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# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

## Understanding Decking Tallies

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### Unit of Measure

The international unit of measure in which woods like Ipe, Garapa, Cumaru, and others are traded is the cubic meter (m<sup>3</sup> or cbm). Unlike the North American unit of board feet, the cubic meter represents the volume of timber bought and sold. Cubic meters are usually converted to industry standard units of measurement, such as net board feet and lineal feet, and then priced accordingly.

### Tally

The industry standard in the US for Ipe decking tallies is 8' through 20' in even lengths (EL) or random lengths (RL). The distribution of lengths in a typical container is 30% of 8' to 10', 40% of 12' to 14', and 30% of 16' to 20', with occasionally some 22'. These percentages are by volume, not by pieces. This is referred to as a (30/40/30) Tally Ratio.

As an example, say a container has 20m<sup>3</sup> of KD decking. It would contain 6m<sup>3</sup> of 8' and 10', 8m<sup>3</sup> of 12' and 14', and 6m<sup>3</sup> of 16', 18', and 20'.

To keep inventory tallies in balance, we need to sell decking in these same ratios. That is why your best price will always be for random lengths of 8 to 20', with a 30/40/30 tally ratio.

Most of the time, you can only buy 8' and 10' at the random length price. A premium is generally charged when you purchase random lengths of 12' to 20' or specified lengths of 12' and longer.