Saunas - an introduction

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• **What is a sauna?**
A sauna is a room with bench seating where the internal temperature is raised to achieve a 'hot' environment. Anybody entering the room will experience a rise in their body temperature. Saunas are a recognised means of aiding relaxation for fit and healthy adults.

Saunas are predominantly constructed of wood. The most commonly used wood is spruce, however rooms can be constructed in cedar, aspen, alder or beech.

The majority of rooms in the UK have walls and ceilings built from a wood-insulation-wood 'sandwich'. These are commonly referred to as 'panel type' saunas. Rooms can also have solid 'log' walls with a panel ceiling.

Due to the high internal air temperatures it is essential that the wood has been kiln dried to achieve a low moisture content, removing the risk of excessive shrinkage. A lot of movement in the wall/ceiling materials will manifest itself as splitting and warping.

It is normal to incorporate windows and all-glass doors in saunas. Any glazing should be tempered to resist any accidental impact.

• **How hot does a sauna get?**
The temperature in a traditional sauna is typically 80 to 100°C. The air temperature is raised using a specifically designed heater.

• **How humid is a sauna?**
A sauna can be be between 5 and 30% humid relative to temperature at 80 to 100°C. At lower temperatures, 40 to 60°C, it is possible to have a higher humidity

• **Where can a sauna be situated?**
Anywhere indoors is acceptable, as long as the room / area has its own ventilation. However, where space allows there should be a shower nearby and an area to relax afterwards and allow the bather to cool down.

• **Does the atmosphere created affect the surrounding fabric?**
No. The amounts of water used to create the higher humidity are quite low. In the unlikely the room the sauna is in gets too warm then a window can be opened

• **Does a sauna need special ventilation?**
No. The sauna will have an inlet and outlet vent that draws and passes air within the area / room it is sited. No mechanical extraction is required from the sauna room.

The position of the heater is also an important aspect of the sauna's design as it will impact on the ventilation and the long-term life of the cabin structure. You should seek advice from your supplier.

• **What electrical power is required?**
This will depend on the electrical output of the heater selected. The heater size required will depend upon the volume of the sauna room. Please seek advice from your supplier.

• **What flooring is required?**
Saunas do not come with an integral floor. Any hardwearing easy-to-clean surface is acceptable; it just needs to be level and even. All the heat is rising, therefore the floor never gets hot.