



Typical postformed front edge detail to plastic laminate worktop

Other plastic laminate products

In addition to the standard decorative laminate sheets, there are also thicker sheets with a decorative face on both sides and a black or brown core. These are 3 to 20 mm thick and are primarily used for doors. Suitable also for worktops as it is very strong, high impact and moisture-resistant material.

They can also be postformed if required.

No substrates are needed over 6 mm thickness.

Recommended thickness for worktops is 10 mm.

Also available are solid colour melamine sheets 1.3 to 2.6 mm thick. These sheets can be glued together in layers, using epoxy adhesives, to make from 6 to 12 mm beautiful, hard-wearing and expensive work surfaces.

This product cannot be postformed but the surface can be routed, engraved or sand blasted.

Source: Formica Ltd

Hardwood worktops

Hardwood worktops are long lasting, hardwearing with great natural beauty. Timber seasons slowly and will darken with age. The main disadvantage to using hardwood for worktops is that it is important to avoid too much water sitting on the surface and it requires oiling from time to time to maintain water resistance.

Timber species

It is vitally important in today's concern about endangered species that all hardwoods are known to have come from a renewable source. The only safe guarantee that this is so is if the timber is certified by the *Forest Stewardship Council* (FSC). Consult the FSC for lists of accredited suppliers.

The following list describes the species that are considered suitable for domestic kitchen worktops.

Ash *Fraxinus Americana* from N. America

Light straw colour with occasional darker chocolate areas and strong textured grain. Suitable for worktops, but reacts more to moisture so must be well oiled in wet areas.

Bamboo *Phyllostachys pubescens*

Strips of thick straight stems, kiln dried, planed on all sides and glued together under pressure which can be worked like any hardwood. It is 27% harder than N. American red oak and 13% harder than maple. 3 m long × 30 mm thick available for worktops, it is kind to fabricators as the sawdust is heavy and falls to the ground.

Beech *Fagus sylvatica* from Germany and Romania

Straight, fine grained, pinkish-blond colour. Extremely hard and dense, but must be well oiled in wet areas.

Cherry *Prunus avium* from N. America and England

Excellent work surface material with some wavy grain which darkens from pale pink to reddish brown with the odd darker fleck. English varieties may have some green patina.