FLOORS4EVERUK

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TECHNICAL GUIDE TG01

Site Conditions and Subfloor Preparation

Version 1 · November 2026 · For the flooring trade

> Figures marked **(BS 8201)** follow BS 8201:2011 *Code of practice for installation of flooring of wood and wood-based panels* as published by leading UK suppliers and the Wood Flooring Association. Other figures are Floors4Ever recommendations. Where the adhesive, underlay or heating manufacturer gives stricter instructions, follow theirs.

1. Before the flooring is delivered

- The building must be weathertight: external doors and windows fitted and closed, roof complete.
- All wet trades (plastering, screeding, tiling, painting, plumbing tests) must be finished and dry.
- Heating must be working. Underfloor heating must be commissioned first (see TG04).
- Room conditions must match normal living conditions: **15–25°C and 45–65% relative humidity (RH)**, before, during and after installation.
- Do not store flooring in garages, sheds, outbuildings or on site in damp conditions.

2. Acclimatisation

- Store the flooring flat, in unopened packs, in the room where it will be laid, raised off the floor on battens.
- Allow **at least 72 hours**, and longer for solid wood or wide boards. Installation can start when the flooring and the room have reached a stable moisture balance.
- Do not open packs until you are ready to install.

3. Subfloor moisture

Subfloor	Requirement
Concrete and sand/cement screed	**Below 65% RH** measured with a hygrometer, as described in Annex A of BS 8201 **(BS 8201)**.
Concrete or screed between 65% and 75% RH	Apply a surface damp-proof membrane (liquid epoxy or polyurethane) approved by the adhesive manufacturer, or a suitable vapour barrier for floating floors.
Above 75% RH	Do not install. Allow further drying and retest.
Calcium sulphate (anhydrite) screed	Dry to the screed manufacturer's figure. Remove surface laitance. Do not use polyurethane primers unless the adhesive manufacturer approves them.
Plywood, OSB and timber floorboards	Moisture content **below 14%**, measured with a wood moisture meter.

Record every reading, with date and location, and keep it with the job file.

4. Subfloor flatness and condition

- The subfloor must be flat to **SR1: no more than 3 mm under a 2 m straight edge** at any point **(BS 8201 / BS 8204)**.
- Grind high spots. Fill low spots with a suitable levelling compound.
- The subfloor must be clean, sound, free of dust, laitance, old adhesive, grease and loose material.

- Timber subfloors must be securely screwed down and free of movement or squeaks. Use flooring-grade plywood or OSB/3. Construction-grade plywood is not suitable.

5. Kitchens and fixed units

We recommend fitting kitchen units and other heavy fixed items **before** the floor. A floating floor must never be fixed down by units, islands or heavy objects.

6. During and after installation

- No other trades should work in the room until the floor is finished and protected.
- Protect the finished floor with breathable protection (for example building paper or a breathable floor protector), with hardboard or correx over it in traffic areas. Do not tape protection to the floor surface.
- Keep room conditions at 15–25°C and 45–65% RH. A humidifier may be needed in heated homes in winter.
- Fit felt pads under furniture and use barrier mats at external doors.

7. Responsibility

The installer is responsible for checking site conditions and subfloor readings before installation starts. Defects caused by unsuitable site conditions are excluded under our Terms and Conditions of Sale (clause 12.4).
