilizes three mills for the fabrication of raw products, each of which contain distinct variations. This variation is especially noticeable when a class A fire rated board is used. The mills have begun to die the center core a pale orange color to distinguish it from other board products. Due to previously stated variables, we do not offer stain as a stock finish.

Pattern Number or Name:

Every pattern has an identifying number or name such as "Nazca", "Ovo" or "Retro". The pattern choice is the second step after choosing a material for the core. A full page is dedicated to each pattern online at

www.interlam-design.com complete with pattern characteristics and photos of the actual product. Do not place an order without requesting a sample and verifying the scale of the pattern. A hand has been included in the pattern shots for use as scale; however this alone cannot give a true representation of the pattern appearance.

Panel Size:

The standard panel size for the Elements offering is 48” x 96” (4’ x 8’). Custom panel sizes may or may not be available based on the pattern and specific panel layout. Please contact Interlam directly for custom sizes. Not all core materials are available in custom sizes. Please contact Interlam to determine material availability for custom projects. For multiple panel cut-to-size projects, please forward a dimensioned layout via e-mail to eddie@interlam-design.com in any of the following formats: .DXF, .DWG, or PDF files. DWG files are preferred.

Panel Thickness:

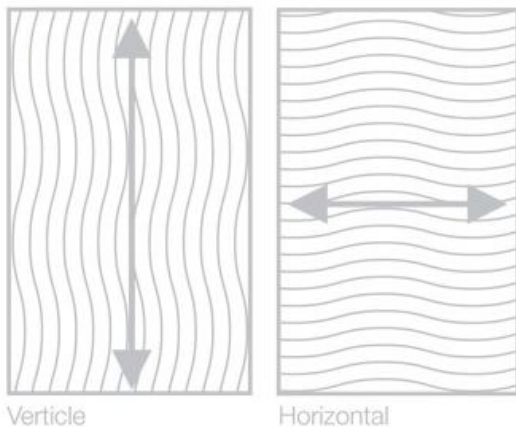
Panel thickness refers to the thickness of the raw stock prior to machining. After machining, the thickest area of the panel may be slightly less than this nominal panel thickness. Panel stock thickness ranges from 1/2” to 2”. Many factors will determine the final panel thickness such as Pattern choice, installation methods and material availability. See “Installation Methods” for further information on thickness specifications.

Pattern Depth:

The pattern depth refers to the deepest cut that is made in the raw stock in order to produce the pattern. Most patterns are offered in only one depth; however a few have multiple depth options as indicated on the specific pattern page.

Pattern Direction:

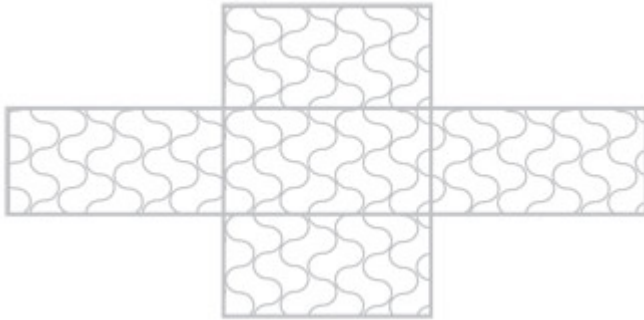
Most Element patterns are produced in the orientation shown in the website or catalogue photos, however a small number of patterns are available in both horizontal and vertical orientations. Please refer to the specific product pattern page for reference. Referring to the illustration, a pattern is said to be horizontal if the tool marks run generally in the short direction and vertical if the tool marks run generally in the long direction. Please note that the vertical and horizontal designations have nothing to do with the installed orientation. For multiple panel layouts or panels that are approximately square, orientation should be indicated in an attached layout sketch. The direction of some patterns is not always obvious, so please refer to individual pattern photos in the catalogue to determine the preferred orientation.



Pattern Repeat Type:

Element patterns are manufactured so that the pattern repeats smoothly from panel to panel creating a monolithic appearance. Depending on the pattern and customer requirements, this continuity can be achieved in a number of different ways. The way in which the pattern continues from panel to panel is called the pattern “repeat type.” The repeat type for each pattern is indicated in the pattern detail section of the catalogue. The different repeat types are discussed below.

