

## 3. PANELS FOR NON-CONSTRUCTION USE

### 3.1 Requirements for non-construction use

The requirements for panels in construction applications are covered in Section 2 of PanelGuide. This section deals specifically with non-construction applications. The term "construction" relates to use in any fixed part of a building or other civil engineering structure. Construction uses can therefore be either load bearing or non-load bearing and the term construction should not be confused with the term "structural". More specifically "construction" refers to any application covered by the Construction Products Directive (CPD) and the harmonised European standard EN 13986, which is published in the UK as BS EN 13986.

Whilst the requirements for panels for use in construction are covered by the CPD and the harmonised CEN standard, these systems are not necessarily applicable to non-construction applications. The EN series of wood-based panel specification standards, such as BS EN 312 for particleboards, may also not be appropriate. The end use of a panel is often unknown at the time of manufacture, and many general purpose products used in non-construction applications may still therefore be those produced in accordance with the requirements of the CPD. Non-construction applications include furniture, shopfittings, packaging and transport.



As stated above, for these types of product the CPD is not relevant but the panels used may still be produced to one of the EN specification standards if this suits the control system in operation at the factory. This is however, not compulsory and an alternative specification can be agreed between the customer and supplier. For some end-uses there are relevant British or industry standards that give guidance on the use and selection of wood-based panels, but in most cases, the specifier has the option of specifying a product in accordance with an existing standard or of producing his own specification. As a result, it is the specifier and his client's requirements that normally determine the requirements for the panel.

The WPIF have produced an Industry Standard for non-construction products and if this is accepted in the UK. The Industry Standard specifies the requirements for a number of types and classes of non-load-bearing wood-based panels for supply in circumstances where they are not intended, by either the vendor or the purchaser, to be used for construction purposes in the building or civil engineering sectors.

The standard defines a series of types of wood particleboards, fibreboards and oriented strand boards. Plywood is not included at present. The types defined are listed in Table 3.1.

For each type, the standard defines:

- ◆ mean tolerances of nominal dimensions, straightness, squareness and flatness
- ◆ mean quality levels for bending strength, modulus of elasticity, internal bond, surface soundness, screw withdrawal, thickness swelling
- ◆ formaldehyde content/release
- ◆ moisture content

Guidance is also given on appropriate quality control procedures and on some supplementary properties that may be requested by the purchaser.

Copies of the Industry Standard are available from WPIF. The adoption of this standard will greatly simplify the specification of panels for non-construction applications.

**Table 3.1 WPIF proposed classification of wood-based panels for non-construction uses.**

<b>Product type</b>	<b>Product class and use category</b>
P/GPD	Particleboard : General purpose : Dry conditions.
P/FID	Particleboard : Furniture and interior fitments : Dry conditions.
P/FIH	Particleboard : Furniture and interior fitments : Humid conditions.
OSB/GPD	Oriented strand board (OSB) : General purpose : Dry conditions.
OSB/FID	Oriented strand board (OSB) : Furniture and interior fitments : Dry conditions.
HB/GPD	Hardboard : General purpose : Dry conditions.
HB/GPH	Hardboard : General purpose : Humid conditions.
HB/GPE	Hardboard : General purpose : Exterior conditions.
MBL/GPD	Mediumboard, low density : General purpose : Dry conditions.
MBL/GPH	Mediumboard, low density : General purpose : Humid conditions.
MBL/GPE	Mediumboard, low density : General purpose : Exterior conditions.
MBH/GPD	Mediumboard, high density : General purpose : Dry conditions.
MBH/GPH	Mediumboard, high density : General purpose : Humid conditions.
MBH/GPE	Mediumboard, high density : General purpose : Exterior conditions.
SB/GPD	Softboard : General purpose : Dry conditions.
SB/GPH	Softboard : General purpose : Humid conditions.
SB/GPE	Softboard : General purpose : Exterior conditions.
MDF/GPD	Medium density fibreboard (MDF) : General purpose : Dry conditions.
MDF/GPH	Medium density fibreboard (MDF) : General purpose : Humid conditions.