Material Surface Options

Surface Preparation

OPTION 1: Mill Surface

The “mill surface” has a slight texture that is created in the manufacturing process and acts like a light skin over the faces of the panel. No finish is applied as a surface treatment.
For exterior applications, a dry factory finish is recommended. If sanded and placed in an exterior environment, the surface will oxidize rapidly and appear chalky and dry.

PROS:	CONS:
more durable, no additional work for surface preparation or finishing; scratching and wear are less apparent over time.	material that has been handled may have slight abrasions, not repairable or restorable to exact finish from factory. Top surface alignment critical and requires additional attention.

EXAMPLES: industrial parts and sub-assemblies, exterior cladding, interior wall panels, benches and seating, high wear area assemblies and furniture, and interior and industrial work surfaces.

OPTION 2: Leathered

Any of the finishes listed in the applied finishes section can be applied to a Richlite panel with factory surface. The surface is slightly more durable as this skin from pressing has not been removed or altered. The mill surface cannot be reproduced and seaming is more critical since the seams cannot be sanded or feathered like they can be with a sanded finish.

PROS:	CONS:
more durable, no additional more durable, no additional work for surface preparation; scratching and wear are less apparent over time.	material that has been handled may have slight abrasions, not repairable or restorable to exact finish from factory. Top surface alignment critical and requires additional attention.

EXAMPLE: interior wall panels, seating, high wear area assemblies and furniture, work surfaces and countertops. When used with Osmo® finish, very good for high water use areas. Enhancer is more appropriate for dry applications. See applied finish application for detailed instructions below.

Material Surface Options Cont.

OPTION 3: Honed

Any of the finishes in the applied finishes section can be applied to a Richlite panel to achieve a honed finish which will have light 150 grit sandpaper swirls evident. The honed finish is a more “satin” finish that is very nice for millwork and countertop applications. It is not recommended for exterior applications and does require an applied finish to be put on after sanding to achieve proper performance. If sanded with no applied finish, the surface will start to appear “chalky” and will also pick up oils from fingerprints, food, etc. While Richlite can be polished to a high finish, this is not recommended as it will show scratches and wear very quickly from use.

PROS:
more polished and satin finished look and feel, good abrasion and wear resistance, paper patterns and natural look more pronounced, can be refinished and surface repairs are easy.

CONS:
slightly less durable surface finish prone to abrasions and hard material wear.

Examples: interior wall panels, seating, high wear area assemblies and furniture, work surfaces and countertops. When used with Osmo® finish, very good for high water use areas. Enhancer is more appropriate for dry applications. See applied finish application for detailed instructions below.

Surface Preparation Process & Techniques

Honed

(Preparation for an applied finish)
Sanding and Scotch-brite Technique

1. Using a random orbital sander with 150 grit sandpaper, go over the surface area lightly and evenly. There is no need to apply pressure, just enough to keep the sander on the surface.

2. Sand the length of the sheet first.

3. Turn 90 degrees and sand perpendicular to the initial pass.

4. Follow with Scotch-BriteTM in 12” circular motion to even linear sanding pattern.

5. Clean with soap and water.

6. Apply finish.

Material Surface Options Cont.

Leathered
(Preparation for an applied finish)
Scotch-BriteTM Only Technique

1. Sand with Scotch-BriteTM on a random orbital sander in 12” circular motion to mildly abrade the mill finish and to remove marring or surface imperfections.

2. Leave any scratches alone as most will disappear with finish and aggressive machining will make a more polished spot in your final overall surface.

3. Clean with soap and water.

4. Apply finish.

Trouble Shooting

Field Versus Shop Work
Richlite can be a dusty fabrication process and fabricating or finishing in the field is not recommended. Both the dust created and the Richlite Color Enhancer in a home can create air quality issues that can pose a problem for end-users. Sealing will require the use of blue tape on seams to ensure that overflow of adhesive does not compromise the surface finish.

Oversanding
Richlite is made with cellulose fibers (layers of paper). If you sand too aggressively in one area for too long, you will create something to the effect of a “topography” map by burning through a layer of paper. It is most noticeable in darker colors. Be cautious with seams and uneven surface areas (bumps or divots). After applying finish, these may even out, but the lines will never disappear. The contouring is especially noticeable in the Slate Black product and is less so in the Black Diamond.

Sanding Too Aggressively
Will develop an extremely mottled pattern; especially noticeable on Black Diamond. Use only a random orbital sander on the finish surface with no added pressure.

Repair
• Use router dust mixed with epoxy in thick paste form to do small spot repairs. Depth of repair may need to be made deeper for repair to take.
• Use melamine or laminate patch for very small spot repairs