

# Effects of Moisture in Cabinetry

### A Healthy Home For You and Your Cabinetry

Home maintenance experts advise homeowners to monitor and control the levels of humidity indoors in order to maintain a safe and healthy home environment. Excess humidity may be caused by any number of issues and can create multiple symptoms within the home, including problems with wood cabinetry. As a natural wood product, cabinetry should be installed in an environment where temperature and humidity levels are controlled. All wood, whether raw or finished, will react to changes in humidity level. Medallion's multi-step finishing process will slow the process of expansion or contraction, but that process cannot be prevented. Please be aware that installing or storing cabinetry where it will be subjected to extreme temperatures or humidity levels will void your warranty. Some activities that are part of the remodeling or construction process greatly increase the moisture content within a home and can be harmful to your cabinetry if precautions are not taken. For example, steps such as drywall taping can add a lot of moisture into a home if the area is not properly ventilated.

### What You May Expect To See When A Humidity Imbalance is Present in the Home

- When humidity conditions are high, wood will absorb moisture and the wood will swell or expand.
- When humidity conditions are low, wood will release moisture and shrink or contract.
- When cabinetry is moved from one location to another, or the humidity conditions in the environment where the cabinetry is located changes, then some expansion or contraction of the wood may be noticeable.

### Measures You Can Take to Balance the Humidity Level in Your Home

- Check your outside drainage to ensure moisture is properly routed away from the home.
- Conduct an insulation audit in your home to ensure that all areas are properly insulated and that your home's vapor barriers are properly installed.
- Use a hygrometer to measure the humidity level in your home. Simple units are available at any hardware store where portable humidifiers are sold. Usually these devices retail for less than \$5 and require a single AAA battery. Simply place the device in the room where your cabinetry will be installed and usually within an hour or so the dial will indicate the current humidity level in that room.

Medical experts generally recommend indoor relative humidity levels of 40 percent to 50 percent. As it turns out, the amount of humidity that is healthiest for you and your family is also the ideal amount of humidity for your cabinetry. Uncontrolled extremes above 80% or below 20% are likely to cause problems.

Check with your local contractor, HVAC specialist or county extension service for tips on how to achieve a balance between adequate ventilation and adequate moisture to create a healthy living environment for both you and your cabinetry in all seasons.

### Important things to consider:

- Wood products located in humid climates are especially susceptible to expansion due to moisture. Homeowners with waterfront properties, properties in coastal regions or any other area where the outside relative humidity is known to be generally high, should be especially vigilant about maintaining the proper indoor humidity level in your home.
- Regardless of location, products installed in non-air conditioned homes are susceptible to moisture imbalance. Winter and vacation homes should maintain climate control even during the off-season.
- If you are experiencing issues related to an expansion/contraction of your cabinetry, then the problem is most likely the result of improper humidity conditions during site storage, installation or use. This would include doors or drawers that are stuck or swollen, for instance, or butt doors which no longer close properly.
- Other effects of moisture imbalance may include panel expansion OR contraction, joint separation (especially in mitered doors) and bowing of the stile or rail.
- Mitered doors need low, stable moisture.
- Density of wood affects how much or how little wood expands to humidity. Maple and Hickory will expand or contract more than will softer species.
- When new cabinetry has been stored in unfavorable conditions, the cabinets should be allowed to stand in the home where they will be installed for a period of time to acclimate to the surrounding environment. This step will help minimize how much the wood doors may swell and bind upon installation. Once the doors have been installed in controlled climate conditions, the doors will naturally restore to the original dimension. Trimming swollen doors will void your warranty.
- Due to the tight tolerances on our Platinum inset cabinetry, the expansion and contraction of the wood may be more noticeable than it is on many overlay door styles. It is especially important to store and install Platinum inset cabinetry in climate controlled environments. Platinum inset products leave the factory with a pre-set gap of 3/32" of an inch. If inset doors are tight in the frame, this is an indication that these doors have taken on moisture from the surrounding environment.

The warranty on your new Medallion Cabinetry is written with the expectation that the product will be stored and installed in a climate controlled environment. With proper maintenance of humidity levels, your new cabinetry will be a long-lasting, durable and beautiful enhancement to your home.