

# INSTALLATION GUIDE

## ENGINEERED TIMBER



Signature



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## INSTALLATION GUIDE

### ABOUT THIS GUIDE

At Signature Floors, we understand that the long-term performance of our products depends on a number of contributing factors. The final floor finish is only one of those factors. Good preparation is essential for a smooth installation.

All Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* can be installed on concrete and timber floors which have been suitably prepared. The effective application is dependent on suitable site conditions, correct subfloor preparation and dryness, the workmanship of the installer, how the product is maintained, and the selection of the correct floorcovering are all equally important.

Signature Floors aims to provide proactive information on to architects, specifiers, designers, and consumers to ensure the optimum performance of all Signature Floors products.

If you have any queries regarding product selection, specification, installation, performance, or maintenance of any Signature Floors products, do not hesitate to contact us. Our aim is to resolve problems prior to the installation of our products rather than have problems to resolve after they are installed.

Signature Floors recommends installing your *Engineered Timber* using this Installation Guide in conjunction with the Floor Covering Institute of Australia Ltd Best Practice Handbook.

### INTRODUCTION

The current AS/NZS 1884-2021 in conjunction with Floor Coverings Institute of Australia – Best Practice Handbook, provides detailed commentary on the recommendations for the installation of *Engineered Timber* on both new and existing floor surfaces. Signature Floors considers AS/NZS 1884-2021 and the Floor Coverings Institute of Australia – Best Practice Handbook to be the minimum industry standard for the installation of all *Engineered Timber* and is endorsed by Signature Floors.

This Installation Guide is intended as a guide to all parties involved in the specification, installation, and maintenance of Signature Floors *Engineered Timber*. Signature Floors recommends the use of reputable flooring designers, whose experience in installation and project management will prove invaluable at all stages of a project. Selecting a flooring contractor solely on price can lead to a poor installation and a discontented consumer. A successful installation not only depends on the skills of the floor layer, but also in the planning and management of the project prior and during installation. Open lines of communication between all

parties concerned will eradicate any problems and will ensure a successful installation, which meets the design requirements within the allotted time scale.

### Product selection

*Engineered Timber* is designed and manufactured using quality craftsmanship and comes with a long list of benefits such as durability performance-to-cost ratio, life cycle maintenance costs, ethically sourced, low VOC's, dimensional stability and that it can be recycled.

Selection of the most suitable floorcovering is of utmost importance. Not only must the floorcovering meet the designer's initial colour and design, but the performance criteria of the product must be sustainable for the anticipated life of the product, allowing for foreseeable actions such as general wear and tear and regular maintenance.

Consideration at the initial specification stage must be given to the occupational usage of the building and the building type. Particular attention must be paid to the type and density of traffic (both pedestrian and wheeled), any special acoustical, electrical resistance or slip resistance requirements, as well as reaction to chemicals and staining agents, and physical properties such as resistance to point and rolling loads. Colour selection also impacts the longevity of the installation, light colours will always show more dirt and scuff marks than darker timbers.

If you have any concerns regarding the suitability of your selected product, please contact Signature Floors. Our Sales Team and After Sales Department can provide advice on the suitability, performance, and application of any of the Signature Floors products.

### CHART 1. MOISTURE TESTING

MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE RH TEST RESULTS		
	Direct Fix Installation (When tested to ASTM F2170)	Floating Installation (When tested using electrical resistance)
RH Content	75%	5.5%

NOTE: If the subfloor moisture content falls outside of these parameters please contact Signature Floors for further instructions before commencing the installation. Signature Floors will not be responsible for any moisture related installation failures if these guidelines are not strictly followed.



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Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* should only be laid on subfloors which do not suffer from rising damp or hydrostatic pressure, and where the moisture level does not exceed that of the levelling compounds and adhesives that are being used when tested in accordance with ASTM F2170.

Relative humidity in-situ probe test carried out as per ASTM F2170 is the only method of testing acceptable to Signature Floors. Subfloors with a relative humidity exceeding that of the Moisture Testing Chart for *Engineered Timber* products, will invariably cause failure of the bond between the substrate and floorcovering.

To prevent these situations arising, Signature Floors does not condone the practice of installing *Engineered Timber* on subfloors with a moisture content that exceeds the limitations of the levelling compounds and adhesives being used and accepts no responsibility for non-performance of Signature Floors products in such instances.

