



# Installation Instructions for Guarantee Requirements

Correctly adhering to the standards outlined in these installation instructions will ensure the countertop's high quality standards being maintained throughout the life of the product. Please take time to completely read the installation instructions before beginning the installation process. In order to insure your Thomas Creek Wood Collection countertop meets and exceeds your expectations, it is important that the following installation procedures be followed:

## **Storing Prior to Installation**

1. All countertops need to be stored in a dry, protected area that will remain free from moisture of all kind, including high levels of humidity.
2. The countertops should remain in their original shipping containers and stacked in a horizontal position until installation is to occur.
3. Air should be able to circulate between the shipping containers.
4. The storage area should be free of any moisture, including construction areas where moisture exists.

## **Temperature and Humidity**

1. These countertops are dried to an 8 to 10 percent moisture content and can be safely stored and assembled in a humidity level between 50 and 60 percent.
2. Remember, excessive humidity above 60 percent can cause the countertop to expand as much as a ¼" in width. Do not expose the countertops to significant changes in temperature or humidity.
3. Sometimes in a construction environment, a conscious effort needs to be exerted to assure reasonable levels of temperature and humidity during storage and assembly.

## **Bowing**

1. Avoid exposing the countertop to different heat and moisture levels on the surface and underside. This will cause it to bow.
2. If this happens, turn the countertop over, allow it to rest, and it should correct itself. If a slight bow is noticed during fitting, screw the back edge to the support then carefully clamp the front edge with a screw clamp before fixing to the front support.
3. When your countertop is constructed, the temperature and humidity is regulated at levels commonly found in most quality homes.



# Preparing Countertop for Installation

## Initial Inspection

Before installing the countertop in its final location, it is important that the temperature and humidity be at normal levels for at least 48 hours before beginning the installation process.

1. If you find any defect in materials or workmanship after carefully inspecting your countertop **it is important to contact your dealer before beginning installation**. Any subsequent claims for damage will be assumed to have occurred during installation on installed countertops. If a countertop is to be returned, it must be repackaged in a manner that assures no damage in transit. The countertop should be covered and protected during the installation process to insure that the high quality standards of manufacture are held in the final assembly location.
2. Inspection can often find small cracks to appear on the surface of the countertop that are often caused by shifts in temperature and humidity. Small cracks should be considered a normal occurrence and can be repaired with a wood filler. They can also be minimized with oiling the surface. Small cracks are not considered a reflection of workmanship and are not grounds for pursuing a claim.

## 1. Cleaning

Clean the countertop with a mild soap and water solution, avoiding the use of highly concentrated soaps, cleaners or products containing ammonia, abrasives, or scouring powder. Wipe and dry immediately with another cloth. Do not let the cleaning agent puddle or remain on the surface for an extended time. This also applies for normal daily use, post installation.

## 2. Oiling

Before installing, oil all surfaces of the countertop, including cut surfaces and edges, with finishing oil. This step prevents the penetration of moisture and ensures that the countertop reacts to moisture evenly without adverse results.

## 3. Priming

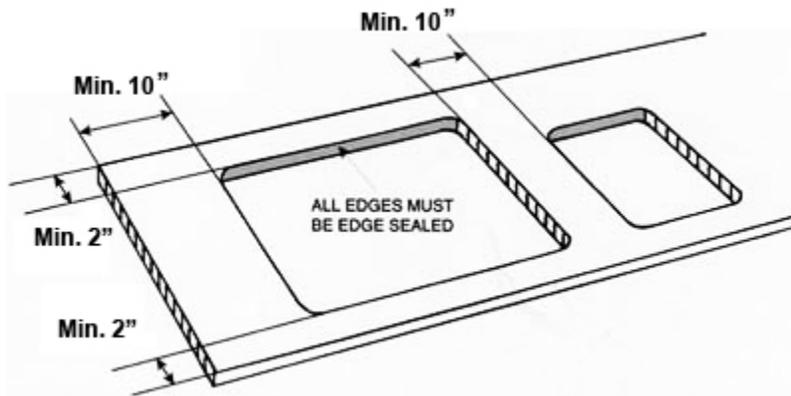
Apply a thin, even layer of oil to the countertop's edges, cutouts, and underside. Then apply a thin layer of oil to the top side of the countertop. Allow the oil to soak in for 5-10 minutes, then wipe away any excess oil with a dry, clean cloth.

