

Quick Tips

Easy ideas to improve production efficiency

Indispensable Carts

Rolling carts are essential parts of most production framing operations, and the right type of cart can make a big difference in productivity. There are poly carts, wire carts, laundry carts, bussing carts, and many more available at stores that sell rolling shelves. Just google “rolling carts” and you'll see the long list of companies that offer solutions for every type of stock movement you can imagine. Many chain stores have rolling carts, but look carefully at the wheels before buying. Cheap plastic wheels won't last long. Find carts with good casters and wheels meant for factories. Stay with 4” diameter wheels or larger if possible, unless you have really smooth floors and light loads.

Also size the width of carts to your aisles. If you have skinny aisles in some areas, make sure you buy narrow carts that will fit. One cart design generally won't work everywhere in your facility. Try one or two carts of one style, and if they don't work well in the area you selected, try them somewhere else. Four casters versus two is another consideration for steering flexibility. And remember, carts can adapt to many circumstances, but getting the right ones for each job can make you more productive.

Jim Burke
President
Machines, Etc.



The Right Lights

We recently moved into a new facility and spent a large amount of time talking about what type of lighting to use. We felt there were three keys to consider: how bright the lighting is (measured in foot-candles), what the color of the bulbs are, and how energy efficient the fixtures are.

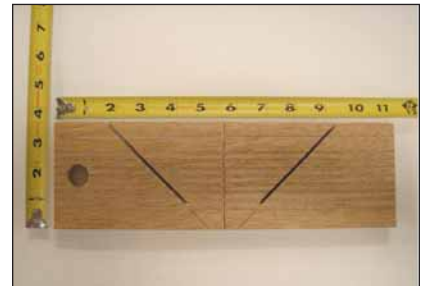
In terms of brightness, 100 foot-candles is typical quality control lighting for factories. Getting a light meter is also recommended to check things like that. You may think you have the right lighting, but it can be very deceiving. For color, 3000° is the typical wavelength for bulbs used in residential homes, although this has been changing with the introduction of compact fluorescents and LEDs. Also evaluate energy-saving bulbs and fixtures. We decided on T-8s, but with new technology being introduced you might want to look into compact fluorescents or LEDs, which are becoming more popular. Decisions should be based on your own lighting needs.

Dale A. Zeimen
Production Manager
Artists' Frame Service



Minimizing Moulding Waste

One of the ways we minimize waste-moulding is to use what we call a “Waste-O-Meter.” It's a simple jig



you can make that lets you calculate how much moulding is lost between the blades with each cut, thus allowing you to maximize the yield of each stick. Simply place a stick of moulding on the jig and measure the distance between the two 45-degree cuts and you can properly calculate exactly how much moulding it will take to make a frame.

We made our jig using chop and table saws. It can be customized to suit your needs. The jig has horizontal lines spaced 1/8” apart with the first increment starting 3/4” up from the bottom to correspond to one of our most popular moldings, 3/4” matte black. If kept attached to a saw, it offers an easy way to calculate waste quickly and efficiently.

Jason Dittelman
Owner
Crestar Manufacturing



Contributors to this column are industry members who have experience in production framing operations. If you have a tip of your own, please send it to:

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PFM Production
207 Commercial Court
Morganville, NJ 07751.