### New Concrete

The most common cause of failure in these types of substrates is moisture, either as construction moisture that has not had sufficient time to evaporate, or the absence of an effective vapour barrier used in 'on ground' construction.

### Construction Moisture

Concrete substrate moisture is a significant problem which can be either temporary, caused by the original construction procedures or can be a continuing problem, caused by ground moisture traveling up through the slab on grade.

In new construction the excess water in the concrete needs time and conditions which allow it to dry out before installing floor coverings. Placement methods and curing compounds of the concrete will have a big effect on the moisture evaporation rate, not to be confused with the curing rate of the concrete surface. Ambient temperature, humidity and the environment are also contributing factors in the drying time of concrete.

Prior to laying any Signature Floors *Engineered Timber*, it is essential that all free water, which can affect adhesion, be allowed to evaporate from the base or be treated with a moisture mitigation system. Please contact Signature Floors for further advice in this situation.

### Existing Concrete

Existing concrete and as described in BCA, if laid directly to ground, must contain an effective DPM (Damp proof membrane). If one is not present or is suspect, a suitable surface DPM should be applied.

A DPM, as the name suggests, is typically a waterproof barrier in the form of a thick plastic sheeting designed to prevent the passage of moisture through it. These are normally used beneath a foundation concrete slab.

The BCA introduced the compulsory use of DPM's and is recommended to treat all 'on ground' concrete sub-floors. Preparatory works should be carried out in accordance with proprietary materials that are being used.

In some instances, a cementitious smoothing compound of at least 3mm thickness should be applied prior to the installation of the *Engineered Timber*. The smoothing underlayment supplier will provide details on which product within their range must be used to suit the end use application and subfloor construction, together with details of which primer should be used.

### Power Floated Concrete

A power trowel (also known as a "power float", "helicopter", "trowel machine" or "whirlybird") is a piece of light construction equipment used by construction companies and contractors, to apply a smooth finish to concrete slabs. Concrete substrates that are 'over worked' with a power trowel can create a crust on the surface of the concrete that slows the drying time of the concrete and creates a smooth dense surface that is difficult to bond to, due to the impervious nature of the surface. It is recommended that highly burnished concrete surfaces are mechanically prepared with the use of a concrete grinder or shot blasted to remove the top surface and then made good.

### Curing Agents

Surface hardeners or curing agents should not be used with power floated concrete, as these can also impair the adhesion of the floorcovering and should be mechanically removed.

### Moisture Barriers

Signature floors does not recommend the use of penetrative moisture barrier systems that cannot be tested for application or performance, or do not have the ability to contain high surface pH. Signature Floors only recommends the use of topical moisture and pH barrier systems, such as epoxy and polyurethane.



FACTS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FLOORING INSTALLATIONS – OVER CONCRETE	
1.	The relative humidity cannot be known simply by visually inspecting a sub-floor and coming to the conclusion it is dry by sight and/or touch.
2.	All concrete regardless of age or grade-level emits some degree of moisture and must be tested prior to installation.
3.	Signature Floors will only recognise the in-situ probe RH moisture testing as their primary criterion for determining moisture content of a concrete substrate, since it is the only quantitative measurement of moisture.
4.	Surface tests do not comply with current testing standards, and are only subjective, at best, in their interpretation.
5.	Signature Floors does not warrant against substrate moisture, and recognise the limits in <b>Chart 1 on page 1</b> as the maximum allowable amount of moisture content, but this must also be compatible with any proprietary materials used for the installation.

SUB-FLOOR PREPARATION

The finished appearance of a floor covering will only be as good as the quality of the base over which it is installed. Any irregularities in the sub-floor will show through the finished floor. Careful sub-floor preparation is vital for an excellent floor appearance and good installation. The sub-floor must be hard, flat, smooth, clean, dry, and free from defects, contaminants and fit for purpose.

Concrete

Must be constructed according to local building codes, must be dry to less than 75% RH (relative humidity) when tested to ASTM F2170 or 5.5% moisture on floating installations when tested using electrical resistance. Concrete sub-floor must be level to +/- 3mm in any 2 metre span in any direction, a damp proof membrane, grinding and levelling with a suitable compound may be needed to achieve these requirements.

A suitable levelling compound can be used to ensure that no irregularities show through to the surface of the finished floor. However, the selection of suitable materials, including smoothing and levelling compounds and any ancillary products is dependent upon the end use of the completed flooring, and must be agreed by the supplier of the preparative materials and the flooring contractor.

