

# Quick Tips

## Easy ideas to improve production efficiency

### Keep a Supplier List Handy

A lot of time can be lost when equipment breaks down and the right people can't be contacted in a timely manner. Perhaps the owner of a production framing company knows the right people to call when things break down or parts need to be ordered, but does anybody else know who to call when a saw or underpinner quits working? To make sure this doesn't happen, create a list of all your equipment suppliers with their phone and fax numbers along with the names of the appropriate contacts. It can also help if the model and serial numbers of major pieces of machinery are listed. When you have to call a supplier and have that information at hand, it can save a lot of time. Print the information and post it in several places in the production area.

The same thing goes for instruction manuals, maintenance routines, and maintenance supplies. These should all be in one easy-to-find location, and several people should know where they are. A list of suppliers and service people should be there as well. The time and money it takes to make a list is a lot less than the trouble you have when production has to shut down and no one knows whom to call.

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### Warehouse Organization

Good production shops clean and organize daily because it helps efficiency and safety and makes employees feel better about their company. With spring cleaning around the corner, this is a good time to review and reorganize your warehouse and production area.

- Look at the flow of your operation. Position tables, shelving, and stock to allow smooth movement of people and product.
- Keep the floor clear of piles. Only purchase materials as needed; secure adequate storage for any overstock.
- Labeling fixtures, component shelves, and bins helps the inventory process and general organization. Everything should have a place so supplies and tools are easy to find.
- An efficient production area keeps orders flowing consistently. Manage problem orders by consolidating them into a specific, designated area; this ensures the flow of normal orders.

Take time to organize your warehouse at least once a year. Look to improve workflow, specify a place for everything, and make sure it is a habit to keep things clean.

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### Framing with Acrylic Glazing

Framing with acrylic glazing can be frustrating and time consuming. Here are some things to remember that will make framing easier and improve the final product.

- Double-check the size of the acrylic. Acrylic can contract and expand up to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " when subjected to different temperatures. Trying to get by with a piece of acrylic that is undercut could pose a problem once it gets to the customer's house.
- Avoid fingerprints at all costs. Using thin, white cotton gloves prevents most accidental fingerprints while fitting.
- When removing the acrylic paper mask, instead of trying to pull it up or tear it off, use a cardboard tube to roll it off. Cardboard tubes left over from rolls of bubble wrap seem to work very well for this purpose.
- After you roll off the first side of a paper mask, check the acrylic carefully for scratches or pits that may be rejected by your customer. Sometimes you don't notice those until the job is complete and then have to waste even more valuable labor than needed.
- After you're sure there are no defects, clean the acrylic with acrylic cleaner or alcohol and a Kimwipes. Spray the Kimwipe until moist and then crumple it in your hand a couple times to spread the cleaner throughout the towel. Then clean away.
- After cleaning, unroll the mask on the second side of the acrylic and clean that in the same manner.

If you follow these tips, you'll save time and reduce the frustrations that can often accompany framing with acrylic glazing.

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