Repeating Pattern Type - Repeating patterns allow the customer to fill a project area of any size using identical standard 4' X 8' panels. The standard panels fit together top-to-bottom and left-side to right- side creating a monolithic appearance. In the illustration below, 5 identical repeating panels are shown to match on all edges. The orientation of all panels must be maintained in the same direction to allow repeat. Repeating panels are only available in full 4' X 8' sheets.



A-B Repeat Type - This type of pattern repeats every other panel. Because of this an “A” and a “B” version of the pattern is manufactured and labeled accordingly. The two versions of the panel are then alternated in the final installation in order to achieve a monolithic appearance.

Minimum Recommended Thickness - The minimum thickness given for each pattern refers to the thinnest material from which the pattern can be cut. Panels of minimum thickness should be specified only when panels are to be attached directly to a sound surface with adhesive or when panels will have screw cleats or a backer attached with adhesive at the installation site.

If the product is to be installed by screwing directly into the Element panel, then panel thickness should be increased by a minimum of 1/2”.

Installation Methods:

The following information is a compilation of published information pertaining to the use and application of carved MDF/IDF products. This publication is intended to serve as an informative tool and a “sharing of information” rather than a strict directive. Each application will have unique circumstances and varied site conditions resulting in an assortment of available techniques and practices to achieve the same result. MDF/IDF products have a possible linear expansion of +/- .33%. Wood is a hygroscopic material, and under normal use conditions all wood products contain some moisture. Wood readily exchanges this molecular moisture with the water vapor in the surrounding atmosphere according to the existing relative humidity. In high humidity, wood picks up moisture and swells; in low humidity wood releases moisture and shrinks. As normal minor fluctuations in humidity occur, the resulting dimensional response in properly designed construction will be insignificant. To avoid problems, it is recommended that the relative humidity be maintained within the range of 25-55%. Uncontrolled extremes – below 20% or above 80% relative humidity-can likely cause problems. Immediately upon receipt of a your order, the panels should be placed in a climate-controlled environment and allowed three days to acclimate to the existing relative humidity (within the above stated ranges). It is very important to note that the panels must be stored flat to reduce the bowing and warping. When MDF/IDF panels are carved, the face of the panel is removed and creates an “unbalanced panel effect”. The level of this effect varies depending upon pattern and board thickness. Plywood backers can be added to the panels to assist in reducing this effect and aid in the installation process. The natural “bow” or “warp” is common to all MDF products and not inherent specifically to our products. This condition is slight and can be compensated by proper installation techniques, some of which are discussed in this bulletin.

Our Carved MDF/IDF wood products are manufactured from 100% recycled/recovered wood chips dried to appropriate average moisture content of 4-6% and maintained at this condition up to time of shipping. Interlam cannot control the conditions the panels are exposed to during the storing and shipping process. Subsequent dimensional change in MDF/IDF is and always has been an inherent natural property of composite panels. These changes cannot be the responsibility of the manufacturer. Specifically:

- Responsibility for dimensional change problems in MDF resulting from improper design rests with the designer/architect/specifier.
- Responsibility for dimensional change problems in MDF resulting from improper relative humidity exposure during site storage and installation rests with the General Contractor.
- Responsibility for dimensional change problems in MDF resulting from humidity extremes after occupancy rests with engineering and maintenance.
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All orders finished "In House" will have a clear lacquer sanding sealer on the back of the panel and the specified finish in either a lacquer or latex finish and or membrane pressed vinyl on the face and all edges. All orders placed as "prime and sand" only will have a lacquer based primer applied as a standard unless otherwise noted at the time the deposit is received. Sealing the back is imperative to reduce the possibility of excessive bowing and warping. All panels ordered as raw or unfinished, **MUST BE SEALED OR BACK PRIMED** prior to installation!! Failure to seal the back will allow moisture to be released and or absorbed from one side, resulting in excessive warping.