Any proprietary materials used for floor preparation must be used in accordance with the manufacturers' recommended instructions.

In all cases, the sub-floor must be sufficiently dry, and the RH (relative humidity) checked to ensure it is not greater than that of any proprietary materials that are being used when tested in accordance with ASTM F2170.

Timber

Must be constructed according to local building codes, must be structurally sound and free from deflection and must be dry to less than 12% moisture. Loose or noisy boards should be fixed prior to commencement. The timber sub-floor shall be flat and firm (no bounce) to a maximum of +/- 3mm in any 2 metre span or 1.25mm over a 250mm span in any direction. Sanding and filling with a suitable compound may be required to achieve these requirements. A minimum of 450mm of unobstructed cross flow ventilation is necessary to ensure no build-up of moisture below the surface.

- Underlay: All floating installations require Signature Floors Luxelay underlay, incorporating a 2mm acoustic closed cell construction and 200-micron moisture barrier.
- Installations where the subfloor is not flat and firm, will require an overlay of a 20mm structural grade plywood. (Any loose or squeaking boards must be fixed before installing the plywood).
- Existing tongue and groove subfloors require the new timber flooring be installed 90 degrees to the existing flooring. If not possible, the installation of a 6mm (minimum) structural grade plywood is required. Important to ensure a 14-15mm perimeter gap is accommodated when installing the structural plywood. Plywood must be nailed, screwed, or stapled to existing subfloor.
- Direct adhesive fix installations over an existing tongue and groove subfloor will require an overlay of Masonite where the floor is flat and firm and in good condition.

General

Where existing timber, plywood or particleboard subfloors are to be used as a substrate, worn, rough, cupped, or warped surfaces shall be sanded or filled, but must retain structural adequacy. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to re-nail the old floor or to repair it by replacing the worn and unsound sections.

Most smoothing compounds are unsuitable for applying to timber bases due to the movement of the base. Seek advice from the smoothing underlayment manufacturer for the correct grade of product for your specific application.

Existing adhesives must be mechanically removed.

OTHER SURFACES

EXISTING COVERINGS AND FINISHES

Magnesite

Magnesite is made from calcined (or burnt) magnesite and various organic and inorganic fillers such as wood, sawdust, ground silica and talc, mixed together with a solution of magnesium chloride, magnesite flooring is extremely rich in chlorides, resulting in problems of sweating, diffusion of chloride ions into the concrete substrate, metal corrosion and high absorbency, usually seen as lumps appearing below the existing floor coverings or cracks in the floor tiles.

Signature Floors recommends that any magnesite screed be uplifted, and the substrate mechanically prepared prior to the installation of new floor coverings.

Terrazzo

The floor must be sound and firmly fixed, and any loose or powdery material removed from the joints. The surface should be prepared with a light grind to remove any surface contaminants and any cracks cleaned out and filled with a suitable resin bonded cement/sand mixture. In most instances, a cementitious smoothing or levelling compound of at least 3mm thickness must then be applied to provide surface porosity for acrylic adhesives prior to the installation of the vinyl floorcovering.

Screed Bases

Sand/cement screed bases are not a suitable substrate for the installation of floor coverings and a suitable levelling compound should be applied.

Ceramic Tiles

Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* is not suitable for use over a ceramic floor substrate.

Metal Bases

Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* is not suitable for use over a metal base substrate.

Painted or Epoxy Coated Floors

Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* is not suitable for use over a painted or epoxy coated substrate.

UNDERFLOOR HEATING

Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* flooring is suitable for installation over hydronic underfloor heating when they are installed in a controlled environment using a direct adhesive fix installation only.

- The radiant heat system must be hydronic (using warm water).
- Follow the hydro water-based heating system manufactures operating instructions.
- Prior to installing *Engineered Timber* over a newly installed heating system, the system should be run at maximum capacity to remove any residual moisture from the cementitious topping.
- The heating system should be turned off 48 hours prior to installation.
- Once the flooring is installed, the hydronic heating system should be turned on and the temperature increased at 2°C per day until desired temperature is reached.
- Ensure the radiant heat system does not exceed 27°C at all times.
- Excessive heat, rapid heating, and/or failure to maintain humidity levels between 40-60% may cause cracking, cupping and other forms of product failure and will void the warranty.
- *Engineered Timber* flooring is not warranted over electric radiant floor heat systems.

