



Q. We recently purchased some 8/4 #2 Com Red Oak. When the shipment arrived we noticed that the boards were heavily checked. Upon asking our supplier about this, he said the lumber qualifies for #2B Com and he could ship this since I ordered #2Com under the NHLA grades. We are a chair manufacturer and use this material for our solid legs. I have always bought #2Com and have never had this problem, have the rules changed? What gives?

A. The NHLA rules have not changed, this has been a rule for around 20 years, but it needs to be changed. First of all let me explain that there are actually two grades of #2Com consisting of #2ACom and #2BCom. You have been receiving #2ACom which requires 50% clear cuttings which works well in your manufacture. #2BCom is a seldom used grade in species like Oak, H. Maple, and Cherry because it simply requires that the board be 50% sound cuttings. Something you might use for the frame of an upholstered sofa. This #2BCom grade is more often used with species like Tulipwood, Cottonwood, or S. Maple. The short story on a long explanation is that when #2Com is specified, it can contain both #2A and #2BCom. I would say that if this is the first time you know of this happening you are fortunate. In the future the surest way of preventing this from happening again is: **WHEN ORDERING #2COM AND YOU NEED CLEAR CUTTINGS ALWAYS SPECIFY #2ACOM.** This applies to probably 80% of you buyers out there using the #2 grade.

Q. We are receiving a number of quotes for hardwood lumber and notice the words green tally on some and net tally on others. Are there multiple tally methods and if so which is the one we should specify?

A. There is a difference between a green tally and net tally of anywhere between 7-10% depending on the species and supplier. You should also see the same difference in price if everything is equal such as origin of species, quality, and grading. A green tally is the actual measurement of the lumber before it goes into the dry kiln to be dried. When going thru the drying process the lumber will shrink in volume from about 7-10% depending on the factors already mentioned. If the lumber is then measured after the drying process this is a net tally. A net tally is the actual kiln dried footage that you receive. If I were a buyer, purchasing kiln dried

lumber, I would always go for the sure thing and purchase on the net tally. If you want to convert between one tally and the other, you must know the percentage of shrinkage your supplier is using. So just ask.

Q. I know you have covered this but I can't find it, so, will you review the Prime grade I keep getting quotes on?

A. Prime was created years ago by exporters as a substitute for the FAS grade. Originally a lot of shippers could not send the Standard NHLA FAS grade because it allowed too much wane (bark or lack of wood) on the board. The rules allow up to 1/2 the length of the FAS board to have wane. As long as the minimum clear cutting percentage was 83 1/3% the board met the FAS requirements. For export shipments this was a problem as bark in some species cannot leave the states. Export shippers edged the lumber heavier eliminating the wane. This in turn caused some boards to fall below the minimum size width needed for the FAS grade, thus the birth of Prime; A virtually square edged board that might be below the 6 inch width required by the FAS grade. Today, with the proliferation of the export market, a lot of shippers are creating new ways to set their lumber apart from their competitors. Prime can have different meanings from one shipper to the next so it is my advice to talk with the supplier and get his or her specifications. For some species it might be a color sort, for others a width and length sort. The most important thing to any successful relationship is open dialog whether with your significant partner or your lumber supplier.

ATTENTION: to all my loyal readers. If you are interested in any on the job training send me an e-mail. I appreciate the questions I receive which make this article possible. Contact me: bshardwoods1@yahoo.com

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