



# Eastern Hardwoods

## Installation Instructions

### Installers and Owners:

Read all instructions completely and carefully before beginning any project. Final product inspection is the responsibility of the installer/owner prior to installation. Installer must use reasonable selectivity and hold out or cut off pieces with obvious defects, whatever the cause. Five percent (5%) must be added to actual square footage needed as allowance for cutting waste and errors in manufacturing. If an individual piece appears to be doubtful as to grade or manufacture, the installer should not use the piece of flooring. **Installation implies acceptance of flooring.**

### CAUTION: WOOD DUST

**Sawing, sanding and machining wood products can produce wood dust. Airborne wood dust can cause respiratory, eye and skin irritation. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified wood dust as a nasal carcinogen in humans.**

### Tools:

The following tools will be helpful, if not necessary for proper installation: moisture meter, mallet, table or circular saw, chalk-line, tape measure, hammer, drill with 1/16" drill bit, nailset, and jigsaw or handsaw. A good quality power nailer in proper working condition will greatly speed installation.

### Job Site Conditions:

In a new construction, hardwood flooring should be one of the last items installed. All work involving water or moisture (plumbing, acoustical ceilings, dry wall taping, etc.) should be completed prior to wood flooring being installed. Heating and air systems should be fully operating maintaining a consistent room temperature at 16°C to 27°C (60-80° F) and a constant relative humidity of 40 to 55%.

Flooring should not be delivered until the building has been closed in and cement work, plastering, painting and other materials are completely dry. Concrete and plaster should be cured and at least 60 to 90 days old. Check basements and underfloor crawl space to be sure that they are dry and well ventilated to avoid damage caused by moisture.

For proper acclimation, flooring should be at the job site at least 72 hours prior to installation or as long as necessary to meet minimum installation requirements for moisture content. **Acclimation within a closed or sealed carton may not be adequate due to lack of air movement, especially in dryer climates. Please take appropriate measures to ensure proper acclimation, which may**

**entail removal of outer plastic wrapping or opening of cartons and peeling back of interior plastic wrapping if packaged in this manner.** (Do not open the ends of cartons only, as this can lead to tapered ends of individual flooring strips or planks).

Handle with care. Do not stand on ends. Store flooring in a dry place being sure to provide at least a four-inch air space under and around cartons.

Do not store directly on concrete or near outside walls. Cartons should be placed in the installation area.

The installation site should have consistent room temperature at 16°C to 27°C (60-80° F) and a constant relative humidity of 40 to 55% for a minimum of 5 days prior to installation of wood flooring.

Note: The moisture content of the subfloor and wood flooring should be checked by an appropriate method. There should be no more than 4% (2% on planks 5" and wider) moisture content difference between properly acclimated wood flooring and subflooring materials, taking into consideration normal living conditions and equilibrium moisture content (EMC).

**IMPORTANT:** ¾" solid flooring is for on or above grade installation only. ¾" solid flooring cannot be installed over radiant heat.

#### **Approved Subfloor Types:**

- 1.APA approved ¾" or thicker exterior plywood.
- 2.¾" (23/32") OSB on 16" center floor joists properly nailed.
- 3.Concrete slab with additional approved wood sleepers and screed system. (See NWFA's guidelines)
- 4.Wood Floors (if installed at proper angle only).
- 5.Resilient tile and sheet vinyl if installed over an above mentioned and approved subfloor.
- 6.Particle board is not an acceptable subfloor.

#### **Subfloors must be:**

- Clean – scraped or sanded, swept, free of wax, grease, paint, oil and other debris
- Smooth/Flat – within 1/8" on 6'. Sand high areas or joints, fill low areas
- Structurally Sound – nail or screw any loose areas that squeak. Replace any damaged subflooring or underlayment
- Dry – an 8 to 10% moisture content is ideal and must never exceed 13% prior to installation of wood flooring.

Remember: All moisture testing must be before wood has been acclimated 72 hours and job site requirements met.