TRANSITIONS

EXPANSION JOINTS

Expansion joints are placed in concrete substrates to allow for expansion and contraction of concrete during and after placement. They are designed as a movement joint and as such must never have floor coverings installed on them without an expansion joint cover. It is important that these joints extend through the floorcovering.

Never lay Signature Floors products over expansion joints.

Proprietary expansion joint covers are available which blend with the floorcovering and disguise the joint. Some are made of vinyl that incorporates a flexible portion and are welded to the abutting vinyl to form an impervious layer. Other types are a combination of aluminium and PVC, which again contains a flexible section.

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Correct treatment at expansion joints is also essential if the floor is going to last and perform in a safe and hygienic manner. We recommend that expansion joints are covered using either a PVC expansion joint cover, or a cover with a PVC insert.

Filling the expansion joint with sealant which is not specifically designed for expansion joint filling or floor smoothing underlayment will lead to floor failure and is not recommended by Signature Floors .

### Edge Trims

In many of the areas where Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* is installed, other types of floorcoverings will also be used. The junction between the Signature Floors flooring and these other types of floorcoverings is a potential weak point, if not treated properly. Correct installation minimises problems such as trip hazards and damage to timber.

The use of proprietary patching and levelling compounds is recommended to make the transition between floor surfaces smooth and gradual.

### Ceramic Tile Transition

In installations where the *Engineered Timber* joins with ceramic tiles or the like, it is important that a smooth transition is achieved at the junction. Aluminium edge trims are recommended for this purpose. They enable a flush cut with the trim, while providing an excellent guide to apply patching and levelling compounds.

### Carpet Transition

It is important that the junction between *Engineered Timber* and broadloom carpet is clearly visible and that any trip hazard is minimised by using edging strips. A variety of edging strips are available for this junction. The relevant manufacturers can supply further advice on installation and use of these types of trims.

### Diminishing Strips

Diminishing strips should be used at all exposed edges of Signature Floors *Engineered Timber* when they are not abutting another flooring material to minimise trip hazards.

## ADHESIVE

Signature Floors recommends the use of Bostik ULTRASET 2 IN 1 adhesive and moisture barrier control combined with their ancillary products, or an adhesive of similar structure as recommended and warranted by the adhesive manufacturer.

The list of Signature Floors approved adhesives can be found here: [Recommended Adhesives List](#). There is no single adhesive that is suitable for all types of *Engineered Timber*.

### Application of Adhesive

If the subfloor is porous, it should be primed using a primer compatible with the adhesive, as recommended by the adhesive manufacturer.

Signature Floors Australia recommends the use of a notched trowel to be used to apply the adhesive. Please refer to manufacturers guidelines on selecting the correct size trowel.

It should be noted that Signature Floors does not approve any adhesive application methods such as direct spraying that cannot guarantee the quantity of adhesive applied.

### Removal of Excess Adhesive

Ideally all excess adhesive should be removed as work proceeds. Water-based adhesive can be easily removed using a damp cloth, before it dries. For removal of specialist adhesives follow the manufacturer's guidelines. Dried adhesives are more difficult to remove, please refer to adhesive manufacturer's guidelines on the correct procedure and equipment to remove excess adhesive.

Always test a trial area first in an unnoticeable area, care should be taken to prevent any reaction or damage to prefinished timber coatings.

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### Pre-Installation

Once material has been acclimatised and the installer is happy that installation is ready to go ahead, planks should be checked for obvious defects in suitable lighting. Signature Floors will not be liable for rectification costs for material installed with obvious defects. Ensure the correct colour and quantity of material has been ordered and that all material is from the same batch. Skirtings should be removed if possible and all door jambs should be undercut to allow the flooring to move freely.

## INSTALLATION OF ENGINEERED TIMBER

SITE LAYOUT	
1.	<i>Engineered Timber</i> flooring should generally be installed lengthways to the longest area.
2.	<i>Engineered Timber</i> flooring should generally be installed with the first row along the longest straightest wall.
3.	Start installation in the top left-hand corner, lay the planks end to end leaving recommended expansion gap
4.	Once the area and commencement point has been calculated, snap a chalk line to mark first three rows of boards.

When cutting *Engineered Timber* planks avoid unnecessary chipping or splintering by having the decorative side 'surface up' when using a handsaw or drop saw, keep the decorative side facing down when using a jigsaw.



