

Best Practice Guide: Looking After Kiln-Dried Timber in Merchant Yards

Kiln-dried timber is supplied at a controlled moisture content to maintain stability, performance, and product quality. Poor storage and handling can quickly reintroduce moisture, distortion, staining, mould growth, extract work and customer complaints.

This guide outlines best practices for timber merchants and yard teams.



1. Keep Timber Dry and Protected

PROTECT FROM WEATHER

- Store kiln-dried timber under cover wherever possible.
- Check timber wrap and use tape to cover any penetrations.
- Avoid exposure to direct ground moisture, splashback, and condensation.
- Immediately re-cover opened packs after customer picking.

GROUND CLEARANCE

- Store packs on level bearers or dunnage at least 150–200 mm above ground.
- Ensure drainage around storage areas to prevent standing water.

VENTILATION

- Maintain airflow around stored timber if possible.
- Avoid fully wrapping wet timber or trapping condensation under plastic covers.
- If the timber is surface wet remove the wrap and store undercover in a ventilated area.

AVOID DIRECT SUN AND HEAT EXPOSURE

- Prolonged sun exposure can create rapid moisture loss and surface checking.
- Maintain shaded storage where possible.

MONITOR MOISTURE CONTENT

- Use calibrated moisture meters for periodic checks.
- Investigate signs of moisture regain, mould, or distortion early.
- Prevent water pooling on packs.

ROTATE STOCK

- Follow “first in, first out” stock rotation principles.
- Regularly inspect older stock for movement, mould, or damage.

2. Maintain Pack Integrity

KEEP PACKS FLAT AND SUPPORTED

- Support packs evenly across their full length.
- Align bearers vertically between stacked packs to prevent sagging.
- Avoid overhanging boards.

MINIMISE REHANDLING IF POSSIBLE

- Reduce unnecessary movement of packs.
- Use forklifts with correct tine spacing and thickness to avoid bending or damaging packs.
- Lift packs squarely and avoid sudden impacts.

RE-STRAP OPENED PACKS

- Secure partially used packs to minimise movement and warping.
- Keep protective wrapping intact where possible.

3. Prevent Damage and Contamination

KEEP STORAGE AREAS CLEAN

- Remove gravel, debris, and mud around timber stacks.
- Maintain yard and gravel areas, keep level where possible.

Consistent handling and storage practices help maintain timber stability, reduce waste and rework, improve customer satisfaction, and protect merchant and supplier reputation.



4. Customer Handling and Dispatch

PICK CAREFULLY

- Replace displaced fillets or stickers where required.

LOAD CORRECTLY

- Ensure tines don't damage the timber.
- Support timber evenly during transport.
- Protect loads from rain during delivery.
- Secure loads to minimise movement and distortion.

EDUCATE CUSTOMERS

- Advise customers to keep timber dry and store timber under cover and off the ground.
- Recommend moisture checks before internal installation.

5. Daily Yard Checklist

- Packs stored off ground
- Covers secure and intact
- Check wrap and repair holes
- No standing water near timber or pooling on packets
- Opened packs re-strapped
- Forklift handling compliant
- Stock rotation maintained
- No visible mould, stain, or distortion

Key Risks from Poor Storage

- Excessive moisture uptake
- Warp and twist
- Mould growth
- Surface checking
- Staining and discolouration
- Reduced product quality
- Increased claims and returns