Wood Substrates: Test the moisture of the wood substrate using a calibrated moisture meter approved for testing wood moisture according to the meter manufacturer. The reading should not exceed 13%, or read more than a 4% difference than moisture content of products being installed. (maximum 2% for planks 3 1/4" and wider)

Concrete Slabs (regardless of existing floor covering): Must have a minimum of ¾" plywood installed as a screed/sleeper system with a minimum of 6mil polyfilm vapor barrier secured to the slab for solid hardwood to be nailed or stapled only. Engineered may be glued directly to the concrete.

All concrete subfloors must be tested for moisture content prior to installation of the hardwood flooring. The moisture content of the concrete subfloor must not exceed 3 lbs/1000 sq. ft emissions or contain a Relative Humidity of 75% or less, referring to ASTM F2170.

Below are methods to test if moisture is present in the concrete subfloor:

- 1) Use an approved calibrated concrete moisture meter as a preliminary measurement for moisture such as: Delmhorst Moisture Meter Model G Tramex Concrete Encounter. Follow manufacturer's specific calibration requirements. Generally, this type of testing will only give you an idea if moisture may be present. This does not imply a safe reading to install.
- 2) Perform a polyfilm test. Tape down 2' x 2' polyfilm squares (a clear garbage bag or plastic drop cloth will do) in several places on the floor. Wait 24 – 48 hours, and then check for the appearance of condensation on the inside of the bag or plastic for a darkening on the concrete subfloor. Either occurrence signals the likely presence of excess moisture, requiring a mandatory calcium chloride test or in-situ RH test ASTM C2170..

Once you have determined the moisture content, a test must be performed to determine the moisture and alkalinity emissions through the concrete slab.

- Perform a calcium chloride test according to the manufacturer's instructions. The maximum acceptable reading is 3-lbs. /24 hours/1000 sq. ft. for moisture emissions or RH in-situ probe test have a max of 75%.
- Perform a pH test according to the manufacturer's instructions. A pH reading of 6-9 on a pH number scale of 1 – 14 is acceptable.
- If the test results exceed this number the concrete slab should be sealed with appropriate sealers to correct those emissions as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

**Installation on plywood and wood substrates: Do not install over particleboard.** Subfloor should be constructed of 5/8" or thicker plywood when installing directly over minimum 2 x 10 floor joists 16" on center. Plywood sheets should be laid with grained outer plies at right angles to joists; adjacent rows staggered four feet and nailed every 6" along each joist with 7D or larger nails. When installing directly over old wood or strip floor, sand any high spots, re-nail old floor to eliminate squeaks or loose boards, and install new planks at right angle (perpendicular) to the old floor, or over lay old floor with 1/4" plywood underlayment. Leave a 1/8" gap at the edges and nail with 7D or larger nails every 6" at the edges and every 12" in both directions and through the interior of each sheet of plywood. The moisture content of the wood or plywood should not exceed 13%.

### **Job Site Preparation**

- Acclimate product for 72 hours prior to installation
- Verify subfloor is level to within 1/8" in 6', and structurally sound. Repair as needed
- Undercut door casings
- Remove any existing wall base, shoe molding, quarter round and doorway thresholds
- Cover the clean surface, wall to wall, with 15lb. asphalt saturated felt paper, lapped 2" to 4" at edge seams. Use of felt paper is optional and will not prevent squeaks or any other noise reduction

### **Getting Started:**

For optimal visual appeal, install parallel with the longest wall. However, to reduce subfloor sagging, the floor should be installed perpendicular to the flooring beams unless the subfloor has been reinforced. Installation should start from the straightest wall, usually an outside wall whenever possible.

In at least two places, at least 18" from the corner, measure out equal distance from the starting wall and snap a chalk line. This measurement must be the sum of the width of the flooring plus an additional  $\frac{3}{4}$ " to allow for expansion space and the width of the tongue. Allow  $\frac{1}{2}$ " expansion when installing floating floors.

### **Installation – First & Second Rows:**

For the first two rows, use boards that are among the longest and straightest. Use the widest plank for the first row for random and alternate width products. Align tongue of first row on chalk line. The groove should be facing the starting wall. Pre-drill  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from back (groove) edge, 1" – 2" from each end, and at 6" intervals when possible. Fasten using 4 or 6d finishing nails or 1" pneumatic finish nails/brads. Countersink the nails.

