# Deck and Fence Stain Selector

Clear, semi-transparent, semi-solid, solid or paint? Each one looks and wears differently. Here's how to choose the right finish for your wood.

## 1 Your finish options

| FINISH | LOOK | GOOD FOR | KEEP IN MIND |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Clear or toner** | Natural wood, light tint | New or very good wood | Least colour, needs redoing most often |
| **Semi-transparent** | Colour with wood grain showing | Wood in good shape | Shows the grain and any flaws |
| **Semi-solid** | More colour, a hint of grain | Slightly weathered wood | Hides more than semi-transparent |
| **Solid stain** | Even colour, grain texture only | Older or mismatched wood | Hides more. Can peel if prep is skipped |
| **Paint** | Full, even colour | Wood that is already painted | On walking surfaces it shows wear faster |

Every stain comes in oil-based or water-based. We mostly use Sherwin-Williams and Dulux.

## 2 Three quick questions

**How is the wood?**
Weathered or patched wood usually looks best with a solid stain.

**Do you love the grain?**
Clear or semi-transparent lets it show through.

**Is it painted now?**
Stain needs bare wood. Painted wood gets painted again, unless you pay for a full strip.

## 3 Picking a colour

- [ ] Test on a hidden board. Stain looks different on every wood.
- [ ] Check it dry, in sun and in shade.
- [ ] Darker colours hide dirt but get warmer in the sun.
- [ ] Match or contrast your house trim, not the siding.

## 4 Prep is the whole job

STEP 1
**Wash**
Dirt, moss and grey fibres come off.

STEP 2
**Scrape and sand**
Loose stain or paint removed.

STEP 3
**Check the boards**
Soft or split boards replaced.

STEP 4
**Stain**
Applied to clean, dry wood.

## 5 Is my wood dry enough?

Sprinkle a few drops of water on the boards. If they soak in, the wood is ready to take stain. If they bead up, the wood is still wet or sealed. In Metro Vancouver, plan staining for the drier months, with dry days before and after.

## 6 Signs it is time to restain

- ✓ Water soaks in instead of beading.
- ✓ Colour is faded or patchy.
- ✓ Grey wood is showing through.
- ✓ Peeling or flaking on boards and rails.
- ✓ Green growth on shady boards.
- ✓ Splinters on the walking surface.

**Not sure which finish suits your deck?**
We will look at the wood and tell you. Call 604-337-2306.

**Ready to get started? Get your written quote.**
Tell us about your project and we will take it from there.

Get My Written Quote

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