FLOORS4EVERUK

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TECHNICAL GUIDE TG02

Engineered Wood Flooring Installation Guide

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> 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.

Read this guide together with **TG01 Site Conditions and Subfloor Preparation**. We recommend installation by a professional flooring contractor who owns a moisture meter and hygrometer.

1. Before you start

- Check that site conditions, subfloor moisture and flatness meet TG01. Record the readings.
- Check the product, grade and colour against the order before opening packs.
- Inspect every board in good daylight before laying. **Do not install any board you are not happy with.** Set it aside and contact us. Installing a board is acceptance of its visible condition (Terms and Conditions, clause 12.2).
- Mix boards from at least three packs at a time for an even spread of colour and grain.
- Allow at least 5–10% extra for cutting and waste (more for diagonal or complex rooms).
- Lay boards parallel to the main light source where possible, and lengthways in narrow hallways.

2. Expansion gaps

- Leave an expansion gap around the whole perimeter, including door frames, pipes, steps, pillars and fixed units.
- Gap size: **at least 10 mm, or 1.5 mm for every metre of floor width across the boards, whichever is greater**.
- Use expansion profiles at doorways and where the floor changes direction (L, T or U-shaped areas).
- Drill pipe holes at least 15 mm larger than the pipe and cover with pipe roses.

3. Method A – Fully bonded (glue-down)

Best for: wide boards, large areas, underfloor heating and heavy-use areas. This is our preferred method over underfloor heating.

- Use a flexible, solvent-free and water-free wood flooring adhesive (MS polymer or hybrid). Use the trowel and spread rate the adhesive manufacturer specifies.
- Prime the subfloor if the adhesive manufacturer requires it.
- Fix a straight edge along a chalk line as the starting guide. Spread only as much adhesive as can be covered within its open time.
- Press each board firmly into the adhesive. Weight down any boards that lift until the adhesive has set.
- Remove adhesive from the surface immediately with the cleaner the adhesive manufacturer recommends.
- Allow at least 24 hours before light foot traffic and furniture, or longer if the adhesive manufacturer says so.

4. Method B – Secret nailing

Best for: engineered boards over a sound timber subfloor (plywood, OSB/3 or existing floorboards) or battens.

- Nail through the tongue at 45° with flooring cleats or staples.
- Space fixings every **200–300 mm**, and no closer than 50 mm to the end of a board.
- The subfloor must be thick and firm enough to hold the fixing. Battens must be no more than 300 mm apart (or as the board manufacturer specifies).
- Check for pipes and cables before nailing.

5. Method C – Floating

Best for: engineered boards over a flat, dry concrete, screed or timber subfloor. Not recommended for solid wood.

- Over concrete or screed, lay a damp-proof polythene sheet (minimum 1000 gauge / 250 microns or as the underlay maker specifies), overlap the joints by 300 mm, tape them, and turn it up the walls behind the skirting. Some underlays have a built-in vapour barrier.
- Use a good-quality underlay suitable for wood flooring (and for underfloor heating where fitted).
- Glue tongue-and-groove boards with a full bead of D3 wood glue (EN 204 D3) along the long and short joints. Click boards need no glue unless the manufacturer says so.
- Maximum board width for floating: 220 mm. Wider boards should be fully bonded.
- Maximum floating area: 8 m in any direction without an expansion break.
- Never fix kitchen islands, units or heavy items through a floating floor.

6. Finishing

- Remove all spacers and temporary fixings. Fix skirting or scotia to the wall, never to the floor.
- Vacuum, then protect the floor as described in TG01.
- Keep a few spare boards for future repairs.
