

# Care for a Lifetime of Living

*Supporting the Beauty, Performance, and Longevity of Your Cabinetry*

## A GUIDE TO LONG-TERM PERFORMANCE

Columbia cabinetry is built with care, intention, and a deep respect for time-honored craftsmanship. From careful material selection to hands-on construction and finishing, every cabinet is made to support a lifetime of everyday living while showcasing the natural beauty and character of the materials.

Like all fine cabinetry, long-term appearance and performance are shaped not only by how it's made, but by how it is cared for and the environment in which it is installed. Gentle cleaning, attention to moisture, and stable indoor conditions help preserve both the finish and overall integrity of the cabinetry over time.

This overview outlines general care principles that apply across all Columbia cabinetry. Material-specific recommendations are provided in individual guides and should be reviewed based on the products in the home.

## INDOOR CONDITIONS & CABINETRY STABILITY

Temperature and humidity naturally influence how wood, engineered components, and finishes behave over time. Maintaining a stable, climate-controlled indoor environment helps minimize natural expansion and contraction, reducing stress on joints, finishes, and surfaces throughout the life of the cabinetry.

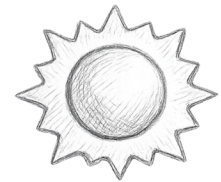
### *Recommended Indoor Conditions*

To support long-term performance, recommended residential conditions are:

- **Relative humidity:** 35%–50% (short-term variation down to 30% and up to 55% may occur)
- **Temperature:** 65–75°F (18–24°C)

Seasonal use of humidifiers or dehumidifiers may be necessary to help maintain these conditions.

Prolonged exposure to environments outside these ranges may result in natural material movement or finish changes and is not considered a warrantable condition.



## EVERYDAY CARE & CLEANING

Alongside maintaining stable indoor conditions, routine care plays an equally important role in preserving cabinetry performance. Thoughtful, consistent cleaning helps maintain the beauty and integrity of your Columbia cabinetry for years to come, requiring only simple, gentle methods - no special products or scrubbing required.

### *Routine Cleaning Practices*

- Dust monthly, or as needed, with a soft, lint-free cloth
- Vacuum crumbs or debris from corners monthly, or as needed
- Wipe surfaces with a lightly damp soft cloth monthly, or as needed, then dry immediately
- Pay particular attention to areas around handles and knobs, where oils from hands can build up with regular use

### *Occasional Deeper Cleaning*

Use mild dish soap only when occasional deeper cleaning is needed:

- Mix a few drops ( $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp) of mild dish soap with 1 quart (1 L) of warm water
- The solution should be barely sudsy
- Apply the solution to a soft cloth, not directly to the cabinetry
- Follow with a clean, damp cloth and dry right away

### *Why Drying Matters*

Always dry seams, edges, and hardware penetrations thoroughly, especially for melamine surfaces. While melamine itself is moisture-resistant, exposed edges, seams, shelf pin holes, and hardware penetrations can swell if water is allowed to sit for extended periods.

### *Interior Cleaning — When More Is Needed (Melamine Cabinet Interiors Only)*

ONLY for cleaning melamine interiors when experiencing more stubborn grease, food residue, or marks:

- For cooking oils or food buildup, use a 50/50 mix of warm water and white vinegar. Let sit 30–60 seconds, then wipe clean and dry thoroughly. Avoid over-saturating



## EVERYDAY CARE & CLEANING, CONT.

- For tougher stains such as coffee, turmeric, or pencil marks, use a paste of baking soda and water or a melamine foam sponge (e.g., Magic Eraser) with light pressure only

Using the above methods on stained or painted wood cabinetry, including finished plywood interiors, can lead to permanent damage.

### *Products & Practices to Avoid*

- Never use degreasers, citrus-based soaps, furniture polishes, or antibacterial formulas
- Avoid harsh chemicals, abrasive pads, or any cleaners containing ammonia, bleach, solvents, or alcohol, as these products may compromise finish integrity
- Avoid oil-based soaps, furniture polishes, waxes, or silicone-containing products, as these may leave residue or interfere with the finish over time

### *Maple Breadboards & Chopping Blocks*

- **Before first use:** Recondition your breadboard or chopping block with food-grade mineral oil to help seal the wood surface. Apply generously and allow the oil to absorb fully before wiping away any excess
- **Routine cleaning:** Wash with mild dish soap and warm water to loosen food particles, then towel dry immediately
- **Avoid:**
  - Soaking, placing in the dishwasher, or allowing water to sit on the surface for extended periods, as excessive moisture may cause warping or damage
  - Strong chemical cleaners, which may leave behind harmful residues or dry the wood
- **Natural deodorizing:** Rub the surface with half a lemon and a light sprinkle of salt to help lift stains and neutralize odors
- Periodic re-oiling will help maintain the wood's integrity and extend the life of the board

## ONGOING CARE & PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Beyond routine cleaning, awareness of everyday kitchen exposures helps prevent excessive long-term wear. Cabinetry is designed for everyday living, but a little awareness and early attention to small issues go a long way in preserving its appearance. Consistent habits and timely response to common exposures help cabinetry age gracefully and support long-term performance.

