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Beyond the Surface - Rethinking Interior Materials in Contemporary Architecture

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1. What is one key difference between particleboard and MDF in terms of internal structure?

Particleboard is made from wood particles or chips arranged in layers, while MDF is manufactured from fine wood fibres that create a more homogeneous internal structure.

2. Why are compact laminate panels often used in high-traffic interior environments?

Because they offer high durability, impact resistance and moisture resistance.

3. How is high-pressure laminate (HPL) typically used in interior applications?

HPL sheets are bonded to engineered panel substrates such as particleboard or MDF to create durable decorative surfaces.

4. A designer is specifying cabinetry for a bathroom with elevated humidity levels. What substrate characteristic should be considered?

Moisture-resistant grades of MDF or particleboard, or compact laminate panels for higher moisture exposure.

5. A project aiming to improve indoor environmental quality requires low-emission materials. What should the architect verify when specifying engineered panels?

That panels comply with recognised emission standards such as E1 and relevant testing methods like ISO 12460-1 or EN 717-1.

6. Which two certification systems help ensure timber used in engineered panels is sourced from responsibly managed forests?

FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification).