CARE OF WOOD DECKING FOR PLATFORM TRAILERS

Platform trailers that set idle for periods of time are exposed to the elements where they may suffer weather damage. This damage results from excessive sunlight, temperature and/or moisture. The damage from sunlight and high temperatures may take the form of shrinkage to the top face of the decking causing larger than normal spacing to appear between boards. Often this will be accompanied by concave cupping of the decking, which is more pronounced in wider width pieces, and cracking or splitting of the decking known as season checking. Such cracks may cause other problems. The cracks fill with rainwater and absorption of water into wood can lead to degradation as trapped water penetrates the interior portion of the boards.

Prevention of weather damage can be greatly minimized by applying a good water repellent and UV inhibitor to all visible surfaces of the decking. The cost of labor to apply the treatment and the material itself is modest when compared to the potential degradation from weather elements. It takes less than an hour's labor and approximately four gallons of repellent using a hand held roller or, the more preferred, hand held pump up sprayer to apply protection to the flooring.

Some of the various types of products used today are Thompson's or Baer's Waterseal, boiled linseed oil, Penofin, or Wood Guard by ISK Biosciences of Memphis, TN. Any of these products will help increase the life of trailer decking. Incorporating a maintenance program of coating the decking on platform trailers will greatly benefit end users, dealers, and manufacturers, especially in the event that trailers set idle for lengthy periods of time.

Best results when utilizing UV-inhibitors and water repellants are experienced when products are applied twice annually – spring and fall. This prepares the wood decking for the onslaught of excessive sunlight during summer months and extreme condition during winter months. Also, a liberal coating upon receipt of trailer will being the process of limiting the effects of the environment.

Keep in mind that wood is a product of nature, and as such, will acclimate to its surrounding environment. Properly seasoned decking can change dimensions after installation given the right conditions. It is important to understand that excessive swings in environmental changes such as summer and winter will take their toll on decking. In addition, platforms setting dead lined or idle, are subject to a different environment than those in operation even if they are in identical locations. Remember the old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".