

Engineered Flooring – Floating Installation

Modern engineered hardwood flooring can be installed as floating floors over purpose made underlay, with no permanent fixing between flooring and sub-floor. This installation method is efficient & cost effective, and where necessary enables the introduction of an acoustic underlay into the flooring specification. An acoustic underlay can be especially useful in shared dwellings.

Environmental Conditions

- All wet trades must be thoroughly dry before flooring materials are delivered to site.
- Maintain suitable ambient humidity 40 to 60% RH. (Monitor with a hygrometer)
- If necessary employ a domestic humidifier / dehumidifier to maintain suitable conditions.

Moisture condition of sub-floors

- Ensure that screeds, concrete, etc are < 65% RH before installation commences.
- Employ a 1000g polythene damp proof membrane where necessary, making sure that joins are overlapped and taped with a waterproof tape.

Soundness of sub-floors

- Ensure all sub-floors are sound, rigid, of load-bearing strength and free of rot, insect infestation or decay.

Evenness of sub-floor

- In order to achieve a floor that feels solid underfoot and to avoid squeaking it is essential that all sub-floors are even to within 2mm over any 3 lineal meter area.
- Sand-cement screed sub-floors requiring further levelling can be levelled using a water-mix (as opposed to latex mix) which will often give the best result.
- Wood based sub-floors that require levelling are better suited to levelling with a purpose made fibre reinforced levelling compound which has greater flexibility.
- Sub-floors with contaminates or adhesive residues, are typically better suited to a latex-mix levelling compound, but may require further preparation before levelling can commence.
- Ensure that levelling compounds are fully cured and thoroughly dried in favourable drying conditions before installation commences (see manufacturers instructions for further advice).

IMPORTANT NOTE

Always check the mutual compatibility of moisture barriers, primers, aggregates, levelling compounds and adhesives before installation. Refer to instructions for use for each product.

Floating Installation

Depending on whether the product chosen is a glue system or glueless system, adhesive will or will not be applied to the tongue and groove joints.

- First a high quality purpose made underlay must be installed over the prepared sub-floor.
- Install flooring ensuring that header joints are randomly spaced with not less than two boards widths between them. Be careful not to repeat the end joint positions on alternating rows. Random spacing of header joints helps avoid excess header-joint movement and associated creaking, and is preferable aesthetically .

Tip

- No area should be spanned by a single board. (Note: Special care should be taken in

narrow areas such as alcoves and around Kitchen centre Islands). Shorter lengths can be used in these areas and header-joints spread. Some areas such as these or L-shaped halls are better suited to the fully-bonded (i.e. stick-down) installation method.

- When tapping up boards to create a close fit at the joints, only use a purpose made tapping block, as cut pieces of wood and other makeshift tapping blocks can damage the tongue and groove fit, or the face of the board.

Tip

- Flooring must not be exposed to artificial heat sources from the sub-floor. Hot water pipes within screeds or below suspended wooden sub-floor can cause excess heat and must be thoroughly insulated. Floor temperatures must not exceed 24 Celsius.

Provision for expansion

- As a guide only allow a minimum 15mm expansion wherever the floor meets obstacles including perimeters walls, structural supports, hearths etc.
- Create additional expansion breaks in doorways using suitable profiles such as T-section thresholds or transition strips.
- Create additional expansion breaks in large floors.
- Where possible install flooring so that planks, strips run parallel to the longest walls, so the direction of greatest potential expansion (i.e. across the grain) does not coincide with the direction of greatest dimension, esp. in large floors.
- The precise combined provision for expansion must be judged by the installer taking into account environmental humidity, moisture content of wood at time of installation, timber specie and size of the floor.

Further information

The combination and order of products used for sub-floor preparation can vary according to specific conditions of the sub-floor. This information is not intended to be exhaustive, or 'how-to' instructions for the novice but will serve as a further guide only for the experienced installer. Further information is available on request.