18mm MDF Board User Guide

Board size: 1200 x 300mm
Thickness: 18mm
Material: Medium-density fibreboard
Suitable for: Interior DIY, furniture and home-improvement projects

Before You Begin

Read this guide and the instructions supplied with your tools before starting work.

Check the MDF board for damage and ensure it is suitable for your intended project. Standard MDF is designed for use in dry indoor areas and should not be used outdoors or in areas regularly exposed to moisture.

Plan and measure your project carefully before cutting. Remember to allow for the width of the saw blade when marking your cutting line.

Tools You May Need

Depending on your project, you may require:

- Tape measure
- Pencil and straight edge
- Hand saw, circular saw or jigsaw
- Drill and suitable drill bits
- Screwdriver
- Fine-grade sandpaper
- Wood adhesive suitable for MDF
- Screws suitable for MDF
- MDF primer
- Paintbrush or roller
- Dust extraction or suitable vacuum cleaner
- Personal protective equipment

Basic Instructions

1. Measure and Mark

Place the board on a clean, flat and stable work surface.

Measure the required size and clearly mark the cutting line using a pencil and straight edge. Check all measurements before cutting.

2. Support the Board

Support the board securely on both sides of the cutting line. Use clamps where appropriate to prevent movement.

Make sure the cutting area is clear and that the saw blade will not contact the workbench, clamps or any hidden objects.

3. Cutting

Use a sharp, suitable woodworking blade and follow the tool manufacturer's instructions.

Cut slowly and steadily without forcing the tool. A fine-toothed blade will generally produce a cleaner edge.

Power-tool cutting can create significant amounts of fine MDF dust. Use effective dust extraction wherever possible and work in a well-ventilated area.

4. Drilling and Fixing

Mark the fixing positions before drilling.

Drill suitable pilot holes before inserting screws, particularly when fixing close to an edge. This helps reduce the risk of the MDF splitting or bulging.

Do not overtighten screws, as this may damage the board and weaken the fixing.

For stronger joints, use a suitable MDF or woodworking adhesive together with appropriate mechanical fixings. Follow the adhesive manufacturer's application and drying instructions.

5. Sanding

Lightly sand cut edges and any rough areas using fine-grade sandpaper.

Avoid excessive sanding, which may create unnecessary dust or affect the dimensions of the board.

Remove dust using suitable vacuum equipment. Do not use compressed air or dry sweeping, as these methods can spread fine dust into the air.

6. Priming and Painting

Ensure the board is clean, dry and free from dust.

Apply a suitable MDF primer to the faces and edges. Cut edges are more absorbent and may require additional coats, with light sanding between coats, to achieve a smooth finish.

Once the primer is completely dry, apply your chosen paint in accordance with the paint manufacturer's instructions.

Seal all surfaces and edges where additional protection from occasional moisture or staining is required.

Safety Information

MDF Dust

Cutting, drilling, routing and sanding MDF produces fine wood dust. Wood dust can affect the eyes, skin and respiratory system and can cause occupational asthma. Exposure should therefore be kept as low as reasonably practicable.

When machining MDF:

- Work outdoors or in a well-ventilated work area where practical.
- Use tools connected to suitable dust extraction.
- Wear suitable eye protection.
- Wear appropriate respiratory protective equipment for the task. HSE guidance identifies FFP3 disposable masks or P3-filtered reusable masks as suitable options for many dusty woodworking operations.
- Ensure respiratory protection fits correctly and is compatible with safety glasses and hearing protection.
- Wear suitable gloves when handling rough or freshly cut edges.
- Wash your hands after use and before eating or drinking.
- Keep children, pets and other people away from the work area.
- Vacuum the work area and clothing after completing the job.

A dust mask should not be used as a replacement for effective dust extraction.

Power-Tool Safety

- Read and follow the tool manufacturer's instructions.
- Check that tools, blades and cables are in good condition.
- Disconnect tools from the power supply before changing blades or making adjustments.
- Keep hands away from moving blades and cutting areas.
- Secure the board before cutting or drilling.
- Remove loose clothing and jewellery and tie back long hair.
- Wear hearing protection when using noisy power tools.
- Maintain a stable working position and do not overreach.
- Never leave a running power tool unattended.

Manual Handling

Although this board is smaller than a full MDF sheet, it may still be awkward to carry.

Lift carefully, keep the board close to your body and avoid twisting. Ask another person for assistance when necessary.

Paints, Primers and Adhesives

Always read the safety information provided with paints, primers, adhesives and other finishing products.

Use these products in a well-ventilated area and keep them away from children, heat and sources of ignition.

Installation Advice

Use fixings suitable for the MDF, the application and the material into which the finished item will be installed.

When installing shelves or wall-mounted projects, use suitable brackets and wall fixings for the wall construction. Do not rely on MDF alone to support heavy loads.

The safe load capacity will depend on the design, span, support positions, fixings and intended use. Seek professional advice where the finished project will support substantial weight.

This board should not be used as a structural or load-bearing building component unless its suitability has been confirmed by a qualified professional.

Care and Maintenance

- Keep the board dry.
- Wipe finished surfaces with a soft, slightly damp cloth.
- Do not soak the board or allow water to remain on the surface.
- Repair damaged paint or sealant promptly.
- Periodically inspect shelves, furniture and wall-mounted projects for loose or damaged fixings.

Storage

Store the MDF board:

- Indoors in a clean, dry environment
- Flat on a level surface
- Away from direct contact with floors that may be damp
- Away from excessive heat and moisture
- Fully supported to help prevent bending or warping

Disposal

Reuse offcuts where possible.

Dispose of unwanted MDF and collected dust in accordance with your local authority's waste-disposal guidance. Do not burn MDF in a domestic fire, stove, fireplace or garden bonfire.