



TIMBER PRODUCT INFORMATION

OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Blueton Limited products are produced using modern & historic designs. Properly maintained and used in the manner for which they are intended, our newly produced benches will provide decades of service.

The timber used for the benches is hardwood from managed stock. The timbers are given a coating of protective oil prior to delivery. All our fixings (nuts, bolts, etc are zinc plated or stainless steel for corrosion protection).

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION:

The benches supplied by Blueton Limited are intended for use only as seating and as such no specific operating instructions are required. Clients should ensure that this is the only form of use that the benches receive.

Our benches are heavy and in particular the cast iron and timber benches will weigh a minimum of 40 kilogrammes. Care should be taken when moving the benches and mechanical lifting gear should be used where possible and extreme care should be taken if manual handling is employed. Protective footwear should be worn whenever the benches are moved. Benches should never be moved by a single person.

The timber used in the manufacture of the benches is a natural product and subject to variation and change. It is possible that the timber slats may show some warping and may also split along the grain, which can present a sharp or pinch risk to users. It is therefore important that all new benches are inspected for this type of hazard prior to use and at the time of installation.

The above information should be adhered to during routine maintenance and Blueton Limited cannot be held responsible for injury caused through improper use or failure to observe the above information and not working in a safe and considered manner.

Blueton Limited are happy to provide further information regarding maintenance and repair and should be the first point of contact in regard to either of these matters, or in the unlikely event of any concerns regarding the integrity of the products.

Although it is not the responsibility of Blueton Limited, where benches have been fixed to a particular surface, then appropriate care should be taken, for example when working with concrete. If benches are installed by Blueton Limited, then we work to the appropriate methods and standards of safety.

“the name in site & street furniture”

Blueton Limited.

27 Winchester Av, Winchester Ind Estate, Denny, FK6 6QE
sales@bluetonltd.com 01324 829661 www.bluetonltd.com

**ROUTINE MAINTENANCE:**

Our benches are produced to the highest standards, using high quality components and are intended to provide many years of service, it is important that they are subject to regular inspection and maintenance if they are to achieve the intended aim.

TIMBER:

Timber is a natural product and therefore cannot be considered to be completely stable and consistent, even though we source high quality timber from reputable providers. The tendency for timber to develop splits or surface cracks is a natural process and Blueton Limited cannot be held responsible for this occurring. As mentioned above, routine maintenance should include visual inspection of timber components of the benches.

The majority of the timber used by Blueton Limited is hardwood, obtained from managed stock with a chain of custody. The timber is treated with protective oil unless specified otherwise by the client. The exact product used will be identified to the client but will usually be Teak Oil but stains may be used if requested by the client. Care and maintenance of the timber will involve the following:

- 1: A visual inspection of the timber no less than once a year, identifying any changes in the timber that have occurred naturally (shakes etc) or as the result of accidental or deliberate damage to the timbers. These should be removed from the timber by the sanding of the area, unless the damage is sufficient that like for like replacement is required.
- 2: A protective coating should be applied to the timber no less than once a year (this may depend on location – eg those benches near to or below vegetation will require greater maintenance). The product should be the same as, or compatible with that originally used by Blueton Limited and should be applied in accordance with the product data sheets supplied by the manufacturer. Over time and properly maintained, the timbers we use will develop a silvery appearance which is quite natural and aesthetically pleasing
- 3: Where timber has reached a point at which it is no longer suitable for further use, either as a result of natural ageing or as a result of damage, accidental or otherwise, then it should be subject to like for like replacement. These will be available from Blueton Limited, although it should be recognised that any replacement timbers will vary in appearance from any original timbers remaining on the bench.

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It is the responsibility of the client to maintain a log of all maintenance of the benches.

There are approximately 100 types of commercially available hardwoods and each have their advantages and disadvantages. The following relates to the two timbers that we use most frequently, Iroko and Oak. This information should be considered carefully when specifying which timber is to be used and once a decision has been made, Blueton Limited cannot be held responsible for the natural changes that take place in the appearances of the timber.

