



CARE OF WOOD DECKING FOR PLATFORM TRAILERS

Platform trailers that set idle for periods of time are exposed to the elements where they may suffer weather damage. This damage results from excessive sunlight, temperature and/or moisture. The damage from sunlight and high temperatures may take the form of shrinkage to the top face of the decking causing larger than normal spacing to appear between boards. Often this will be accompanied by concave cupping of the decking, which is more pronounced in wider width pieces, and cracking or splitting of the decking known as season checking. Such cracks may cause other problems. The cracks fill with rainwater and absorption of water into wood can lead to degradation as trapped water penetrates the interior portion of the boards.

Prevention of weather damage can be greatly minimized by the applying of good water repellent wood preservative to all visible surfaces of the decking. The cost of labor to apply the treatment and the material itself is modest when compared to the potential degradation from weather elements. It takes less than an hour's labor and approximately four gallons of repellent using a hand held roller or, more preferred, a hand held pump up sprayer.

Some of the various types of products used today are Thompson's and Baer's Waterseal, linseed oil, and Wood Guard by ISK Biosciences of Memphis, TN. Wood Guard contains a preservative agent that may better the results. ISK Biosciences can be contacted at 800-524-1093. Any of these products will help increase the life of trailer decking. Incorporating a maintenance program of coating the decking on platform trailers will greatly benefit end users, dealers and manufacturers, especially in the event that trailers set idle for lengthy periods of time.

Keep in mind that wood is a product of nature and, as such, will acclimate to its surrounding environment. Properly seasoned decking can change dimensions after installation given the right conditions. It is important to understand that excessive swings in environmental changes such as summer and winter will take their toll on decking. In addition, platforms setting dead lined or idle, are subject to a different environment than those in operation even if they in identical locations. Remember the old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact your local dealer or OHC at 800-999-7616.