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### Engineered Timber Installation Methods

#### DIRECT FIX INSTALLATION

1. Subfloor surface must be dry, flat and firm to a maximum of +/- 3mm over a 2 metre span or 1.25mm over a 250mm span in any direction. Use of a 2 metre straight edge is recommended.

Subfloor must be clean and free of wax, paint, oil, and debris. Sweep entire area to be installed prior to installation.

Terrazzo should be lightly sanded and cleaned with mineral spirits prior to spreading adhesive.

Timber subfloors must be structurally sound. Plywood (OSB APA rated, minimum of 3/4" 19mm thick). Moisture should not exceed 12% and the difference in moisture between subfloor and flooring should not exceed 3%.

Concrete subfloors must be dry flat and firm. Slab must be dry to less than 75% RH (relative humidity) when tested to ASTM F2170. Moisture content must be 2.75% or less when measured with a Capacitance Moisture Meter.

Signature Floors recommends the use of Bostik ULTRASET 2 IN 1 adhesive and moisture barrier control combined with their ancillary products, or an adhesive of similar structure as recommended and warranted by the adhesive manufacturer. A list of Signature Floors approved adhesives can be found here: [Recommended Adhesives List](#)

2. Plank flooring should generally be installed lengthways to the longest area, measure the width of the space and ensure the final piece of plank will be wider than 75mm. If this is not the case adjust the starting row to suit.
3. Set out preparation is critical for a successful installation when direct bonding timber. A dry lay is recommended for the first 2-3 rows ensuring best use of board off-cuts and product feature.

Fit the first row along the longest straightest wall. Starting in the top left-hand corner, lay the planks end to end leaving a 10mm expansion gap. Cut the end piece allowing for the expansion gap. If the offcut piece is longer than 300mm this can be used to start the second row and will help facilitate the recommended staggered effect.

Once the area and commencement point has been calculated snap a chalk line to mark first three rows of boards.

The first row may need to be adjusted where the starting wall is not straight, the board should be scribed and cut ensuring the required expansion allowance is provided along the full length of the wall. Note: Walls in the room may not be parallel.

Use spacers to allow for the 10mm expansion around all fixtures. Spacers will also assist in holding the boards in place on the first row

Ensure the groove side is facing the wall on the first row.

When spreading adhesive, only spread to the edge of board as marked by chalk line.

Use only as much adhesive as can be used during the open time of the adhesive.

Follow adhesive manufacturers guidelines in relation to spread rate and cure time.

Ensure substrate has 100% coverage of adhesive using recommended trowel size as per adhesive manufacturer's instructions.  
**Refer Figure 1.1.**

When engaging the boards, it is necessary to position the tongue and groove together and press the board into the adhesive as significant sliding action will spread the adhesive more thinly, lowering its height, which can result in poor bonding between the floorboard and subfloor. **Refer Figure 1.2.**

Boards should be placed firmly into position ensuring full bonding with adhesive. Planks may be weighted to assist with bonding if required. If at any time during your installation you feel the planks are going offline or opening, use the strap clamps and weights to hold them while the glue dries.  
**Refer Figure 2.7.**

4. Continue this way ensuring you allow a 10mm expansion gap around all fittings including pipes, pillars, frames, and fixtures.  
**Refer Figure 1.3, 1.4.**
5. Measure the cut size for the final row and ensure you allow for the expansion gap. While fitting the final row, under door frame or architraves you may need the pull bar to ease the piece into place.

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6. Immediately clean any spills or excess adhesive from surface of flooring during installation. Follow adhesive manufactures recommendations.
7. Direct adhesive fix installations have more resilience to expansion, allowing for a more flexible approach to the placement of expansion subject to site and environment conditions up to 10 lineal metres in width and 15 lineal metres length may be accommodated. Compartmentalisation is required for installations incorporating adjoining areas, normally placed under a doorway. Please contact your place of purchase or your Signature representative for further clarification.
8. When fitting skirting boards or other mouldings they should be fixed to the wall not the flooring, do not press down too hard so the floor is restricted in moving as this can restrict adhesive bond between the flooring and subfloor.
9. Foot traffic should be kept to an absolute minimum until the adhesive is fully cured, follow adhesive manufactures recommendations. Wait a minimum of 24 hours before placing furniture on flooring and resuming normal traffic.

