



## PET HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

To get the best out of your Pet Home, please follow the guidelines below.

### APPLY WOOD SEALER

Sealing the base wood of your Pet Home with at least two coats of sealer will provide a water-resistant finish, and is important for preventing urine and liquids from immediately soaking into the plywood floor. The sealer provided contains no solvents, and is labelled safe for pets. See overleaf for instructions on how to apply.

### USE A WATERPROOF LINER

It's important to note that although the wood sealer will prevent urine from sinking into the wood, prolonged exposure to damp without the opportunity to dry out will cause the seal to break down, similar to water damage on a wooden table. To avoid staining and keep your pet home floor looking pristine, it is essential to use a **waterproof liner**. A liner will keep the wood dry by preventing contact, and will add years of service to your Pet Home.

To line the base of your Pet Home, use a waterproof material, such as a pond liner, puppy pads or waterproof-backed fleece liner. This is especially important for larger pets such as guinea pigs and hedgehogs as they produce more urine. Make sure the liner covers the entire floor area and joins between the floor and base walls, overlapping by at least 2cm along all four edges.

### USE OF SUBSTRATE LAYERS

For small pets that love to burrow such as hamsters and gerbils, it's best to add at least 20cm depth of substrate whilst ensuring any liner is completely covered. A very deep substrate provides a natural environment, whilst protecting the base of your Pet Home. Remember to leave enough height free at one end for a nesting box and wheel.

For guinea pigs and hogs, use washable fleece liners, or fill the base with 8cm of your chosen substrate for comfort, on top of a waterproof liner.

#### Substrate Examples

- Wood Shavings – Wood shavings (not sawdust!) must be labelled dust-extracted.
- Megazorb - A highly absorbent soft wood pulp bedding often sold in bales as horse bedding. Keeps odours low.
- Carefresh – A reclaimed pulp waste bedding with high absorbency, good natural odour control and low dust level.
- Ecobed – A warm, soft, absorbent bedding with a low dust level.
- Fitch – Recycled paper bedding which is soft, warm and very absorbent. Often sold in bales as horse bedding.

## PROTECT CARPETS AND WOOD FLOORING

The Base of our Pet Homes has been designed with an air gap underneath the plywood floor. This allows air to circulate which will help dry out the base in the event of contact with liquid.

When placing your Pet Home on a carpeted or wood floor, ensure your floor is protected with lining material to prevent contact with the underside of the base. For deep-piled carpets, your pet home should be raised off the ground by at least a couple of centimetres. Castor wheels are ideal, but you can use a couple of wood batons placed at each end to support the full length of your Pet Home.

## AVOID DIRECT SUNLIGHT AND RADIATORS

Wood is a natural product which expands and contracts with variations in temperature. We advise you **NOT** to place your Pet Home directly in front of radiators or windows exposed to direct sunlight, as this may cause warping of the wood.

Positioning your Pet Home appropriately will also help ensure the temperature is comfortable for your pets, and reduce the risk of them overheating.

## PREVENTING GNAW DAMAGE

Hamsters, guinea pigs and all other rodents have a natural inclination to gnaw. Their teeth will continue to grow throughout their life, and gnawing is a natural behaviour to wear teeth down. Make sure your pets have access to various wooden/natural gnaw toys within their enclosure to enrich their environment, and discourage them from damaging their home.

**Note:** Rodents will gnaw most things including plastic, so providing something to gnaw on is equally important when housing in plastic cages.

## CLEAN OUT REGULARLY

Soaked and soiled substrate should be removed at least 2-3 times a week, and preferably spot-cleaned on a daily basis. Damp substrate will start to smell and go mouldy if not removed on a regular basis, and without a waterproof liner, it will cause staining. Regular cleaning will keep your home clean, fresh, and dry, and will prevent mould and smells from building up.

To perform a thorough clean, remove all substrate and lining material, and use a clean damp cloth to wipe the floors and walls. **DO NOT SPRAY A CHEMICAL CLEANING PRODUCT DIRECTLY ONTO THE WOOD** as this may adversely affect the wood sealer, and will only dampen the wood further.

Lining material should be washed and/or replaced regularly.

It's advisable to check your Pet Home on a regular basis for any damage caused by your pet. If any splintering occurs, then gently sand down the rough edges to avoid injury.



# WOOD SEALING INSTRUCTIONS

Our Pet Homes are supplied untreated, with a 250ml pot of **pet-safe clear matte wood sealer** provided for sealing the base prior to use. It's essential to follow this step, otherwise accidental contact with urine will immediately soak in. Apply at least two coats to achieve a water-resistant finish. If any sealer remains, you can always apply a third coat for an extra layer of protection.

**STEP 1** - First assemble the Pet Home by following the Assembly instruction sheet.

**STEP 2** – Apply as directed below, depending on which type of Pet Home you have purchased.

- Apply the sealer generously using a clean brush.
- Work the sealer into the joins where the plywood meets the walls, and the base corners.
- Brush along the grain of the wood as this will provide a better and smoother finish.

## **Pet Home with Integrated Floor**

If you've purchased a Pet Home with an integrated base, apply the sealer to the plywood floor and the lower half of the walls first. Any remaining product may be used on the top half of the walls. For a 120x60cm size enclosure, there should be at least enough sealer for two coats on the plywood floor and a single coat on the walls.

## **Pet Home with Separate Base Unit**

If you've purchased a Pet Home with a separate base unit, apply 2 coats of sealer to the plywood floor, the interior base walls, and base rim, and any remaining sealer can be applied to the main walls.

For a 180x60cm base unit, there should be just enough sealer for two coats.

**STEP 3** – Allow to dry for at least 2-3 hours before applying the second coat, making sure the wood is completely dry to the touch without any wet areas, before the second application.

**STEP 4** – Once the second coat has been applied, leave to dry for at least 24 hours before preparing the Home for your pet.



## DEALING WITH STAINS AND/OR FLOOR DAMAGE

If, over time, the floor of your Pet Home has become stained or damaged, you can opt to replace the plywood yourself, or purchase a Replacement Base Unit from us.

**To purchase a Replacement Base Unit, visit our online shop here:**

<http://www.hamster-homes.com/browse/replacement-parts>.

**To replace the Plywood yourself, follow the instructions below:**

- Plywood is available from all timber merchants, and some will cut to size.
- To remove the plywood, unscrew the base screws. Measure the plywood to the nearest millimetre in both length and width, or alternatively, contact us for dimensions.
- Plywood thickness can vary, so before having plywood cut to size, take a short base length with you to check the plywood fits the channel before purchase.
- Ensure the plywood is classed for “exterior use” for better moisture resistance.
- Once the new sheet of plywood has been inserted into the channel, screw the screws back in until they just bite into the wood and close the gap.
- You will need to reseal the new plywood before use.