Due to the manufacturing methods used to produce Elements, most panels will have a slight "bow" or "warping" in them. This is considered normal and can easily be removed using the installation methods below. If a higher degree of flatness is required, Baltic Birch Plywood can be bonded to back of panels prior to manufacture. This reduces but will not completely eliminate warping.

Z-Clips:

Z-Clips may only be used if there is sufficient material thickness to allow screw attachment of the clips to the Element panel. Ideally, the panels should be specified thick enough or with a thick enough backer to accommodate the screws that are to be used. Panels of minimum recommended thickness can be used for Z-Clip installation, but the installer must first glue wood screw cleats to the back of the panel. Z-Clips should run the full panel width to insure adequate support across the entire panel. A minimum of three (3) rows of z-clips are required per 8 foot high panel. Adding a fourth row may be required depending on the pattern and panel thickness specified. The rows should be situated at the extreme top and bottom of the panel with the remaining rows centered. Plywood or solid wood "in-wall" blocking is required with metal stud construction and recommended with wood framing. Z-clips are available for purchase from Interlam. Estimate 4pcs (8 foot lengths) per 4 x8 Element panel. The z-clip is shipped in 8' lengths without bored holes. Price \$12.00 each (\$48.00 per sheet)

Construction Mastic:

A high quality construction mastic such as "Liquid Nails" or a "PL" Mastic such as "PL Premium Polyurethane" www.stickwithpl.com can be applied to the back of the panels and then pressed onto a structurally sound surface * A structurally sound surface for the purposes of this installation would be a wall skinned in 12mm Baltic birch plywood. Interlam does not recommend using this method to apply directly to drywall or painted surfaces. (follow construction mastic manufacturer's application instructions). Panels must be mechanically held in place until mastic is completely set. The installer **MUST** insure the panels are completely flat and aligned prior to the mastic curing. Improper placement using this method will result in a permanent incorrect installation with bowing or cupping on all sides at joints.

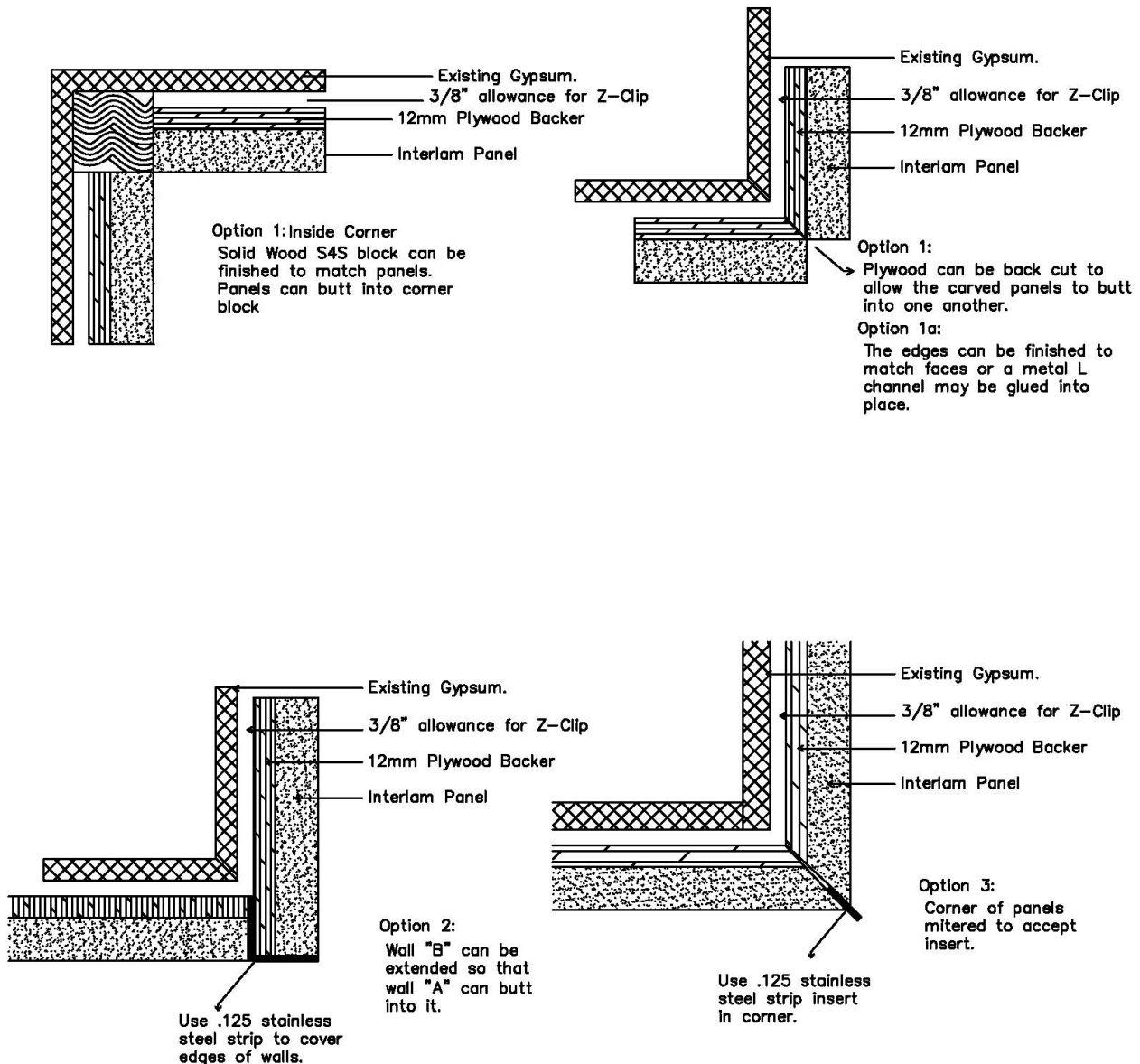
Direct Screw Attachment:

