Glossary of Woodworking Terms

A. General Terms

d—the abbreviation for “penny” in designating nail size; for example, 8d nails are 8 penny nails, 2½” long.

fiber—A general term used for any long, narrow cell of wood or bark, other than vessels.

grain direction—The direction of the annual rings showing on the face and sides of a piece of lumber.

hardwood—Wood from a broad leaved tree and characterized by the presence of vessels. (Examples: oak, maple, ash, and birch.)

heartwood—The older, harder, nonliving portion of wood. It is usually darker, less permeable, and more durable than sapwood.

klin dried—Wood seasoned in a humidity and temperature controlled oven to minimize shrinkage and warping.

sapwood—Wood immediately inside the cambium of the living tree that contains living cells. This wood is more permeable, less durable, and usually lighter in color than heartwood.

softwood—Wood from a coniferous or cone bearing tree and characterized by having needles, such as pine.

vessel—A series of cells having fused together to form a long tube. They extend longitudinally in the stem.

B. Terms Used in the Lumber Industry

boards—Lumber less than 2 inches in nominal thickness and 1 inch and wider in width.

board foot—A measurement of wood. A piece of wood that is 1 foot long by 1 foot wide by 1 inch thick. It can also be other sizes that have the same total amount of wood. For example, a piece of wood 2 feet long, 6 inches wide, and 1 inch thick; or a piece 1 foot long, 6 inches wide, and 2 inches thick would also be 1 board foot. To get the number of board feet in a piece of lumber, measure your lumber and multiply Length (in feet) x Width (in feet) x Thickness (in inches). The formula is written:

\[ \frac{T' \times W' \times L'}{12} = \text{Board feet} \]

T" x W" x L" = Board feet

or

T" x W" x L" = Board feet

or

T" x W" x L" = Board feet

dimension lumber—Lumber 2 to 5 inches thick and up to 12 inches wide. Includes joists, rafters, studs, planks, girders, and posts.

nominal—Refers to the size of lumber by which it is known and sold in the market. Nominal size often differs from the actual size.

timbers—Lumber that is 5 inches or more in its least dimension. According to use in construction, they are classified as beams and stringers, girders, purlins, and posts.

veneers—A thin slice of wood cut from a log with a knife or saw. Veneers are also produced in a giant lathe, by turning a log on a horizontal axis against a long knife cutting the log into thin wood slices.

Note: Also refer to the glossary in each of the member manuals.