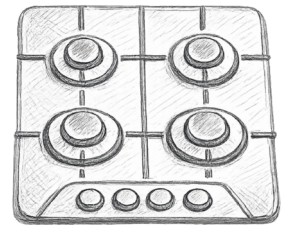
### *Managing Moisture & Heat Exposure*

Everyday exposure to water, heat, and steam is inherent to kitchens and baths. Cabinetry performs best when that exposure is brief and well managed. Standing water, trapped moisture, or excessive or sustained heat exposure may affect cabinetry performance over time. Care and awareness matter most around:

- Sinks, dishwashers, and plumbing fixtures
- Cooktops, ranges, and countertop appliances that generate heat or steam
- Trash pull-outs

Best practices to reduce risk:

- Avoid placing steam-generating appliances directly beneath wall cabinets
- Run the range hood whenever boiling, steaming, or sautéing
- Use ventilation every time you cook
- After dishwasher cycles, allow 15–30 minutes for internal steam to dissipate before opening fully – or use the unit's vent/fan-dry setting
- Wipe spills, splashes, and condensation as they occur
- Repair chips in the finish promptly to prevent moisture intrusion



### *Household & Food Exposure Considerations*

Certain foods and household products commonly found in kitchens can cause staining or surface changes if left in contact with cabinetry for extended periods. Use care, and clean promptly, when contact occurs with:

- **Acidic foods:** Vinegar, citrus juices, tomatoes, wine
- **Highly pigmented foods:** Coffee, tea, berries, spices, cooking oils
- **Household chemicals:** Nail polish remover, hand sanitizers, or cleaning wipes not intended for finished surfaces

### *Protective Everyday Practices*

Simple habits help protect cabinetry in high-use environments:

- Wipe spills promptly and dry surfaces right away
- Avoid hanging damp cloths or towels over cabinet doors
- Minimize prolonged exposure to direct sunlight
- Periodically inspect high-use areas such as sink bases, pull-outs, and trash cabinets
- Regularly clean high-touch areas, such as around handles and knobs, to prevent buildup from everyday use



**In sink or plumbing zones especially:**

- Wipe spills immediately
- Dry exposed edges thoroughly
- Use shelf liners in high-risk areas
- Check periodically for slow leaks

***Touch-Up & Minor Repairs***

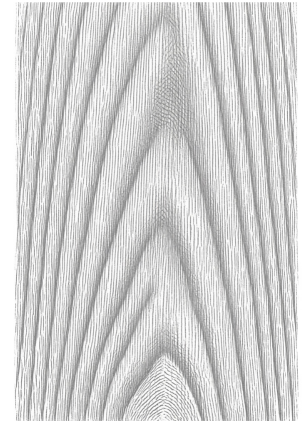
Touch-up products are available through your authorized Columbia Cabinets dealer to help address minor wear from everyday use. Prompt attention to small chips or finish wear helps protect cabinetry from moisture intrusion and supports long-term durability.

**UNDERSTANDING NATURAL MATERIALS**

Even with thoughtful care and stable environments, natural materials will continue to evolve over time. Many Columbia cabinetry products incorporate solid wood and wood veneer components. Variations in grain, color, texture, and tone—and subtle changes over time—are inherent to real wood. Natural characteristics such as mineral streaks, grain movement, color variation, pin knots, and other species-specific markings are part of the material itself and contribute to the authenticity, warmth, and individuality of each cabinet.

Engineered materials and decorative laminates offer greater visual consistency, yet they also benefit from thoughtful care. Attention at seams, edges, and joints helps maintain their appearance and long-term performance.

Understanding these natural characteristics provides helpful context when reviewing warranty coverage.



**WORKING WITH YOUR WARRANTY**

This Care & Cleaning Guide is intended to support the proper use and long-term care of Columbia cabinetry. It should be read in conjunction with Columbia’s Limited Lifetime Warranty, which defines coverage terms, environmental requirements, and exclusions.