Elements may be attached to a supporting structure by screwing directly into the panel back. As is the case with Z-Clip installation, the panels should be specified thick enough or with a thick enough backer to accommodate the screws that are to be used. Construction mastic should also be used in conjunction with this technique. If attaching directly through the face of the panel into a substrate or batten preferably "in-wall blocking", the hole should be predrilled and countersunk and filled with a non-shrinking type of filler such as "Bondo" or similar auto-body filler. This technique is not performed on prefinished panels and therefore will most likely be finished in the field after installation. If this technique is utilized, the back must be sealed prior to installation. Bondo or similar auto-body fillers, wood putties or wood fills **ARE NOT RECOMMENDED** for the filling of seams between each panel. If the designer is attempting to achieve a monolithic appearance of the panels, a flexible seam fill or caulk should be applied in the seams prior to finishing. The selection and type of a particular seam fill should be compatible with the specified finish. Consult the specified finish manufacturer for compatible "Flexible seam fill options". Based on the inherent linear expansion properties of MDF/IDF products, flexible seam fillers must be utilized in the absence of a designed reveal or quirk line to allow for movement. With the proper technique, the seam will be inconspicuous; however it will never be invisible.

Seams:

Prefinished panels will have noticeable seams due to the finish buildup on the edge of each panel. The pattern will continue perfectly from one to another, however depending upon the pattern and pattern direction relative to the seam location, the severity of the seam visibility will vary. Some patterns allow the seam to be hidden within the patterns, while others may require the seam to be placed against the direction of the pattern and be more noticeable. It is recommended that the designer contact Interlam Corp. prior to specifying a pattern or specific installation technique to achieve the highest level of design intent. During this contact, the specifier should provide the following information:

- Complete layout in AutoCAD of the specified area only, including plan, elevation and section
- A selection of patterns being considered with *desired pattern direction*
- Desired finish
- Installation technique being considered
- Site conditions
- Specific core requirements I.E. fire rating, LEED's, CARB etc....
- Corner conditions- Sample illustrations are shown



Consideration of all the aforementioned elements will allow Interlam to determine a suggestion for optimal placement of material seams and methods of installation.

The installation of “Elements” requires more than a basic knowledge of rough carpentry and should only be performed by a certified AWI millwork company. Special conditions such as miter corner conditions, radius applications, custom shapes etc... should be addressed during the initial design phase.

FURTHER QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO: eddie@interlam-design.com