

Painted Cabinets: What to Expect



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Cabinet Company

Canyon Creek offers framed and full access premium cabinet lines; a value frameless line and Closets Plus for all of your storage needs.

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Painted wood cabinets are a popular choice for the entire kitchen or as an accent color for the island. The smooth, even surface and wide range of color choices are desirable for those who want a different look than that of wood. However, before choosing a paint as your finish, it should be noted that hairline cracks are unavoidable on painted wood cabinets and are not a defect or a sign of poor quality.

Because wood naturally expands and contracts with seasonal changes in temperature and humidity, there is movement at the seams of the cabinet doors that will look like the paint is “cracking” at the joints. Hairline cracks occur wherever there’s a joint between pieces of wood with grain running in different directions. For example, the joints between stiles (vertical pieces) and rails (horizontal pieces) on mortise and tenon doors, or the face frames that surround the door openings.

Visible seams are common where the stiles and rails meet.





Mitered door styles will experience this too, but because the miter joint is usually more noticeable anyway, it tends to be easier to accept visually. As cabinet doors are comprised of multiple pieces of wood, with the grain running in different directions, these boards expand and contract at different rates.

Every wood species behaves this way, although cracks are more noticeable on light-colored cabinets than on dark ones and on painted cabinets vs. stained cabinetry. Since wood movement is much more pronounced across the grain than with it, changes in humidity will affect the expansion and contraction of each piece.



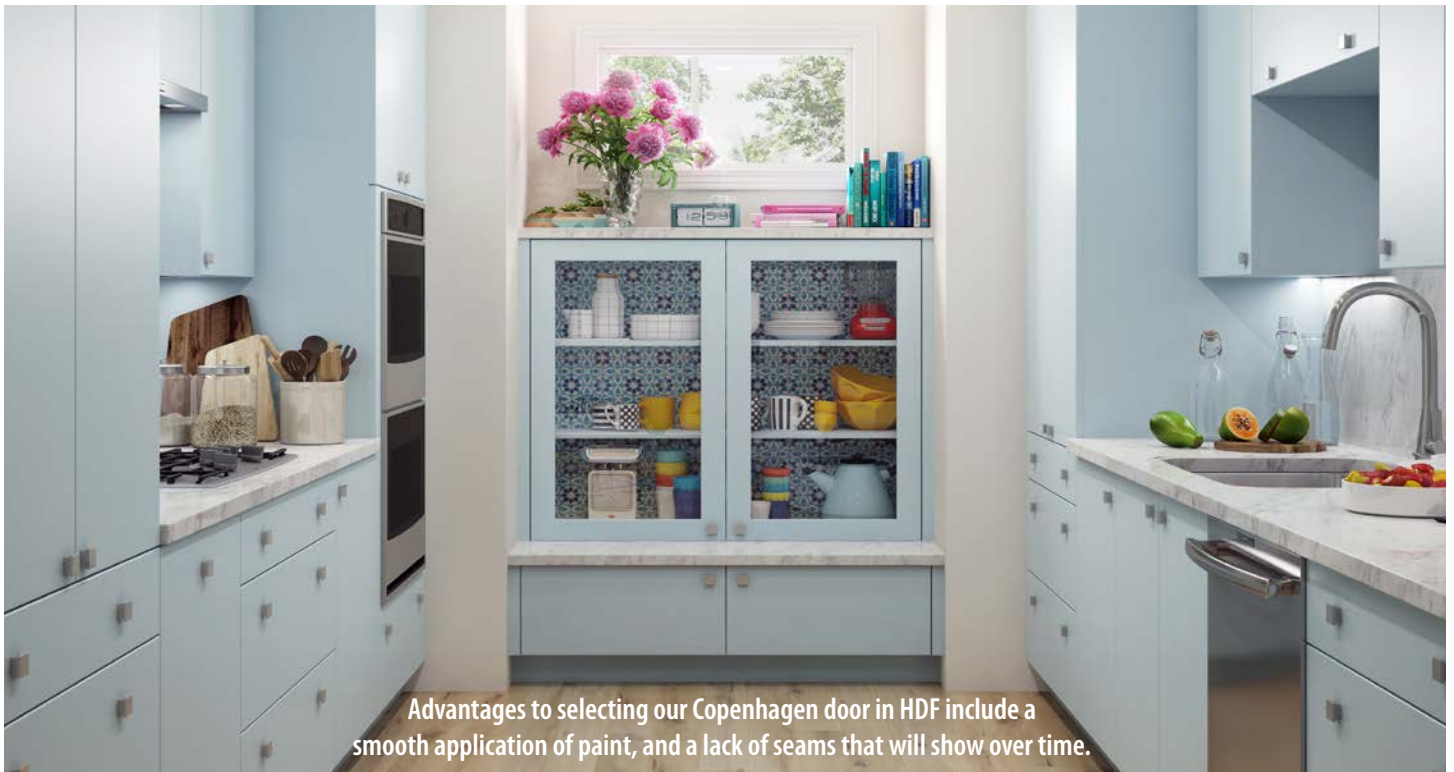
Also note that the cracking will probably be more noticeable in winter than in summer, because heat dries everything out. It helps to maintain the temperature in your home within a range of 60° F to 90° F, with relative humidity in the range of 40% to 50%.

A painted finish, no matter how good or how carefully applied, will experience cracking at the joints. It is quite normal and will occur on all cabinet lines from the least to the most expensive. We offer paint on maple because of its consistency and stability, and on red oak, which will show some of the wood grain through the paint.

These cracks are actually present on all cabinetry, but with stained cabinets, and their visible wood grain, you just can't see them as readily. If you look closely at the cabinet joints on the stained cabinetry shown at left you will see where the different pieces meet.

If you really like the look of paint, but would like to virtually eliminate the cracking, you can either try carefully controlling the temperature and humidity levels in your home, or you could consider a cabinet door constructed from painted MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard) or HDF (High Density Fiberboard).

Canyon Creek Cabinet Company offers several door styles across its cabinet lines that are constructed with an MDF or HDF panel for painted doors. There are also wood alternatives, such as Super Matte foils, High Gloss foils and acrylics, laminates and thermofoils that will provide an even color throughout the cabinetry without the cracking from paint.



Advantages to selecting our Copenhagen door in HDF include a smooth application of paint, and a lack of seams that will show over time.