Figure 1.1

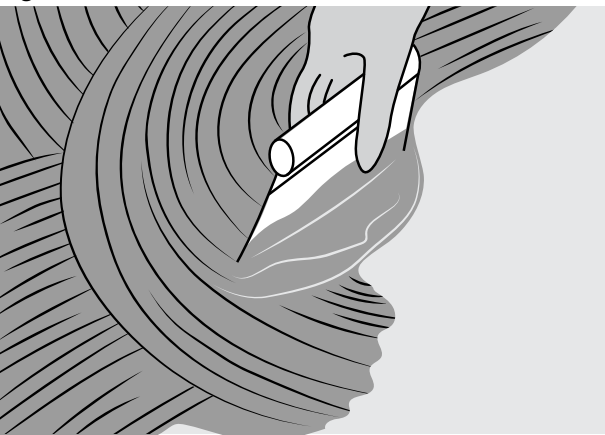


Figure 1.2

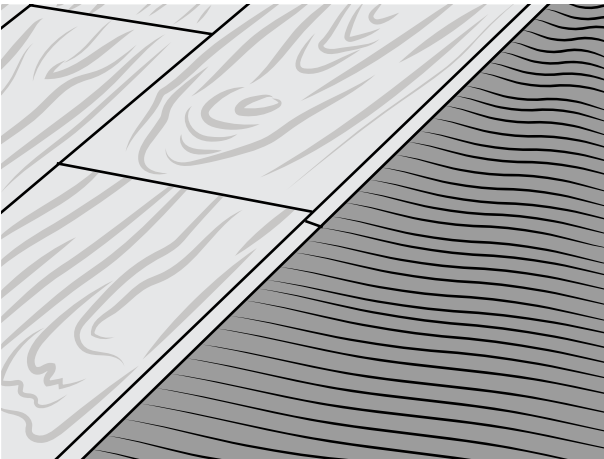


Figure 1.3

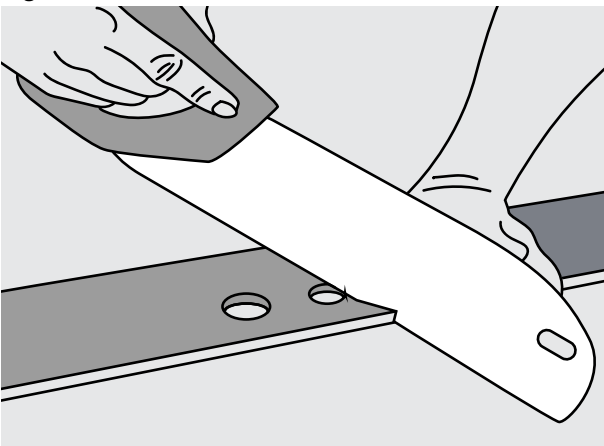
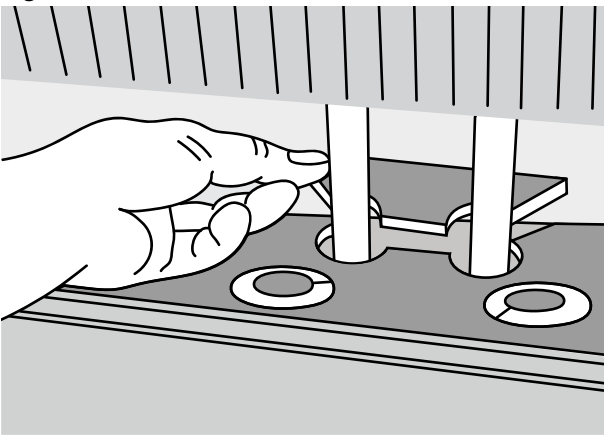


