



Material & Finish Reference

Quick decision guide for environment, durability, appearance, and budget

This reference is designed to help owners, contractors, and buyers compare common fabrication materials and finish paths used by Fine Edge. It is a practical planning tool — not an engineering standard or code document.

1) Common Material Paths

Material	Typical Use	Best For	Cost
Carbon / Mild Steel	Structural parts, interior rails, painted exterior work	Strong and versatile; needs proper coating outdoors	\$
Aluminum	Coastal exteriors, van interiors, lighter assemblies	Lower weight, good corrosion resistance	\$\$
304 Stainless	Premium architectural and standard exterior use	Clean appearance and strong corrosion resistance	\$\$\$
316 Stainless	Marine / near-water exposure	Best corrosion resistance for harsh coastal environments	\$\$\$\$

2) Finish Comparison

Finish	Look	Durability	Typical Use
Powder Coat	Strong color control; common for architectural work	Medium–high depending on prep	Exterior steel/aluminum with design-driven finish
Galvanized	Best utility protection for steel	High	Structural / heavy-use exterior steel
Brushed / Polished Stainless	Premium finished look	High when correct stainless is used	Architectural stainless applications
Raw / Patina	Intentional unfinished aesthetic	Low outdoors unless maintained	Interior decorative use or controlled design effect

3) Environment Rule-of-Thumb

- Interior dry space → carbon steel or stainless may both work depending on finish goals
- Standard exterior → coated steel, aluminum, or stainless depending on use and budget
- Near salt air / coastal exposure → prioritize aluminum or 316 stainless
- Fleet interiors → aluminum often preferred where weight matters; steel where maximum rigidity matters
- Heavy-use structural / utility work → prioritize function, finish system, and service environment over appearance alone

4) Quick Selection Grid

Project Type	Strong First-Choice	Why
Interior stair handrail	Carbon steel + powder coat	Budget-friendly and visually flexible
Oceanfront railing / coastal gate	Aluminum or 316 stainless	Better long-term corrosion resistance
Van shelving / fleet interior	Aluminum or coated steel	Depends on weight sensitivity and load
Industrial platform / support	Steel + proper protective finish	Structural performance first

5) Project-Specific Notes