

A Grade versus AA Grade Veneers

Prior to mid-1997 both the Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) and the Window and Door Manufacturers Association (WDMA) defined Premium grade doors identically. However, in mid-1997, the AWI published new standards in which the veneer grade requirement for a premium grade door went from grade A to grade AA. The change was made to ensure that doors were to match the panelling and casework on higher end projects, given that they are often grade AA. The change has created an inconsistency with WDMA standards, as well as confusion regarding veneer grade appropriateness for different applications. Grade A veneers are and should be specified on the majority of building projects, e.g. educational, medical, office and governmental building projects.

Following is a comparison of the implications resulting from the selection of each grade:

	Grade AA	Grade A
Economics	+10% to 30% upcharge to Grade A	Normal market pricing
Lead-times	Extended lead-times or not available	Normal lead-times
Wood Resource Use	Poor use of wood resources; decrease in yields	Optimal use of wood resources
"Marketability"	Limited need. Primarily to match architectural railwork or panels	Industry standard. Generally acceptable in all but a few select projects

It is the responsibility of the architect or specifier to select what veneer grade and appearance is required on a given project. Important in the decision-making process is an understanding of the terminology and implications of door and veneer grade. **Because of the conflicting veneer requirements between WDMA and AWI, it is critical that a specifier always indicates the door grade (premium or custom) and the veneer grade AA, A or B).**

For further information, please contact your Algoma Hardwoods representative.

Note: We welcome your making use of our Tech Reports. Please feel free to duplicate as appropriate.