

Nominal vs. Actual Lumber Sizes

The real finished size of standard 1x and 2x boards · inch and mm

NOMINAL	ACTUAL SIZE (T × W)
1×2	3/4" × 11/2" (19 × 38 mm)
1×3	3/4" × 21/2" (19 × 64 mm)
1×4	3/4" × 31/2" (19 × 89 mm)
1×6	3/4" × 51/2" (19 × 140 mm)
1×8	3/4" × 71/4" (19 × 184 mm)
1×10	3/4" × 91/4" (19 × 235 mm)
1×12	3/4" × 111/4" (19 × 286 mm)
2×2	11/2" × 11/2" (38 × 38 mm)
2×4	11/2" × 31/2" (38 × 89 mm)
2×6	11/2" × 51/2" (38 × 140 mm)
2×8	11/2" × 71/4" (38 × 184 mm)
2×10	11/2" × 91/4" (38 × 235 mm)
2×12	11/2" × 111/4" (38 × 286 mm)

T × W = thickness × width. The 2×4 is highlighted — the size everyone asks about.

Lengths are actual: an 8-ft 2×4 is a full 8 ft; only the cross-section shrinks. Figures are for surfaced (S4S) softwood dimensional lumber — the standard at any lumberyard or home center.