

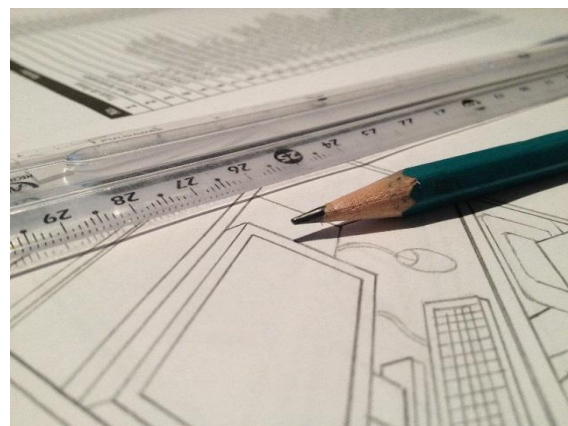
Tunncliffe's

Tunncliffe Timber Company Limited

New Dimension for the Exterior Joinery Shop NZS 4211

The topic of Exterior Timber Joinery complying with NZS 4211 has been on the radar since 2007 when the industries awareness was raised with the introduction of the Building Code Clause H1 Energy Efficiency. Double glazing came on the scene to achieve new insulation ratings which threw a challenge as to how to incorporate the larger size glazing units in the joinery. This was a moment in time when we looked at our product and realised, that in most circumstances, we were building windows and doors to a standard that in fact is no longer valid, NZS 3610 was superseded by NZS 4211 in 1985.

The old standard provided us with simple profile drawings and a set of rules we had to follow. The new standard is a performance standard which requires the product to have been tested for structural strength and weather tightness. A timber joinery product now has to have a label and a paper trail behind it to prove it has been manufactured to the required standard of the building code. This brings about a whole new dimension to a joinery business making exterior timber windows and doors.



The aluminium window and door sector, which is an estimated 95% of the New Zealand window and door market, is a different beast from the timber sector. It's "Bigger Business" with relatively few corporate die holders, a few more brands and many more franchisee manufacturers. This business model needs systems and comes with a great deal of liability and compliance issues.

An aluminium joiner is often a franchise holder receiving the profiles, regularly updated manuals with instructions, a software package, training and back-up from its corporate parent company. He or she builds the joinery according to tested pre-set drawings and calculations developed over several decades. However nothing is presented on a plate explains Kath Kitchen from Fisher Aluminium Gisborne.

Kath's father started their business in the 1950's and was one of the first timber joinery manufacturers to produce aluminium joinery in 1970. In the early days everything was kitset based to standard sizes and limited designs, we then went to working out the detail manually, with the introduction of the computer we moved to spreadsheets, next was a DOS computer programme, which we still use and only recently there is a Windows based package.

There is a lot worked out for you by the prime die holder but there is still a lot of our own input required making the joinery compliant. If we have something out of the ordinary we can fall back on our prime die holder who will assist in the design and engineering. To learn the system and understand the concept it takes about 3 months training for someone at senior staff level with adequate computer skills and basic window knowledge.

We can confirm that our timber joinery lagged behind with regard to compliance over time. The authorities seem to take a different stance towards it than with aluminium joinery. It has always been a too big a job for a small joinery company to get up to compliance level and it is good to see that the Master Joiners have made an effort to get something going. However it is up to the Individual joinery companies to bring their business up to the level to be able to produce the compliant joinery. You need to invest in bringing in a system and upskill staff.

And this is what a lot of Timber Joinery companies are struggling with; finding the time and money to get going. A relatively large number of them still see no justification and argue that they don't see a demand for it. The reality however is that you are obliged to produce building products that comply with the New Zealand building code, even if it does not show on the plans.

It is also important to realise that current JMF 4211 product has nothing to do with the windows and doors manufactured back in the 1980's under the same name. There seems to be some misunderstanding in areas of our market in that regard.

Michael Bangs, secretary of the Auckland branch of the Master Joiners spends time with joinery companies to bring them up to speed with the JMF system. He also organises training sessions for members during their quarterly meetings. As Tunncliffe's is experiencing an increased uptake of the JMF profiles Michael also notices an increased demand for the JMF system. He also explains that it is up to the individual joinery company to bring their skill levels up to compliance. It is the new dimension for the timber joinery business as much as Health and Safety compliance for example, we need to move with the times.●