## 4. Finishing

Approximately twelve hours after the second oiling, sand the countertop lengthwise with an abrasive pad. Wipe down all surfaces to remove dust. Follow up with another oiling of the surfaces, wiping away any excess oil after permitting the oil to soak in for 15 minutes. Permit the countertop to sit for 24 hours after the final oiling before beginning the installation process.

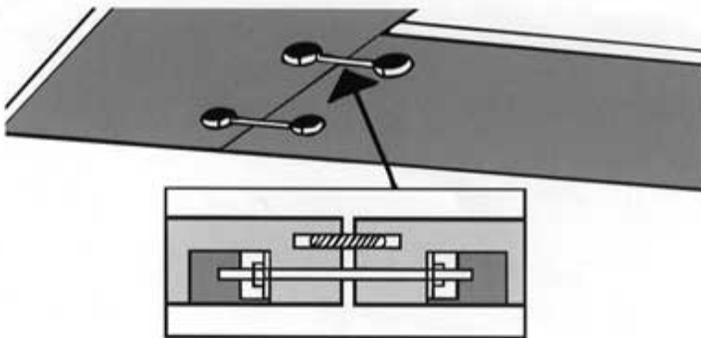
## 5. Cutouts

1. Any cutouts for sinks, ovens, etc. must be at least 1/4" larger than the units themselves. This allows the wood to move.
2. The hole for taps must be at least 1/8" larger in diameter than the water pipe. Farmhouse sinks must have at least 3/8" overhang and the edges must be treated regularly to prevent the countertop from splitting.
3. Make sure that a gap of at least 10" remains from any cutout to the end of the countertop or between cutouts (see diagram).
4. When using a jigsaw, always cut from the underside of the countertop to avoid splintering. All cutouts must be completely sealed with oil to prevent moisture damage to the countertop.



## 6. Joints

Joints require the use of jointing bolts and a strip. Use at least two bolts for a 25 1/2" to 26" countertop.





# Installation Steps

## 1. Checking Levels

Before starting installation, determine that all upper surfaces of the cabinets are level and have been installed according to generally accepted standards. A spirit level should be used to install cabinets and be used when installing the countertop.

## 2. Checking Fit

1. Determine that the countertop fits properly by setting it in position on the installed cabinets and then removing it.
2. The countertop panels are designed to form right-angled joints as standard, unless a different angle was specified in the initial order as submitted by the dealer or other ordering authority.
3. If the countertop does not fit as specified, do not proceed further with the installation and contact the ordering dealer immediately.

## 3. Pre-Drilling Joining Holes

1. Cupboards with top panels must have holes cut to permit the countertop panel joints being tightened from inside the cupboard.
2. If the cupboards do not have pre-drilled screw holes, drill a 3/8" screw hole every 12 inches in the top panels of the cupboards.
3. Carry out final tightening and adjustment as necessary. Failing to follow the instructions for joining the countertop panels can lead to sealing problems.

## 4. Installing Spacers

1. When installing countertops on cabinets with top panels, the countertop must rest on spacers. The spacers should be equal in length to the breadth of the countertop and be approximately 1/4" thick.
2. Place spacers on top of the cabinet at all cabinet joints or every 24 inches, whichever is the lesser distance, and at the ends of the countertop.
3. If the countertop will rest on a free-standing panel, install spacers under the rear edge of the countertop as well.
4. To ensure durable, tight joints, all joints must be supported. After placing the spacers, drill three 1" holes close to the rear edge of the top panels of each cabinet to allow for ventilation.

## 5. Placing the Countertop

1. Lay the countertop panels on top of the cabinets before final fixing.
2. Leave a gap 1/8" wide between the countertop and the wall to allow the countertop to move. This is especially important when installing an angled or U-shaped countertop.
3. Sealant must be applied between the countertop and the wall. If the wall has damp brickwork, apply sealant or aluminum sheeting to the entire contact surface of the rear edging.



## **6. Preliminary Work for Joining Panel Joints**

1. Install the tension bolt from inside the cupboards. Without using sealant, test-join the panels to ensure they form a flush joint.
2. If the joints in the countertop panels bow (due to uneven acclimatization) the panels must be flattened before installation can continue.
3. To flatten, allow the countertop to lie on top of the cabinet for 1–2 days. Both surfaces of the countertop must be exposed to the same temperature/humidity levels to avoid bowing.
4. Complaints related to uneven, sealed joints will be rejected.