With reference to the timbers, Oak is a good choice of timber due to its density which gives it great strength and also because it is rich in tannins which makes it naturally resistant to both insects and fungus. However, it should be noted that, particularly in the early stages of the aging process the tannins can leach from the oak in an unpredictable manner and appear unsightly. Whilst this is entirely natural and cannot be prevented without use of a sealing coat over the timber, which is not really advisable in terms of the longer term maintenance legacy of the benches, clients should be aware of this possibility. In addition, Oak can have a tendency to skew or split as part of the natural aging process and although this is not a frequent problem it is one which we like our clients to be aware of. The Oak will eventually age gracefully.

NOTE: It is our experience that the movement of the timbers and leaching of tannins from oak can be quite unsightly, and that despite having been brought to the attention of purchasers they can express dismay at the process. Therefore, we understand that all purchasers of benches using oak timbers are aware of the possibility of this occurrence and that are prepared to accept it and that any occurrence of this type is then NOT the responsibility of Blueton Limited. ALSO, that where benches have been purchased on behalf of a client or third party, that they have been made aware of the negative properties of oak and that Blueton Limited are not to be held responsible for these natural and predictable occurrences.

An excellent non-native alternative to Oak is Iroko, which has many of the qualities of Oak, does not have the same tendency to discolouration in the early stages of aging and is a premium timber. It is also quite forgiving in terms of maintenance. However in addition to question of the non-native origin of the timber, supplies of FSC Iroko of the grade that we require are less consistent than for Oak. There are other certification options that can be explored as an alternative to FSC and all our timber would either be or chain on custody or third party legally verified. Chain of Custody (CoC) Certification is given to forest products sourced from a sustainable forest management which ensures consumers that it complies with the Forest Management Standards. It is given to products that can be tracked, traced and are verified by a third party certifier. It should be pointed out that our environmental policy forbids us from using timbers not sourced from managed and renewable sources.

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Instructions for maintenance of timber.

Before starting any work on the timber all workers should wear the correct protective clothing and equipment. All workers should wear gloves, eye protection and simple dust masks.

The work should only take place when the timber is dry. Always work along the grain of the wood, you can tell which direction this is by running a finger along the surface – with the grain will feel smoother than against the grain. Do not do this until you have inspected the timber to ensure that there are no splits or splinters.

Follow the following sequence:

- 1: wipe over each timber slat to clean any surface debris.
- 2: visually inspect each slat, looking for any splits or cracks in the timber.
- 3: where any splits have been found any sanding of the timber must be done away from any sharp points rather than towards them.
- 4: the first sanding should be with the coarsest of the sand papers, use a 80 grit paper and sand along the timber slat. Work along the length of the timber and not across. Any dust should be cleaned away before the next stage by wiping along the slats with a dry clean cloth or brush.
- 5: next, repeat the sanding of each slat using a finer 120 grit paper, again working along the length of the slat with the grain and never across. Any dust should be cleaned away before the next stage by wiping along the slats with a dry clean cloth or brush.

Once the timbers have been sanded then the oil should be applied. The benches are originally sent out with the timbers treated with a protective oil – the specific product can be identified or specified on request.

Workers should also wear full protection as described above and should also wear full sleeved clothes and full length trousers.

Two coats of the oil should be applied. If possible then 12 hours should be left between coats but if conditions are good then this time can be shorter if required. Work should also take place in a well ventilated environment and the person undertaking the work or the supervisor should have read the product information and safety data sheet for the oil.

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1: Apply the first coat of oil, this can be done either using a clean bristle brush or a roller. The oil should be applied along the slat and not across.

2: Once the first coat of oil is sufficiently dry, reapply the oil using the same method. The surface of the timber should be clean and dry before applying the oil.

NOTE: If any cloths are used to clean the slats and are coated with the oil, then they should be washed immediately or disposed of in an airtight container and not left in direct sunlight.

Note: adherence to the above routine and processes should ensure that, without accidental damage or vandalism, timber supplied by Blueton Limited should provide many years of usage.

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