

# DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection Installation Instructions

Updated: 1/11



*Quality You Can Trust... From  
North America's Largest Roofing Manufacturer!™*

[www.gaf.com](http://www.gaf.com)

**GAF**DECKING  
SYSTEMS**GETTING STARTED...****DuraLife™****Natural Grain Collection****PLAN THE DESIGN OF THE DECK...** IT IS THE BEGINNING OF A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT.

1. **Completely read the application instructions...** before starting the installation of the deck.
2. **Properly unload and store DuraLife™ Natural Grain decking...**
  - a. Do not dump or drop decking from the back of a truck or trailer. Decking should be offloaded by forklift or by hand. Store decking on a level area on wood supports placed every 3 feet (914 mm).
  - b. Protect DuraLife™ Natural Grain decking during storage with a lumber cover or tarp.
3. **Use proper lifting techniques...** when lifting DuraLife™ Natural Grain decking; it is heavier than standard wood materials.
4. **Use proper joist placement...** to realize savings in both time of installation and from cost of materials. Make sure the joist direction maximizes the desired lay-out of the deck.
5. **If a railing is to be installed...** consult the railing manufacturer for the required spacing between the railing posts.
6. **Follow all local and state building codes...** when planning and installing your deck.
7. **Use normal wood working tools...** to cut, route or fasten DuraLife™ Natural Grain decking. For cutting, carbide-tip saw blades with approximately 2 teeth per inch are recommended for best results.
8. **Tools needed...**
  - Circular saw (24 tooth carbide blades).
  - Cordless drill with a quick drive bit for pre-drilling holes and screw fastening.
9. **Always use personal safety equipment...** when using tools.

**VENTILATION AND DRAINAGE...**

1. **To perform properly...** DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking **must** be installed with proper drainage and ventilation.
2. **Ensure that:**
  - a. Joists are level across each span... a slight slant of the deck [1/8 inch (3 mm) for every 8 feet (2.4 m)] away from your home for drainage is required.
  - b. The substructure has at least 2" (51 mm) clearance from grade.
  - c. Skirting does not impede airflow under the deck.
3. **Where ventilation is minimal or obstructed...** flow through or soffit venting **must** be added around the perimeter of the deck to create cross ventilation under the entire substructure to avoid accumulation of moisture and humidity.
4. **Never attach DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking to...** any solid surface, watertight membrane, concrete, or existing decking.

**FRAMING YOUR DECK...**

1. **Use minimum nominal 2"x 8" (51mm x 203 mm)...** sized joist for deck frame construction. KDAT (kiln dried after treatment) stamped framing lumber is recommended as it is typically straighter, lighter, easier to handle, and will not shrink or expand as much after installation as non-KDAT lumber.
2. **Never use DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking as structural members...** when constructing your deck.
3. **Use 16" (406 mm) on center joist spacing...** if the decking is to be installed perpendicular to the joist.
4. **Use 12" (305 mm) on center joist spacing...**
  - a. If the decking is to be installed at an angle to the joist (maximum 45° angle).
  - b. In heavy traffic areas (i.e. restaurant patios, hotel walkways, public boardwalks, etc.).
5. **Confirm required joist spacing...** with local and state building code agencies.
6. **If heavy equipment is going to be installed on the deck...** such as a hot tub, consult the equipment manufacturer for specific requirements for framing and support.
7. **Install the framing joist vertically...** with the 2" (51 mm) side in contact with the decking. Do not install decking on framing that has been installed flat with the 8" (203 mm) side in contact with the decking, as this may cause debris and moisture to be trapped between the framing and decking.

**USING DURALIFE™  
NATURAL GRAIN  
DECKING AS  
STAIR TREADS...**

1. **Do not space stringers wider than 12" (305 mm) on center...** when using DuraLife™ Natural Grain decking for stair treads.
2. **Overhang...** for stair treads must not exceed 2" (51 mm).

**BLOCKING IS  
REQUIRED  
WHERE THE END  
OF TWO DECK  
BOARDS MEET...**

When the design of the deck is longer than 20' (6.1 m) or it is a unique design, blocking, ("sistering"), or additional framing is required.

1. **DO NOT SHARE JOISTS OR FASTENERS, at butt end joints in the decking...** the ends of each deck board are to be individually supported and fastened (See fig. 1).
2. **Transition/divider boards or other intricate designs...** require additional blocking or framing.

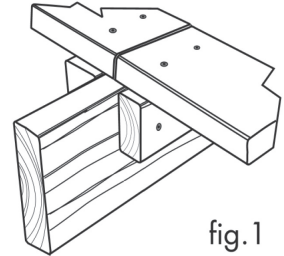


fig. 1

**BOARD SPACING  
OR GAPPING...**

All decking expands and contracts slightly as a result of temperature change.

**When installing DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection Solid profile boards...**

During installation, **always** space boards to provide the following minimum gaps to allow for these changes:

- **Side to Side...** 3/16" (4.8 mm).
- **End to End...** typically 3/16" (4.8 mm depending on board length and temperature (see Chart 1 - "Deck Spacing Calculator").
- **Structure...** typically 3/16" (4.8 mm) between all decking and any structure or post (see Chart 1 - "Deck Spacing Calculator").

