

# HOW TO STAIN

MASONITE® FLUSH DOOR SERIES, MASONITE® FRENCH DOOR SERIES,  
MASONITE® WOOD PANEL SERIES, AND LOUVER DOORS

## IMPORTANT

*Please read and understand the entire procedure before attempting to finish your doors.  
Be sure to follow the manufacturers' instructions on product labels.*

Field finishing of wood doors can be accomplished by several methods, using a variety of materials. First, assemble all the materials needed for your door finishing project. You will need drop cloths, paper towels, wood filler, scraper, putty knives, sandpaper, sanding block, single ply lint free 100% cotton cloths (clean and dry), tack cloths, stir sticks and good quality pure bristle brushes or applicators.

The full beauty of wood is best emphasized by use of a quality, satin or semi-gloss sealer after the door has been stained.

Your work area should be clean, dust free (avoid carpeted areas unless you cover the entire carpet with plastic), well ventilated and out of direct sunlight.

## HOW TO START

When selecting tools for the job, remember that higher quality tools yield higher quality results. White china bristle brushes work best. Rags for wiping should be 100% cotton, single ply lint free.

Results achieved may not precisely match the stain color charts. Also, the stained door may not match exactly the stained wood trim around the door. Test first in order to determine the color and match. Tinting or thinning of the stain may be required to achieve the desired results.

\*\*Masonite does not recommend the use of dark stains on wood doors. Due to the nature of the process used to create wood facings many species of wood will create a "barber pole" effect (inconsistent appearance where the wood skins have been bound to make up the face of the door).

### 1) MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- A high quality oil-based stain and a clear topcoat **OR**
- A high quality oil/varnish-based stain-and-sealer combination with a compatible topcoat

Always follow manufacturer's applications, directions and recommendations. ALWAYS use exterior grade materials if you have an exterior door application.

- 3" -4" White China Bristle Brush
- 1" China Bristle Brush
- 100% Cotton, Lint-Free Wiping Cloth
- Tack cloth
- 220 Grit Sandpaper and Sanding Block. Additional sandpaper or steel wool per manufacturer's instructions may be required.

3) The more care taken in preparing the surface before the stain is applied the better the results. Remove all hardware and fill any nail holes and blemishes with wood filler. These fillers **MUST NOT** contain stearates or waxes and should be stainable or color matched to the wood stain. If you are finishing a French door that has muntin bars (wood grille), it is not necessary to mask the glass lites, since each one is protected with a plastic film.

4) Remove handling marks by sanding lightly with 220 grit sandpaper before applying finish. Surface should be clean and dry, free of all dirt, grease, glue stains and machine marks. Sand again lightly between coats.

5) For staining soft or porous woods (ie. Pine, Fir, Hemlock, Aspen, Maple) use a pre-stain conditioner to help prevent blotching and streaking. (NEVER USE A LACQUER-BASED TONER OR FINISH). Some woods, particularly Pine, has a tendency to absorb stain unevenly. The wood conditioner penetrates the wood, preparing the surface so that the stain is absorbed evenly.

6) Wipe down with a tack cloth to ensure a dust free finish.

7) Prepare the materials according to the manufacturer's instructions.

8) Apply a thin coat of stain with a 3" -4" brush. Use a wiping cloth to remove excess stain. When wiping stiles and rails, use long strokes to prevent stain from pooling where the horizontal rails and the vertical stiles meet. Only work on one area of the door at a time.

For **Wood Panel Doors**, start with the door panels ①, then the mullion ②, then stain the horizontal rails ③, then the vertical door stiles ④. For a **French Door**, start with the muntin bars (grille) and then proceed to the rails and then stiles. We recommend finishing with the door laying horizontal on a bench or workhorses for best results. For **Wood Veneer Doors**, finish in the direction of the grain.

Remove any excess stain from the corners of the panels or lite grilles by feathering with a dry 1" brush.

9) Stain all four edges last (top, bottom, left and right).

10) With some stains, a second coat will yield a deeper color. Make sure the first coat is completely dry before applying a second coat. Consult the stain manufacturer's directions for drying times.

### 2) PREPARATION & APPLICATION:

Doors should be allowed to acclimate to the environment where they will be installed. This may take at least two days under average conditions. Avoid finishing immediately after a rain or damp weather and during periods of higher than average humidity. In very dry conditions, the door should be finished right after the wrapping is removed. Ensure adequate air flow around all surfaces of the door when conditioning.

11) Allow door to dry completely for 24 hours or until there is no more odor of the stain. Apply a minimum of two layers of topcoat. Refer to manufacturer's instructions for topcoat compatibility with the stain used in Step 8.

Advantages and disadvantages of solvent-borne clear finishes:

- Brushes well, excellent resistance to: wear, water, and water vapor.
- Subject to UV degradation, slight yellowing.

Advantages and disadvantages of water-borne clear finishes:

- Scuff resistant, easy clean-up, minimal solvent fumes, non-yellowing.
- Moderate water resistance, weather-sensitive application, and potential for raised wood-grain.

Ensure each coat is dry before applying the next; sand between topcoats as recommended. **The entire door (all 6 sides) must be completely sealed with two coats minimum to restrict moisture absorption and to maintain the Masonite warranty.** Apply top coats over one area at a time, per Step 8 schematic.

12) After finishing is completed, reinstall all hardware.

For **French Doors** with wood muntin bars, use a sharp blade or utility knife to cut away the protective plastic film leaving clean edges around the lites.

### Storage and Handling:

- 1) Deliver doors to the building site after the plaster, drywall or concrete is dry. If doors are stored at the job-site for more than one week, top, bottom and side edges **MUST** be sealed. Care **MUST** be taken to avoid edge or face damage.
- 2) Store flat on a level surface in a clean, dry, well ventilated building. Protect from dirt, water and abuse, but allow air circulation. Doors must be sealed with an oil-based sealer or primer if stored for long periods.
- 3) Doors should not be subjected to abnormal or sudden variations in heat, dryness or humidity and should not be exposed to direct sunlight.
- 4) Doors should be stored at least 10' away from any heat source. Excessive heat on one area of the door creates uneven drying which results in warping and checking on the faces.
- 5) Doors should be conditioned to the average prevailing humidity before hanging. In below-zero temperatures, doors should be stored properly in a dry building at normal temperatures for at least three days before hanging.
- 6) Handle with clean hands or gloves and do not drag doors across one another or across other surfaces.

