

SOLID SURFACING BY FORMICA GROUP / DARK COLORS FABRICATION TECHNICAL BRIEF



Formica Corporation has developed a fabrication technique that will help fabricators improve the appearance of drop edge build-up seams. This fabrication technique will work for all Formica® Solid Surfacing designs, but it is critical when working with Dark Colors and Ice Colors.

This technique has been developed to insure the highest quality finished product by minimizing visible (white) seams in drop edge build-up assemblies. During final finishing, in our manufacturing facility, the back of the sheet is sanded using 100-grit sandpaper with a wide belt sander. This process enables us to maintain thickness tolerances and ensures a consistent flat back of the sheet. The back sanding, however, creates whiteness on the back of the sheet that, if not removed, could create a visible seam in drop edge build-ups.

TO ACHIEVE THE BEST POSSIBLE EDGE APPEARANCE WITH DARK COLORS:

- Sand the back side of the countertop deck (in the drop edge area) and sand the face and back of each edge strip with 120-grit (100 micron) sandpaper using a random orbital sander.
- Sand until the white linear lines have been removed from the back of the sheet/strip and the face has been roughed up enough to insure proper bonding.
- Always glue the face of the material to the back of the next piece in the drop edge assembly.
- Use recommended color matched adhesive.

Additionally, deck seam appearance on Dark Colors can be improved by simply wiping down the edges of the sheet to be seamed together with denatured alcohol (instead of scuff sanding the edges with 60-grit sandpaper). The strength of the seam will be unaffected as long as a seam reinforcement (scab) strip, made from 1/2" material, is bonded to the back side of the seam.

FINISHING DARK COLORS

Formica Corporation fabrication techniques that will help fabricators improve the appearance of the finish in dark colors. These fabrication techniques will work for all Formica Solid Surfacing designs, but it is critical when working with Dark Colors.

Formica Solid Surfacing sheets and molded shapes are finished to a satin finish in the factory but fabrication and installation operations, as well as customer selection of other finishes, make it necessary for the fabricator and/or installer to adjust the final finish.

The abrasive mineral of choice for finishing solid surfacing material is aluminum oxide. It is available in various sizes from coarse to extremely fine in either the P-graded grit or micron forms. We recommend using the Micron system for sanding. Below is a chart of the standard grits that are available. 100 micron would be the coarsest and 15 would be the finest on this chart.

MICRON SYSTEM

100 micron
80 micron
60 micron
40 micron
30 micron
15 micron

NON-WOVEN NYLON ABRASIVE PADS

Used for final finishing to matte or satin finish, maintenance, etc. Generally used in two grades:

Maroon: (very fine) for matte finish 3M Scotch-Brite #7447 Mirka® Mirlon #447

Gray: (ultra fine) for satin finish 3M Scotch-Brite #7448 Mirka® Mirlon #448

When sanding Dark Colors, it is important to not skip the progression of grit or micron. For example it would be incorrect to sand with 100 micron and skip to 60 micron when sanding Dark Colors. The correct step would be 100 micron, 80 micron, 60 micron.

Always clean thoroughly between sanding steps. Particles from the abrasive pads could be left on the surface, so when the next step of sanding occurs, larger particles will cause "swirls" and create a poor finish.

In most cases, solid surface countertops should be installed with a "matte" finish. This is achieved by sanding to 60 micron and then a maroon abrasive pad 3M Scotch-Brite #7447. To enrich the color of the Dark Colors, it may require extra steps of sanding. A "semigloss" finish may be required. To achieve this sand with 100 micron, 80 micron, 60 micron, 30 micron and a gray abrasive pad 3M Scotch-Brite #7448. Sanding wet with the #7448 will create a more uniform finish. The use of a 500 grit Abralon pad made by Mirka also helps bring the color out of a dark color.

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TECHNICAL BRIEF CONTINUED



There are also many quality manufactures of large profile sanding equipment that will increase your productivity and help you sand to a high quality finish. Gem Industries www.gemindustries.com and Pinske www.pinske-edge.com are just a couple.

FINISHING FORMICA® SOLID SURFACING

Formica Solid Surfacing sheets and molded shapes are finished to a satin finish in the factory but fabrication and installation operations, as well as customer selection of other finishes, make it necessary for the fabricator and/or installer to adjust the final finish.

There are three basic finishes that are used. Each of these have certain advantages and disadvantages which should be seriously considered for each application. The properties of these finishes are described below:

MATTE		SATIN		DARK COLORS SEMIGLOSS	POLISHED
P-grade	Micron	P-grade	Micron	Micron	Micron
120	100	120	100	100	100
180	80	180	80	80	80
220	60	220	60	60	60
320	30	320	30	30	40
3M® Scotch-Brite Maroon #7447	3M® Scotch-Brite Gray #7448	3M® Scotch-Brite Gray #7448 – Wet	3M® Scotch-Brite Gray #7448 – Wet	Mirka® Abralon 8A-241-500 – Wet	30
					15
					9
					3M® Finesse-it #051144 -77340
					3M® Finesse-it #051144-81235

COLOR LIST

307 SPANISH PAPRIKA	780 LUNA STONE
309 PESTO MIST	781 LUNA CONCRETE
389 MARRON GRANITI	782 LUNA WEATHER
501 BLACK LAVA	786 PORTOBELLO FINE
650 EBONY MOSAIC	787 DRIFT TRAVERTINE
651 CHICORY MOSAIC	
652 PECAN MOSAIC	
654 BOTANICAL MOSAIC	
655 COSTAL MOSAIC	
656 RIVER ROCK MOSAIC	
704 SALITILLO STONE	
714 FEDERAL CORNERSTONE	
715 GOTHIC CORNERSTONE	
763 COFFEE SILICA	
766 PORTOFINO MINERAL	
774 LUNA FOSSIL	
775 LUNA STORM	
777 NOCE TRAVERTINE	
779 GRAY SPARKLE	

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Technical assistance may be obtained through your local Formica Solid Surfacing distributor or from Formica Corporation trained representatives in sales offices throughout the country. To assist these representatives, Formica Corporation maintains a sales technical services staff in Cincinnati, Ohio. For technical assistance, contact your distributor or sales representative; write the company directly at Formica Corporation Technical Services Department, 10155 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241; call 1-800-FORMICA™ or fax (513) 786-3195. In Canada, call 1-800-363-1405. In Mexico, call (525) 530-3135.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

See www.formica.com for the most current technical data and warranty information, which is the only authorized source for this information.

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Manufacture of Formica Solid Surfacing is covered by one or both U.S. Patent Numbers 4,473,673 and 4,652,596 and by corresponding patents in other countries.



GreenGuard Environmental Institute
Formica® Solid Surfacing is GreenGuard Indoor Air Quality
Certified under the GreenGuard Standard for Low-Emitting Products.

For warranty information, please visit www.formica.com or call 1-800-FORMICA™.

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