Pre-drill and blind-nail at a 45° angle through the tongue of the first row every 1" – 2" from the ends and spaced in 8" to 10" intervals. To ensure flush engagement of groove with the following row(s), countersink the nails. Continue blind nailing using this method with following rows until stapler can be used. Alternatively use a pneumatic finish nailer and install nails/brads at the same intervals with a minimum length of 1 1/2"-2". To ensure the desired overall appearance, stagger end-joints of adjacent rows at a minimum of 4" to 6" when possible.

### **Installing the floor:**

Always use the recommended fastener for the specific product being installed. Use a minimum 1 1/2" fastener recommended by the stapler manufacturer 1" to 2" (2.5 – 5cm) from the ends spaced at 8" to 10" intervals.

Set compressor at 70 PSI. If tongue damage occurs, lower air pressure. Fasten several sacrificial boards to the floor. Check for surface damage, air pressure setting, tongue damage, edge blistering, etc., before proceeding. Make all adjustments and corrections before installation begins. Once proper adjustments have been made, remove and destroy the boards. Work from several cartons when installing the floor to vary the depth and color of the overall look. The last 1 to 2 rows will need to be face-on the tongue side, following the nailing pattern used for the first row.

### **Glue-Down Installations (General Information):**

The maximum adhesive working times for urethane adhesive is 60 minutes. When not in use, keep the adhesive container tightly closed to prevent thickening. Thickening will cause difficulty in spreading the adhesive. Open times and curing times of ALL adhesives vary dependent upon subfloor porosity, air movement, humidity and room temperature. Urethane adhesive has a shortened working time in high humidity environments, whereas the working time for polymeric resin adhesives will be lengthened. In areas of low humidity, open time will be longer with urethane adhesives and shorter with polymeric resin adhesives. Adjust the amount of adhesive spread on the subfloor accordingly. The adhesive should not be applied if subfloor or room temperature is below 60° F (16° C). Working time will vary depending on job site conditions.

Hold trowel at a minimum 45° angle firmly against the subfloor to obtain a 40 to 60 ft. per gallon spread rate. The trowel will leave ridges of adhesive and very little adhesive between the ridges. This will allow you to still see the chalk lines between the ridges and provide the recommended spread rate. For additional application instructions, follow the recommendations on the adhesive container. Proper ventilation within the room must be provided. An electric fan is helpful.

## **Spread the Adhesive (Glue-Down Installations):**

Spread sufficient amounts of the recommended adhesive with the recommended trowel in an area that can be covered in 60 minutes. If necessary, nail a sacrificial row with 1" nails on the dry side of your chalk line to help hold the first row in place.

NOTE: Avoid installing on the surface of the flooring. If necessary, distribute weight using a kneeler board.

## **Installing the Floor (Glue-Down Installations):**

Use the longest, straightest boards available for the first two rows. For random and alternate width products, use the widest plank for the first row. The first row of planks should be installed with the edge of the groove lined up on the chalk line. The tongue should be facing the starting wall. The first row must be aligned and seated in the adhesive, as all additional rows will be pushed back to this original row. Remove tongue to allow for expansion space, if necessary, on the row adjoining the wall.

When installing products wider than 3-1/4", apply a bead of recommended wood glue to all of the end grooves prior to installing adhesive. When installing pieces, engage the end-joint first, as close to the side (long) tongue and groove as possible, then slide together tightly to engage the side (long) joint tongue and groove. To avoid adhesive bleed-through and memory pull-back, avoid sliding pieces through the adhesive as much as possible when placing them in position.

During the installation occasionally remove a piece of flooring from the subfloor and inspect the back for proper adhesive transfer. Adequate adhesive transfer is necessary to ensure sufficient holding strength. If the adhesive skins over and fails to transfer, remove and spread new adhesive to achieve proper bonding. NOTE: Clean adhesive from the surface of the floor frequently, using the recommended adhesive cleaner. Urethane adhesives become extremely difficult to remove when cured. Do not use tape before adhesive is removed from the surface. Use clean towels, changed frequently, to prevent hazed and adhesive residue.