Figure 1.4



FLOATING FIX INSTALLATION

1. Plank flooring should generally be installed lengthways to the longest area, measure the width of the room, and ensure the final piece of plank will be wider than 75mm. If this is not the case adjust the starting row to suit. Install the underlay sealed at the joins and taped with a vapour tight tape or by the use of the supplied joiner. Allow the edges to run longer and wider than the floor area to encapsulate the finished installation.
2. Fit the first row along the longest straightest wall. Starting in the top left-hand corner, lay the planks end to end leaving a 12-14mm expansion gap with the groove side facing the wall. Use the spacer wedges in the expansion gap to keep the planks in line. Cut the end piece allowing for the expansion gap. If the offcut piece is longer than 300mm this can be used to start the second row and will help facilitate the recommended staggered effect. If there is any doubt as to the dryness of the sub-floor with a floating installation, it is recommended to install 200uM builder's plastic with all joins sealed with a waterproof tape to act as an additional moisture barrier.
3. Fit the second row without glue. Once you are satisfied, the planks are straight and everything is in line, you may proceed to glue the planks together. Disassemble the planks ensuring you remember their order.
4. Using the cross linked PVA adhesive, apply a bead to the top edge of the groove to the planks from the first row. Re-fit the planks using the spacing wedges ensuring they are fitted together snug but not too tight. Use the tapping block and hammer if needed.
5. Continue this way ensuring you allow a 12-14mm expansion gap around all fixtures and fittings until you reach the opposite side of the room.
6. Measure the cut size for the final row and ensure you allow for the expansion gap. While fitting the final board, you may need the pull bar to ease the board into place.
7. If at any time during your installation you feel the planks are going offline or opening, use the strap clamps to hold them while the glue dries. **Refer Figure 2.7.**
8. Once you have finished the final row cut the underlay to the height of the boards.

9. Fit skirting or scotia to cover the expansion gap.

Skirting/moulding should not be forced down on top of flooring under any circumstances. This can cause a pinching effect, restricting product movement and contributes to product failure. When fitting skirting boards or other mouldings they should be fixed to the wall not the flooring.

10. Silicon/sealant should not be used to seal or conceal gaps. This can cause a pinching effect, restricting product movement and contributes to product failure.

