

Dimensional lumber

Dimensional lumber is a term used in North America for lumber that is cut to standardized width and depth specified in inches.

Softwoods

Nominal	Actual	Nominal	Actual
1 X 6	3/4" X 5-1/2"	2 X 8	1-1/2" X 7-1/4"
1 X 8	3/4 X 7-1/4	2 X 10	1-1/2" X 9-1/4"
1 X 10	3/4 X 9-1/4"	2 X 12	1-1/2" X 11-1/4"
1 X 12	3/4 X 11-1/4"	3 X 4	2-1/2" X 3-1/2"
2 X 2	1-1/2" X 1-1/2"	4 X 4	3-1/2" X 3-1/2"
2 X 3	1-1/2" X 2-1/2"	4 X 6	3-1/2" X 5-1/2"
2 X 4	1-1/2" X 3-1/2"	6 X 6	5-1/2" X 5-1/2"
2 X 6	1-1/2" X 5-1/2"	8 X 8	7-1/2" X 7-1/2"

Examples of common sizes are **2x4** (also **two-by-four** and other variants), **2x6**, and **4x4**. The length of a board is usually specified separately from the width and depth. It is thus possible to find 2x4s that are four, eight, or twelve feet in length.

In The Americas, *two-bys* (2x4s, 2x6s, 2x8s, and 2x12s) are common lumber sizes used in modern construction. They are the basic building block for such common structures as balloon-frame or platform-frame housing. Dimensional lumber made from softwood is typically used for construction, while hardwood boards are more commonly used for making cabinets or furniture.

The nominal size of a board varies from the actual size of the board. This is due to planing and shrinkage as the board is dried. This results in the final lumber being slightly smaller than the nominal size.

Hardwoods

Nominal	Surfaced 1 Side (S1S)	Surfaced 2 sides (S2S)
3/8"	1/4"	3/16"
1/2"	3/8"	5/16"
5/8"	1/2"	7/16"
3/4"	5/8"	9/16"
1" or 4/4	7/8"	13/16"
1-1/4" or 5/4	1-1/8"	1-1/16"
1-1/2" or 6/4	1-3/8"	1-5/16"
2" or 8/4	1-13/16"	1-1/32"
3" or 12/4	2-13/16"	2-3/4"
4" or 16/4	3-13/16"	3-3/4"

Sizes for dimensional lumber made from hardwoods vary from the sizes for softwoods. Boards are usually supplied in random widths and lengths of a specified thickness, and sold by the board-foot (144 cubic inches).

Hardwood lumber is commonly sold in a "quarter" system when referring to thickness. 4/4 (four quarters) refers to a 1 inch thick board, 8/4 (eight quarters) is a 2 inch thick board, etc. This system is not usually used for softwood lumber, although softwood decking is sometimes sold as 5/4 (actually one inch thick).

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