Check for a tight fit between all edges and ends of each plank. End-joints of adjacent rows should be staggered 4" to 6" when possible, to ensure a more favorable overall appearance. To eliminate minor shifting or gapping of product during installation, use house wrap tape to hold the planks together. After installation is complete, remove all of the house wrap tape from the surface of the newly installed flooring. Do not let the tape remain on the flooring longer than 24 hours. Avoid the use of masking or duct tape, which leaves an adhesive residue and may damage the finish. If necessary, use weights to flatten boards with bows until adhesive cures, in order to prevent hollow spots. Boards that cannot be flattened should be cut in length to reduce the bow, or not used. Be sure not to spread adhesive too far ahead of your work area. Complete the installation using the same technique for the remainder of the floor. Avoid heavy foot traffic on the floor for at least 24 hours. Lift the furniture or fixtures back into place after 24 hours.

## **General Information for Floating Floors:**

Floating floors can be installed over any structurally sound surface that meets or exceeds local building codes. Any width of flooring can be installed in this manner but wider widths are preferred. Plan the floor layout (in width) to avoid having to rip the last row narrower than 1". This may require ripping the first row to assure the last row is at least the minimum width. Allow 1/2" expansion around all vertical obstructions.

## **Installing the Underlayment (Floating Installations Only)**

Install the underlayment in the same direction the hardwood flooring is to be installed. Extend the underlayment a few inches up the wall. Trim excess prior to installing trim or moldings. The floating floor underlayment already has double-sided tape for ease of taping the precut overlapping seams if a non-adhesive underlayment is used; tape all seams with exterior plastic tape such as TYPAR wrap tape.

## **Installing the Floor (Floating Installations Only - NOT Click)**

Select the first board. All installations should begin with the groove side against the wall using the longest boards available. Apply a continuous 1/8" glue bead to the inside bottom of the groove on the end of the board. Do not apply glue to the groove side at this time. Products with the end tongue on the left should be installed right to left, opposite tongues should be left to right. If a sacrificial board was used DO NOT glue the first row to it. Complete the first row. Cut the last board allowing for 1/2" clearance between the wall and the floor. (Use the remaining end of the cut board as a starter board for any row following row three).

Install a wedge on the end of the board between the hardwood flooring and the wall, allowing 1/2" expansion space. Avoid installation of any boards shorter than 16" in the first four rows. Use a pull bar to pull the last board into place from the opposite end. Install wedges into the gap and tighten. If any glue gets on the surface of the flooring, wipe off immediately with a clean damp cloth. Cut or use a shorter board for the first board of the second row. Start the second row by applying 1/8" bead along the inside bottom of the end and side groove of the new board.

Install the first board of row two. Apply a bead of glue to the inside bottom of the end and side groove of the next board and install. When installing boards together, use a tapping block against the tongue, not the groove. Tap the boards into place by tapping with a hammer on the tapping block. DO NOT tap on the edge directly with the hammer. Complete the second through fourth rows using this technique. Insert wedges on the ends, as necessary, to restrain the movement of the floor.

In the remaining rows, stagger joints 4" to 6" apart. Install the rest of the floor. Be sure all joints are tight. Use spacers on the long and butt walls. Use a tapping bar to tighten the joints from the ends.

Complete the Installation (All Installation methods):

- Remove all tape and clean the floor with the recommended hardwood flooring cleaner
- Trim all underlayment (floating only) and install or re-install any transition pieces, reducer strips, T-moldings, thresholds, bases and/or quarter round moldings that may be needed. These products are available pre-finished to blend with your flooring. Nail moldings into the wall, not the floor
- Inspect the floor, filling all minor gaps with the appropriate blended filler
- If the floor is to be covered, use a breathable material such as cardboard. Do not cover with plastic
- Leave warranty and floor care information with the owner. Advise them of the product name and code number of the flooring they've purchased
- To prevent surface damage, avoid rolling heavy furniture and appliances on the floor. Use plywood, hardboard or appliance lifts if necessary. Use protective castors/castor cups or felt pads on the legs of furniture to prevent damage to the flooring.



