

FORMICA PRIMA® WORKTOPS: INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE

This information presents the most effective ways of fitting and installing Formica Prima® laminate worktops. Before you do any work on your new worktop, please ensure you are completely satisfied with the product by checking for damage or defects. These guidelines are intended to help you achieve the best possible results. Information applicable to UK/Ireland region only.

Important message to the installer

This installation and maintenance sheet must be left with the end user, as the guarantee is only valid if guidelines as described in the installation sheet have been followed.

Measuring

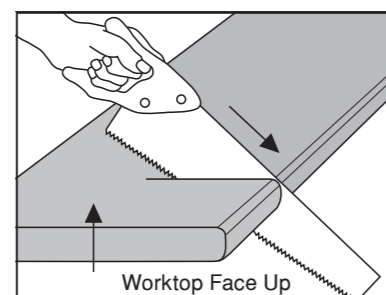
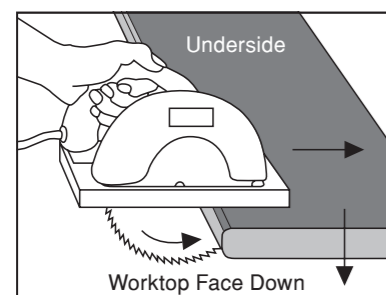
Marking can be done with a soft pencil either on the face of the worktop, if using a hand saw, or on the back if using a power saw. Check measurements before cutting.

Preparation

The worktop should be adequately supported during all cutting, drilling or sawing operations. All cutting tools should be sharp and safety goggles should be used whenever cutting laminated boards.

Cutting

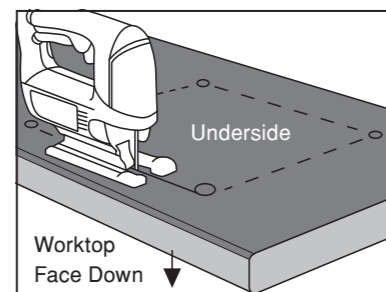
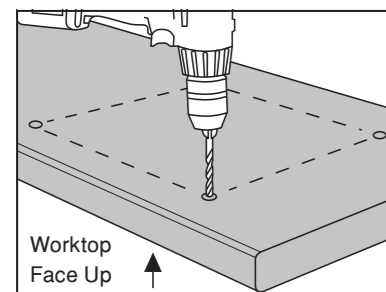
Formica Prima® worktops can be cut a number of ways. The best results are achieved when the worktop is cut slightly oversize by 5mm, using either a portable power saw (with the decorative side face down) or with a hand saw (decorative side face up). To finish the edge use a portable hand router, straight edge and 'G' clamps. Clamping the straight edge of the worktop, either with the decorative side face up or down, but always ensuring the cutter will enter at the postformed edge, will result in a perfectly straight chip-free cut. It is difficult to maintain a totally chip-free finish when using a hand saw, without having to tidy it up afterwards. If the sawn edge is to be laminated, it is advisable to use a portable router. When cutting and joining two worktops, particular attention should be paid to sealing the joint with a silicone sealant or a contact adhesive, this will prevent the possibility of water ingress.



Making Cut-Outs

Any cut-outs should be carefully measured and marked. Then working from the decorative surface, drill through all the corners using the largest diameter drill possible, since sharp internal corners can lead to cracks forming in the laminate surface. **Ensure that there is a minimum radius of 10mm at each corner.**

Cut-outs can once again be made using the portable hand router, similar to the method described above, however, a jig-saw can be used providing the four corners have been pre-drilled using a 12mm drill bit. Mark out the area to be cut on the face side of the worktop and drill a hole in each of the four corners.



After drilling, turn the worktop over and mark a straight line from one edge of a hole to another. Then using a jig-saw with a fine toothed blade, cut from hole to hole. Ensure the piece to be cut away is well supported on the last cut. After the cut-out has been made, try the sink or hob for size.

To ensure that your Formica Prima® worktop remains in excellent condition, **it is essential that all exposed edges of the chipboard are sealed** with a silicone sealant or contact adhesive. For a sink cut-out, the exposed raw chipboard should be treated with a waterseal or varnish. In addition to this, we would also recommend the use of a purpose made gasket, often supplied with the sink or silicone sealant applied to the perimeter of the sink prior to installation. The hob cut-outs can be protected in the same way but it is also advisable to cover the exposed edges and the edge of the laminate with aluminium foil, to prevent the heat affecting the cut-out.

Tiles

When tiling above a worktop a space of at least 3mm should be left between the surface of the worktop and the bottom row of tiles to allow for easy removal of the top.

Sealing of Holes for Services

Where pipes are to be brought up through the worktop, a 2-3mm allowance for expansion/contraction should be maintained around the pipe. The void can then be filled with silicone sealant. When installing a dishwasher care should be taken to ensure that the protective deflector provided by the dishwasher manufacturer is fitted correctly to the underside of the worktop.

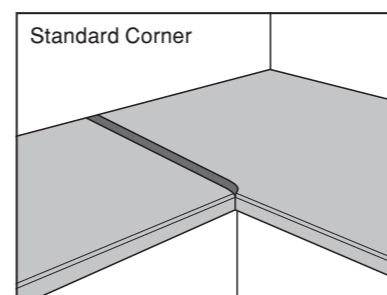
Edging of Worktops

All exposed edges should be finished with matching laminate, as supplied with every Formica Prima® worktop. Ensure that the cut edge is flat, clean and dust free. Prior to applying the adhesive to the edges, the laminate surface should be protected (ie sticky tape) to prevent the over spill of adhesive curing/marring the surface during the edging process. Apply a proprietary adhesive, ideally PVA adhesive (which is suitable for woodwork), to the edge of the worktop. It can be applied using a 12-25mm paint brush, directly to the chipboard edge. The edging strip should then be placed sanded side down onto the wet adhesive. Ensure that there is sufficient overhang of edging on both the face and underside of the worktop.

