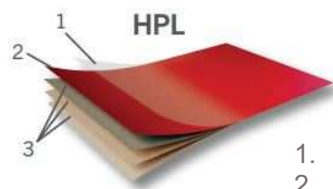


High Pressure Laminate vs Melamine

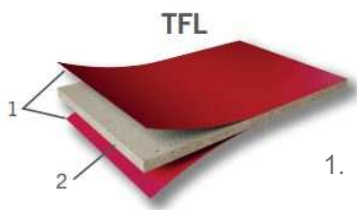
Southwest Contract’s standard construction incorporates high pressure laminate (HPL) material on all exterior surfaces of our laminate products. The alternate material, as shown below, is thermo fused laminate (TFL), commonly referred to as melamine. Many furniture vendors in our market will provide HPL tops for durability, however they will substitute TFL or melamine for the bulk of the product as a cost-engineered item. While the use of TFL or melamine provides an almost identical surface appearance, the structure and durability is very different as shown below.

HPL is four times thicker than TFL. High pressure laminate’s additional thickness is contributed to a wear-resistant overlay, a decorative sheet, and three layers of impact resistant kraft paper. TFL is merely one thin sheet of melamine saturated, decorative material. Note the comparison and characteristics below.

Southwest Contract also offers melamine construction when requested, however we recommend the far more durable HPL. With HPL on the sides, drawer fronts, door and backs, the product has greater impact resistance, scratch resistance, and moisture resistance. If HPL is needed on the horizontal surface for durability, we believe the same durability is required for all surfaces. Knowing that the furniture will be repositioned in the room for many years, an HPL product allows students to create the layout that best suits their individual study, sleep and social space. It is easy to understand why melamine construction is less expensive than high pressure laminate, however it does not match the value obtained when investing in a completely high pressure laminate exterior product.



1. Wear-resistant overlay
2. Decorative sheet
3. Impact resistant Kraft



1. Melamine saturated decorative sheet
2. Melamine saturated backing sheet

	Thermally Fused Laminate (TFL)	High Pressure Laminate (HPL)
Multiple designs/textures	●	●
Stain & moisture resistance	◐	●
Scratch resistance	◑	●
High impact resistance		●
Edgebanding	●	●
Lower cost	●	

