

Kiln Drying Your Wood



Drying Live Edge Slabs

We recommend customers air-dry their live edge slabs to 20-25% moisture content before kiln drying.

Drying live edge slabs properly is a meticulous process that may extend beyond two years. Although you may be eager to use the freshly cut, beautiful slabs for your upcoming project, it is crucial to recognize that they are in a green, unseasoned state and not yet suitable for immediate use.

A general guideline suggests allowing live edge slabs to air dry for a year for every inch of thickness before subjecting them to kiln drying. **The objective is to achieve a moisture content (MC) level of no more than 25% before kiln drying. This important initial step will ensure the most successful kiln drying result.** Once removed from the kiln, the ideal MC depends on the environment where the slab will be placed. Typically, this ranges from 12% or less, with a target of around 8% to 10% for most wood slabs.

Opting to construct furniture, such as a dining room table, from a green slab may initially yield an aesthetically pleasing result. However, issues arise once the piece is introduced into a home environment. As the slab undergoes natural drying processes, it may develop cracks, warps, and lose its initial appeal. Glued joints may disintegrate, potentially leading to a disappointed customer. These problems can manifest themselves as early as the first week or up to a year later.

To avoid these issues, it is essential to follow proper drying procedures for live edge slabs. The initial step involves air drying the slabs for approximately two years after being cut. During this period, placing the slabs on sticks, typically 1"x1", with spacing of around 16" to 30" between each slab, facilitates uniform drying and provides structural support. This practice prevents rapid drying; minimizing the risk of large cracks and warping.

Determining when the slabs are adequately air-dried involves assessing their moisture level, ideally reaching 20-25%, using a moisture meter. The duration varies depending on the slab's thickness, with thinner slabs taking around six months to dry, compared to several years for thicker ones.

Subsequent to air-drying, the slabs undergo kiln drying for four to twelve weeks. If utilizing an external service for kiln drying, advance coordination is crucial due to potential backlogs. Post-kiln drying, verifying the moisture levels is imperative, aiming for 8-12% moisture content, expecting some variations across different parts of the slab.



At Kitsap Dry Kiln, a dehumidification dry kiln is employed, having proven control electronics and our extensive experience drying lumber, timbers and slabs, ensuring the best drying profile for your high-value slabs. We make every effort to apply best practices and proven kiln profiles to minimize the drying stresses on your slabs. Once the slabs are unloaded from the kiln, they are ready for use, albeit with a potentially less attractive appearance. Planing and sanding will restore the slab to its original beauty.

If you have more questions regarding drying your live edge slabs, please contact us with your questions by phone or text at (360) 551-0643 or by email at dean@kitsapkiln.com.

Recommendation acknowledged / dry it anyway!

You have just read the recommendation for drying live edge slabs. Often, customers prefer to go ahead with kiln drying even if their slab moisture content is higher than 20-25%. While there is a greater chance of drying defects such as end splitting or surface warping, these conditions do not always present themselves, or the finishing method makes these issues less of a worry. We are happy dry your slab with a higher starting moisture content, and do everything possible to make the drying easy on your slab. In order to do this, you simply need to acknowledge that you understand the risks of doing so. By filling out the release below, you are have acknowledged that we recommended the starting moisture content be 20-25% or less and that you have read and understand this document.

CUSTOMER NAME & SIGNATURE

(print name)

(signature)

To be filled out by Kitsap Dry Kiln:

Date:	Target Moisture Content %:
Moisture Content %	Known defects before kiln drying:



Kitsap Dry Kiln
Dry Kiln & Mobile Sawmill Services

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