



SUPERIOR

SAUNA & STEAM

Sauna Key Design Features

1. Sauna Ventilation

The number one feature for a clean long lasting sauna is proper air exchange. There should be an **upper outlet vent** approximately a 1/3 of the way up off the floor, usually under the top bench. The **lower intake vent** should be at floor level near the sauna heater, which helps to circulate by convection. For indoor saunas, instead of the lower vent, it is acceptable to just leave a ½" gap under the door.

Leave vents (and if possible the door) open when finished using the sauna to minimize the time that bacteria is exposed to an ideal growing environment. Building codes require similar air exchange and with the high temperatures and humidity in saunas it is very important so bacteria and fungi do not grow as fast and destroy wood grain.



2. Sauna Vapor Barrier

It is important that a foil vapor barrier is used in the sauna design to keep moisture out of walls. The foil vapor barrier adds 1R of insulation value. Plastic or synthetic vapor barriers are not designed for high temperatures of a sauna and will likely breakdown and release toxic gases and be rendered ineffective. Any hot spots like knots in paneling can melt holes in plastic and synthetic vapor barriers, exposing the inner wall to damaging water vapor. Simply install by stapling the vapor barrier around walls and ceiling with the foil side facing you. It is recommended to have a 2 to 3" overlap and use aluminum foil tape on seams for the best result.



3. Sauna Wood Types

The wood used for sauna steam rooms vary widely, usually depending on what types of woods are available locally. Sauna woods for walls and ceiling are milled with tongues & grooves (T&G) that interlock tightly and make installation easy. Superior Sauna uses Aspen, Spruce, and Cedar for our saunas.

Aspen is a very light in color and provides a more soothing sauna experience. It is also considered the most non-allergenic wood for sauna use. This means that more people (especially in public or commercial saunas) can enjoy the health benefits of a sauna without irritating certain respiratory conditions, as the famous aromatic Cedar wood scent sometimes can. Superior Sauna Aspen sauna wood comes with a milled relief groove on the backside to allow airflow behind the wood and the vapor barrier. It also features a waterfall style T&G design for a more effective water resistant seal.



Aspen, Spruce, and Cedar treated with paraffin oil



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3. Sauna Wood Types (Cont.)

Nordic Spruce sauna wood paneling is a great choice for any residential or commercial sauna. The quality rustic look (with small tight knots) is very traditional and beautiful with its unique wood grain. Nordic Spruce sauna wood is popular for use in Finnish and European traditional saunas.

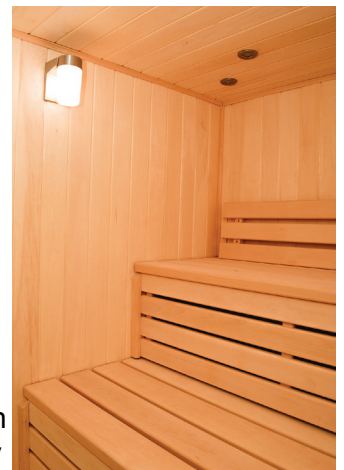
Western Red Cedar is a very popular sauna wood with its varying shades of color and aromatic scent. Western Red Cedar T&G sauna wood is available in two different thicknesses for sauna building. Cedar sauna woods have natural oils which gives them a naturally resistant property to many bacteria, fungi, and insects.

Sauna Wood Paneling Install: note that **stainless steel finishing nails** are recommended to attach sauna paneling. Regular or galvanized nails will corrode over time and leave dark streaks and stains on the walls. We offer 15, 16, and 18 gauge nails to fit many brands of nail guns (for speed and accuracy). As you construct your sauna room the only place you may want to use a treated material is on the sill plate. Plan wiring well in advance for sauna light, heater unit, and control panel. While paneling and trim are being installed, make sure to keep it 1½" off of the floor so it doesn't wick moisture and so there is clearance for the flooring.

Remember that sauna woods must breathe, so never use sealants or coatings that would break down from the heat, which could release harmful gases. Sauna Wood Treatment oil is available and can be applied to paneling and benches to help keep wood cleaner by not allowing excess perspiration to soak into wood fibers. The oil treatment is great for high maintenance commercial saunas or daily used home saunas.

4. Sauna Benches

Superior Sauna benches are made of clear grain woods, White Basswood and Red Cedar, and feature fully rounded edges for maximum comfort. Many of our bench designs utilize wall mounted rails that allow bench seats to lift out and easily be removed for cleaning. Benches and brackets should be made with clear lumber, as knots make for uncomfortable "hot spots". Be sure to install benches with hidden fasteners (from bottom through support into bottom of top bench board) so there are no exposed hot metal fasteners to burn sauna users. Basswood bench stock measures 5½" wide by 1¾" thick. Red Cedar stock is 5½" wide by 1½" thick. These commercial quality materials will outlast other types of sauna benches, as the surface can be sanded every year or so to maintain a "new" look. Portable sauna benches are another option for additional guest seating or as a cooling off bench outside the sauna. Portable benches can be made to ANY custom size. **Note:** Clear grain is on exposed parts, there may be knots hidden on the back, and will not impact sauna use.



5. Sauna Heater

There are a variety of types and sizes of Sauna Heaters for any location, commercial or residential. All of our sauna heaters can have water poured over the rocks to produce steam like in traditional Finnish steam saunas.



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5. Sauna Heater (Cont.)

Wood Burning Sauna Stoves are the most traditional type of sauna heater and offer the most heat output. Wood sauna stoves usually have the option of a built in water heating tank for bathing after the sauna session. Wood burning sauna heaters have much hotter surface temps, so they don't typically use a heater guard and usually require a brick or stone wall inlay near the heater to act as a heat shield.

Electric Sauna Heaters are the most convenient to use and take up little sauna room space. Electric heaters should have a sturdy heater guard installed according to heater manufacturer specifications.



Water can be used on the rocks for steam with all of Superior Sauna heaters. The Finnleo brand sauna heaters are excellent when used wet or dry. Finnleo has the best warranty in the industry with 5 years for residential use and 1 year for commercial installations. Tylo, Scandia, and Polar are other brands of quality electric heaters. We offer replacement parts for most sauna heaters in service, for brands like Polar, Finnleo, Helo, Saunatec, Amerrec, Scandia / Vico, Tylo, and more.

6. Sauna Door

There are three types of sauna doors, all wood, wood with a small window, or full glass panel. There are several sizes available from standard 24" to 36" wide handicap accessible doors. The all wood door is paneled on both sides of your choice of T&G wood and features an insulated core. Glass panel sauna doors are standard with a pre-hung jamb, 5/16" tempered glass panel, and all hardware with a special coating for sauna use. Custom sauna doors can be ordered to fit any existing sauna room and pre-hung is optional.

Rough openings for pre-hung sauna doors are typically framed in 3" larger on width and height, from door jamb size. It is recommended to frame in doors and windows after they arrive for a perfect fit with casing and door jamb thickness.

If you plan to build your own sauna door, our Sauna Door Hardware Kit features heavy duty stainless steel spring hinges, spring ball catch latches, and quality wood handles.

7. Sauna Window

Sauna windows allow ambient light to enter and help make the sauna space seem larger. For outdoor sauna cabins, the sauna window allows a nice view of your surroundings or the use of a lantern for night time lighting, hung outside the sauna of course. For indoor saunas, you can set up a TV outside the sauna window. Tempered double pane, insulated glass units are used for efficiency and safety. Window frames are mad with quality select woods. Rough openings for windows are usually framed in 3/4" larger on width and height from window casing size.

