

BS 1186 has been superseded by the European Standard BS EN 942. It is however still widely quoted on site by the construction industry and used extensively by specifiers.

The purpose of this document is therefore to give the reader an insight into the contents of BS 1186-3 but with the caveat that it is now out of date and reference should be made to the new European Standard BS EN 942

The primary purpose of BS 1186 'Timber for and workmanship in joinery' is to categorise the quality of timber used in joinery by defining requirements against which the physical characteristics of the timber can be measured.

The 1991 revision takes into account current good practice and availability of species.

Quality Grades According to BS 1186

There are three grades applicable, mostly concerned about the size and frequency of knots

Class 1 – Is suitable for high status buildings. Using cladding boards of 100mm – 150mm width, sound knots are limited to 22.5mm. Most hardwoods are available to this quality, but in softwoods it is limited mainly to imported douglas fir and western red cedar.

Class 2 – This is the most common classification for unfinished timber cladding. Sound knots are limited to 35mm

Class 3 – Knots are restricted to 50mm or no more than 35% of the board width

BS1186 also details limits of natural defects of timber in the following areas:

- Splits, shakes and checks
- Resin Pockets
- Sapwood
- Wane
- Straightness of Grain
- Exposed Pith
- Decay and Insect Attack
- Plugs, Insects or Filler

Moisture content is one of the most important aspect of joinery specification and BS1186 gives four levels of moisture content which approximate to end use conditions for joinery

It recommends the following average moisture content

External Joinery 13% to 19%

Internal Joinery

Unheated Building 13% to 17%

Room temperature 12C – 21C 10% to 14%

Roome Temperature in excess of 21C – 8% to 12%

Please remember that this document is for information only and as previously stated BS 1186 has been superseded by the European Standard BS EN 942.