**When using DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection grooved profile boards with the Sabre™ Clip Fasteners.**

During installation, **ALWAYS** space boards to provide the following minimum gaps to allow for these changes:

- **Side to Side...** fasteners automatically gap boards 3/16" (2 mm).
- **End to End...** typically 3/16" (4.8 mm) depending on board length and temperature (see Chart 1 - "Deck Spacing Calculator").
- **Structure...** typically 3/16" (4.8 mm) between all decking and any structure or post (see Chart 1 - "Deck Spacing Calculator").

**NOTE:**

Note: If the deck is located near or around a tree, be sure to allow for future growth of the tree.

Chart 1.  
Deck Spacing Calculator

Nominal Size: 0.5" x 12"  
Actual Size: 0.5" x 11.5"

Board Length	Maximum Anticipated Temperature Increase from Time of Installation (°F)																				
	10(°F)	12(°F)	14(°F)	16(°F)	18(°F)	20(°F)	22(°F)	24(°F)	26(°F)	28(°F)	30(°F)	32(°F)	34(°F)	36(°F)	38(°F)	40(°F)	42(°F)	44(°F)	46(°F)	48(°F)	50(°F)
Required Gap (Inches) at Butt Joints or Other Immoveable Objects																					
6	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8
7	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8
8	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8
9	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16
10	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16
11	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16
12	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	1/4
13	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	1/4	1/4
14	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4
15	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	5/16
16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/16	3/16	3/16	3/16	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	5/16

Note: Always allow the greater of a 1/4" gap or the value from chart around column or other fixed elements. For values greater than those shown in the chart please contact GAF at 1-866-322-7452 or online at www.gaf.com.

**COLOR AND  
ORIENTATION OF  
THE DECKING  
BOARDS...**

1. **Natural fiber used in the manufacturing of DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking...** is intended to create subtle color variations between boards.
2. **DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking has a directional grain...** as a result light will reflect off the surface of the board differently depending on the orientation of the grain.

3. **To ensure a consistent color across the deck...** it is vital to maintain the same orientation of the deck boards during installation.
  - Align the arrows... that are imprinted on the side of each board so that they point in the same direction.
4. **Always lay out...** the deck boards before final installation to ensure an acceptable color mix.



**Note:** The color of DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking may gradually fade over time. This is natural and expected. Fading and color variations are not covered under the limited warranty.

## FASTENING...

### There are two methods...

that can be used to fasten DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking.

#### 1. Sabre™ Clip hidden fasteners:

- a. **Two Sabre™ Clip hidden fasteners...** are required at each joist, one on each side of the decking board, regardless of the joist spacing.
- b. **Side to side spacing is maintained...** by the Sabre™ Clip hidden fasteners.
- c. **Face fastening of the outer most edge of the first and last board...** is required when using Sabre™ Clip hidden fasteners. (See face fastening instructions below.)

**Note:** If the deck design utilizes transition, divider boards or herringbone designs, Sabre™ Clip hidden fasteners can be used to fasten boards at perpendicular junctions.

- Disassemble the clip by unscrewing the fastener and removing the plastic insert on the bottom of the stainless steel cap.
- Use the fastener and the pointed stainless steel cap to secure all boards creating the joint.
- Make sure all adjoining boards are engaged in by the fastener.

#### 2. Face fastening:

- a. **Use #8 x 2 1/2" composite lumber or standard deck screws...** when installing DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking.
- b. **Stainless steel or coated deck screws...** are recommended.
- c. **Anti-mushrooming screws...** will enhance the final look of the installation and do not require pre-drilling except at the ends of the deck boards. When using regular wood deck screws, first pre-drill and countersink all fasteners locations.
- d. **Two fasteners...** are required at each joist, one on each side of the board, **regardless** of the joist spacing.
- e. **Drive fasteners straight...** directly through the deck boards at a 90° angle to the decking surface. Do not toe nail or drill at an angle.
- f. **Never place fasteners...** closer than 3/4" (19 mm) from the edge or ends of the board and when not pre-drilling, no closer than 1 1/2" (38 mm) from the edge or end of the board.

**Note:** If the ends of the boards are fastened within 1 1/2" (38 mm) of the end of the board, always pre-drill and countersink fasteners when fastening the boards regardless of the type of fastener being used.

- g. **For the best appearance, use a white chalk line...** to ensure straight fastener lines.

**Caution:** Colored chalk can stain the decking and can be very difficult to remove.



## FINISHING THE DECK BOARD INSTALLATION...

**Trimming may be needed...** after all decking has been installed:

1. **DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking should NOT extend more than 2" (51 mm)...** beyond the framing in any direction.
2. **Use a white chalk line...** to provide a cut line for squaring off the decking.  
**Caution:** Colored chalk can stain the decking and can be very difficult to remove.
3. **Use a circular saw...** to trim the ends of the DuraLife™ Natural Grain Collection decking along the chalk line.