## **7. Final Assembly of Panel Joints**

1. When the panel joints match perfectly, loosen the tension bolts and pull the panels approximately 1/8" to 1/4" apart.
2. Apply sealant to the entire length of the joints, including the front edge and underside. Immediately tighten the tension bolts, using alternating turns on each bolt to avoid a film forming on the sealant.
3. If the joints have been made correctly, the excess sealant will ooze out above surface level along the entire length of the joints as the bolts are tightened. Ensure that no pockets have been created where the sealant has not been pressed out.
4. Carry out a final tightening and adjustment of the joints to complete the installation. Use a piece of cardboard to remove excess sealant by scraping forward from the rear edge of the panel.

## **8. Supporting Free-Standing Countertops**

1. In corners where there is no supporting kitchen element, the rear edge of the countertop panel must be supported; otherwise, the joints may become misaligned.
2. Free-standing countertop sections measuring 10" or more must be supported by frames or T-bars to avoid bowing or damage. Freestanding countertops should also be supported on the underside with brackets or wooden blocks to prevent the joints from slipping.

## **9. Attaching the Countertop**

1. Using a row of three screws placed 12" to 20" apart, affix the countertop to the front and rear edge, plus the middle of the cabinets. Screws are to be inserted no more than 12" apart along the length of the countertop. Use right-angled brackets if the cabinets do not have top panels.
2. Insert screws with washers up into the countertop through the middle of the 3/8" holes. Do not over-tighten the screws, as this will prevent the countertop from moving and functioning correctly.
3. The direction the countertop will move can be determined by selecting either the front or rear edge to lock the countertop into position.

## **10. Installing and Sealing Rear-Edge Molding**

1. If the countertop was delivered with the raised rear-edge molding sections unattached, these must be installed and sealed after the countertop panels have been secured to the cabinets.
2. Apply sealant between the edging and the wall.



## **11. Protecting from Heat and Moisture**

Aluminum foil or sheeting should always be used to protect the underside and sides of the countertop against heat and moisture from appliances installed in close proximity. This includes heaters, dishwashers, ovens, washing machines, radiators, and other appliances.

1. Small household appliances that generate surface heat should not be placed directly on the countertop surface as the wood may dry out and cracks may appear. This includes coffee makers, toasters, and other small appliances.
2. A protective layer of aluminum sheeting must always be applied to the undersides of solid wood countertops installed on a brickwork base. These countertops must also rest on spacers to ensure ventilation of their undersides; otherwise, the countertops will bow. Do not install the countertops until the brickwork is completely dry. Beware of other special applications where moisture or dampness could be absorbed by unprotected wood.
3. Ensure that there is sufficient ventilation space around and above dishwashers and protect the underside of the countertop with aluminum sheeting. The sheeting must extend over the edges of the adjacent cabinets and be affixed before securing the countertop. Protective aluminum (or similar) moldings are often supplied with dishwashers; install these in accordance with the supplier's instructions.
4. Protect the countertop from ovens, paying particular attention to the edges of the countertop around free-standing range ovens.
5. Apply silicone sealant or aluminum sheeting to the edges of the countertops closest to the range (the end pieces). Small cracks may still form but this is natural and does not constitute grounds for complaint. Such cracks should be treated with extra oil.

## **12. Locating and Installing Ovens**

1. Do not install integrated range ovens or "drop-ins" less than 8" from countertop joints or 10" from the end of a countertop. The leading and rear edges of integrated range units must be no less than 2" from the leading and rear edges of the countertops in which they are installed.
2. Double hot-plate units must be installed at least 10" apart; otherwise, the wood between them will dry out too quickly, resulting in the formation of cracks in the wood. Also, support the countertop between the holes cut to accommodate the "drop-ins". Effective supports are essential, especially if a number of holes are to be cut close to each other.
3. Seal the edges of holes with a thin layer of silicone and apply aluminum sheeting to reflect as much heat from the range as possible. Small cracks may still form (treat with extra oil) but this is natural and does not constitute grounds for complaint.

## **13. Locating and Installing Sinks**

1. Avoid locating countertop joints close to sinks and/or water pipes. If installing a double sink, it is important to pay special attention to the information in Step 12.
2. Seal the edges of holes with a thin layer of silicone. Make sure the silicone completely covers the surface, as imperfect seals can lead to cracks or discolorations in the countertop.