

Marine Dock & Lift

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Canopy tarp materials, pros and cons of various materials.

As of this writing, 3 Nov 15, we can offer no fewer than 6 different tarp materials.

1. ShelterRite Lite a 13 oz vinyl material.
2. Vintex by Shoretex, Designer colors. 13oz vinyl material, with earth tone colors.
3. ShelterRite 18 oz Vinyl material. (well proven material, used for truck tarps)
4. Harbor Time a canvas type of cloth
5. Weathermax 8 oz nylon type of cloth.
6. Seamark 2 tarps in one. a lighter weight vinyl bonded to the underside of high end Sunbrella cloth.

Some real world explanation of materials above, based on past sales experience. Starting with ShelterRite Lite, and ShelterRite.

The 18 oz ShelterRite has been around for many years, and has proven itself to be very durable. It is the same type of material used for semi truck tarps. Tarps that go down the highway at 70MPH all day long. Of all the materials described below, it offers the best wind whip resistance. Its durability is one of the primary reasons customers prefer its usage. The 18 oz material leans toward the lower end of price point spectrum. You receive a lot of value for the dollar paid.

There are only 2 real downsides to the 18 oz ShelterRite. There is the heavier weight when installing it. Especially when you get up into the larger canopy frames. And that its color retention over the years is less than the cloths. Especially with some of the darker colors such as burgundy, or dark green. Final color retention though, is based on application, and time outside. As some shorelines are shaded in worst of afternoon sun.

The 13 oz ShelterRite is fairly recent. Approx 2 years on the market as of this writing. It attempts to take away at least one of negatives associated with the the 18 oz ShelterRite. And that is the weight. There is a change up in the underside coating to eliminate some of the weight, while retaining the tear resistance, water tight characteristics, and UV inhibitors. The price point between the ShelterRite Lite and 18 oz is very close to each other.

Vintex by Shoretex. The 13oz designer or Earth Tone colors. It is designed to be lighter weight, pliable, and structurally sound against UV, mold, mildew, and abrasion. Its characteristics are not unlike the ShelterRite Lite, with focus though on offering a different stable of colors.

Harbor Time. Harbor Time is a material that has been around for quite some time also. I tend to refer to it as a canvas like cloth. It reminds me of "Army tent" days. In that very durable material, and high resistance to abrasion. Its color retention is better than that of the Vinyls. If a downside, it would be that not fully waterproof, as the Vinyls are. You could get some seepage over time, with heavy rains, or if water was allowed to pool on a flatter canopy frame. Price point is at slightly upper range. It is not as prevalent as in past, due to the Weathermax material becoming more popular. So may not be as readily available.

Weathermax cloth. this is a 8oz material. It is very light weight, and reminds me of a nylon type of material. For its light weight though, it does have high abrasion resistance and good durability. Its color retention is also very high. I like to say, the older the baby boomers get, the more of Weathermax we sell !

The Weathermax is a material I have personally now used for 6 years on tarps on lifts on the home front. Some items that I have noted. As the Harbortime above, it is not 100% waterproof. With heavy rains, I do see seepage on the underside of tarp. Especially where the material contacts the canopy ribs. There can be drips on the boat or pontoon. So if 100% waterproof is a buy criteria, we would not suggest the Weathermax as material of choice. We have also seen that sharp edges can cut into the material quite quickly, in that it just isn't as thick as the ShelterRite. So in some situations, if the canopy is to be in high exposure areas, we have had the corners padded with the 18 oz ShelterRite to lessen cut risk. (Think Mille Lacs lake)

A big upside though, is storage of tarp. If properly folded, the Weathermax folds up into a very neat small bundle for larger tarps. I can fold up a 23ft long by 108" wide Shoremaster sized tarp into a 9" x 22" x 14" size for storage! Price point in the medium range.

Seamark cloth. The Seamark cloth material has been around for a good 20 some years now. It is a unique combination of vinyl material bonded to the backside of Sunbrella cloth. Sunbrella is a high end cloth used in the boating world, for shade over the boat interiors. It has the best color retention of all the materials listed above. And being that it has the vinyl underside, it is also waterproof. There can though, be a couple of drips in the stitching areas. The Seamark is considered a 15 oz material. So weight wise it is up there with the ShelterRite. I have noted the color retention with the Seamarks, and it does hold up well. Though like other colors, the burgundy, can dim more quickly than the neutral tones. Potential downside to the Seamark. One is that as it ages, there can be some separation of the vinyl backing to the Sunbrella cloth above it. And I have also seen some separation in heavy storms, if lower drapage gets considerable wind whipping. From a price point perspective, it is on the very upper end of cost. As in reality, you are buying 2 materials in one tarp. Rarely though, have we had a customer state that they did not feel they received the proper value for price point paid. It really does retain its looks that well. We find the Seamark tarp buyer, is the customer that truly wants the ultimate in looks.

I invite questions on descriptions above!

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