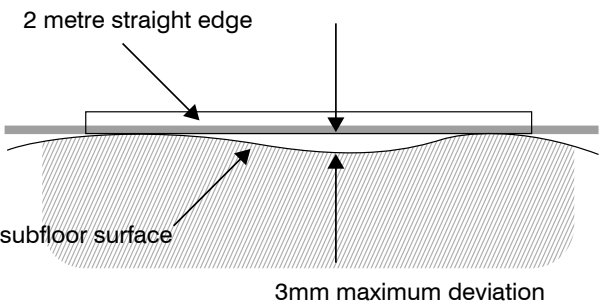


Figure 2.1

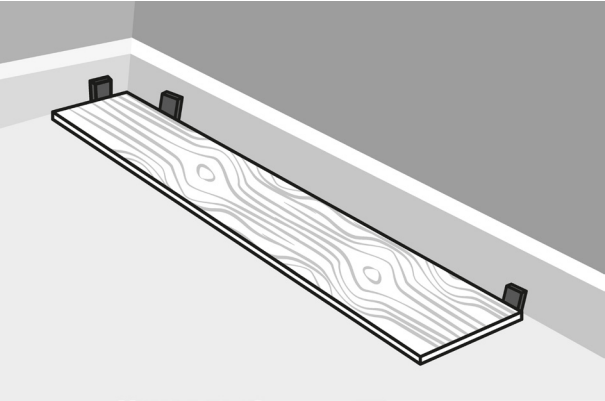


Figure 2. 2 and 2. 3

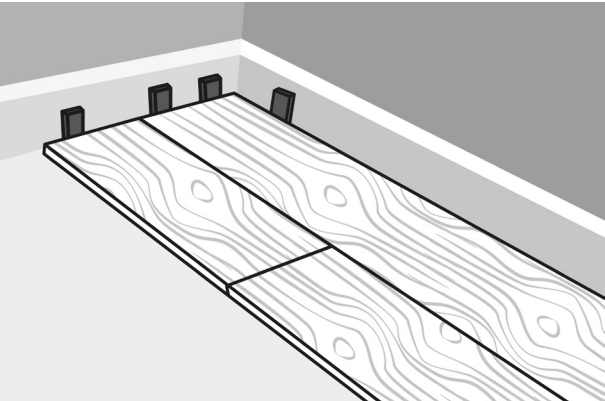


Figure 2.4

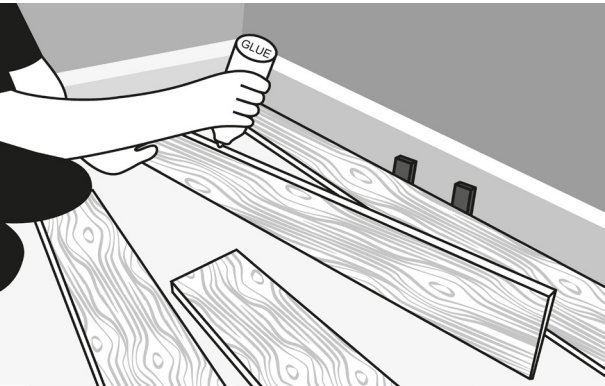


Figure 2.6

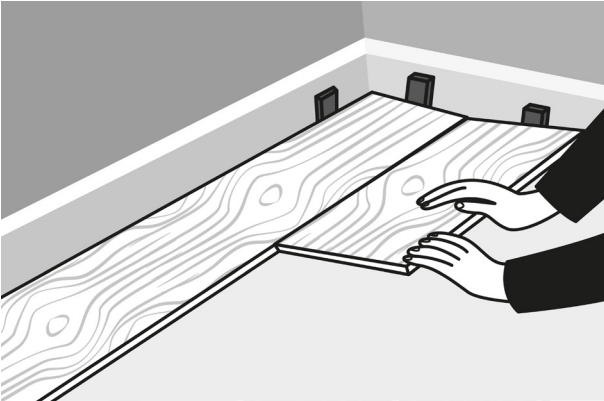


Figure 2.7

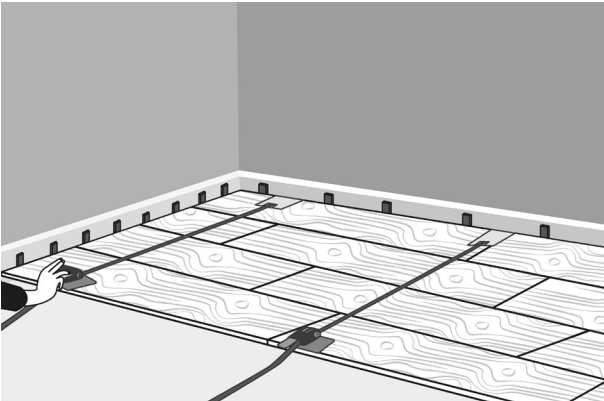
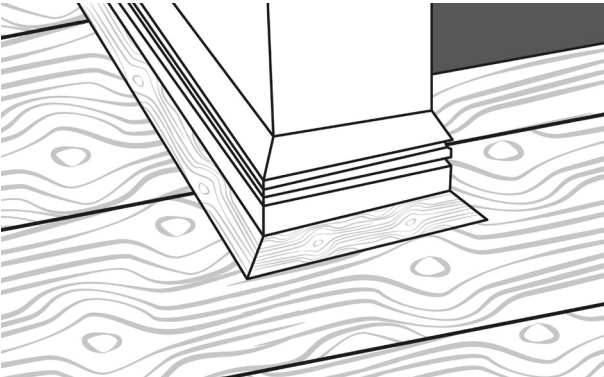


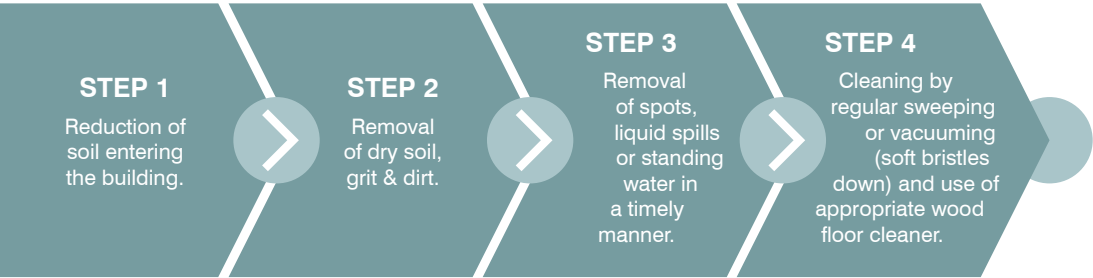
Figure 2.9



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POST INSTALLATION CARE:



**Stair Installation**

To maintain safety and product performance all stairs should be glued direct to tread and riser. Stairs should be installed with a suitable adhesive from the Signature Floors [Recommended Adhesives List](#). Adhesive should be applied with 100% coverage of tread and riser. Trowel size may vary subject to site conditions. Follow adhesive manufacturer instructions.

Surface should be firm, flat and free from any contaminants including paint or chemical residue. Surface should be level +/- 1mm over 200mm in any direction. Ensure stair nosing is fitted flush with stair tread edge.

## **Engineered Timber – Installation Guide**

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