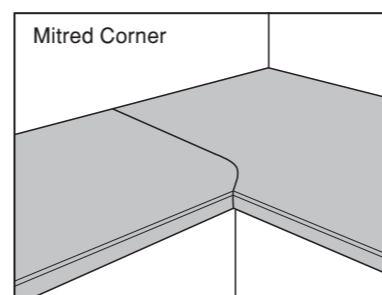
Using an electric iron, then slowly move set on medium, apply pressure to the edging strip and hold in place for approximately 5-10 seconds, along the strip and repeat. Leave for at least 1 hour before removing excess edging strip. To remove excess edging strip use either a portable trimming machine or a sharp block plane. Final finishing can best be achieved by using a 250mm smooth file.

Jointing of Worktops

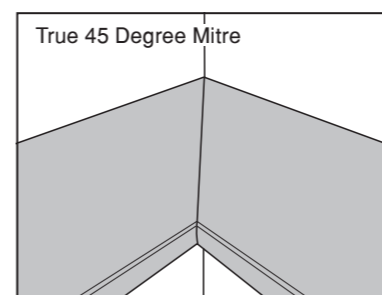
Formica Prima® worktops can be jointed either by a standard butt joint using a profiled jointing strip, a scribe Masons Mitre joint or a true 45 degree Mitre joint. When cutting butt & scribe joints always use a good quality jig and follow the manufacturer's instructions for an accurate finish. Always use a good quality well maintained hand router with a sharp cutter. Jointing bolt slots should be cut using the jig and be no deeper than 25mm from the underside face.



Always use good quality jointing bolts as follows:
Up to 500mm joint length - two bolts
600 to 750mm joint length - three bolts
750 to 900mm joint length - four bolts



Jointing biscuits should also be used to add strength to the joint and ensure the joint is level. If in doubt consult a professional fitter.



Care should be taken when trying to achieve a true 45 degree mitre as they can become weak at the narrowest point. Always ensure connector bolts are sufficiently used from the end point to prevent damage or breakage.

Note

Joints are vulnerable to moisture ingress. Ensure that a quality adhesive or sealant is used during the jointing process. Avoid placing electric kettles or tea pots directly over joints. Always use a trivet or protective matt to protect the joint from moisture.

PVC Aprons

PVC aprons can cause excessive wear to the edges of laminate work surfaces. We would recommend that PVC aprons are not used as over a period of time the excessive wear will become more evident and spoil the look of the worktop.

CAUTION HEAVY

Dishwashers and Washing Machines

Every Formica Prima® worktop is supplied factory sealed along the front underside edge. Integrated dishwashers and washing machines emit steam and moisture on a regular basis. It is recommended that extra protection should be given to worktops which have these appliances underneath. Extra sealant or a baffle plate should be placed on the underside of the worktop for extra protection. Consult the appliance manufacturer for further details.

General

Formica Prima® worktops are rigorously tested in line with British and European standards to ensure that they will meet the exacting requirements of any modern kitchen. Every Formica Prima® worktop therefore incorporates specific features which make it highly resistant to heat, impact, scratching and moisture. Our decorative laminates are tested to a temperature of 180°C. Boiling water and cooking splashes will therefore do no harm to the surface of the worktop. All Formica Prima® worktops are effectively sealed to protect the core from moisture along the front and back edges.

Cleaning

General cleaning of the surface requires only a damp cloth and a mild detergent or non-abrasive cleaner diluted in warm water. Abrasive scouring powders, creams and even polishes should all be avoided. If the worktop has a textured surface, a soft nylon nailbrush can be used to ensure a more thorough cleaning. Potentially persistent stains should be removed immediately. For gloss worktops, buff the surface after cleaning with a soft cloth.

Things To Do And Things To Avoid

	Things To Do	Things To Avoid
	To prevent damage from hot objects, use heat resistant mats on the surface of the worktop. Always use ashtrays for cigarettes.	Never place objects from the oven or hob directly onto the laminate surface since this may lead to blistering. Care should be taken with hot irons and cigarettes.
	Always use a chopping board for preparing food.	Cookery items, kitchen utensils and other objects sliding across your worktop will produce fine scratches in the laminate. Never cut foodstuffs directly on the laminate surface.
	Wipe spilt liquids away from joints and cut-outs immediately. Ensure that all inset appliances are properly sealed with a suitable waterproof silicone sealant.	Moisture will not harm the laminate surface but it is advisable to wipe away any spillages as soon as possible. The critical areas are around joints and cut-outs.

Lifetime Guarantee of Quality

Formica Group offers a lifetime guarantee for any Formica Prima® worktop which is shown to be defective in either **materials or manufacture only**, and will undertake to replace any worktop with a manufacturing defect. Due to the inherent properties of gloss laminate, Formica Group cannot accept any responsibility for the performance of the laminate surface.

PLEASE NOTE: The lifetime guarantee becomes void once the postformed edge has been cut off.

PLEASE NOTE: This installation and maintenance guide has been developed for guidance only. Formica Group cannot accept responsibility for the final fitting of your worktop. Colour and surface finish should be checked before installation. Formica Group will not accept any claims for re-fitting costs resulting from mis-matched surface colour or finish.