

## Floor preparation and installation information

### Introduction

Floor Core products represent the newest generation of high-quality resilient wood and tile looking flooring. It has a unique interlocking-edge design for simple installation. Minimal trimming is involved, just score and snap the plank. The wear layer has additives embedded within the finish that makes the product more durable and resistant to wear or scratches.

**Adequate floor preparation is crucial prior to the installation of a hybrid floor. If issues occur relating to flooring performance it can often be attributed to insufficient floor preparation prior to an installation.**

Floor Core Hybrid is a fully waterproof floating floor which includes excellent acoustic underlay layer. Floor Core Hybrid is manufactured to be very light and flexible to assist installation a variety subfloor surfaces. You must read through the installation guideline prior to the floor installation. Floor Core Hybrid flooring is suitable for both commercial and residential use. Floor Core Hybrid is not suitable for installation in outdoor areas nor in areas that will be continually wet. Sunrooms, saunas or rooms that can be potentially flooded are also not suitable for Floor Core products. However, it is suitable for kitchen, laundry and utility rooms. It is essential to fill the expansion gaps around the potentially wet area after a specific amount of time and using an expanding gap filler.

#### Required floor preparation:

**Substrate preparation must follow the requirements as set in the Australian Standard 1884-2012 Resilient Sheet and Tiles Installation Practices for Floor Core products.**

- The surface of the subfloor must be clean, dry, flat, smooth and stable (no gap greater than 3.0mm beneath a 2.0 metre straight edge) with minimal deflection. The subfloor must also be swept so that any dust or debris is off the floor prior to installation. It is essential that the subfloor is free from excessive moisture or alkali. **The subfloor preparation is the main and major part of successful installation.**
- Any polish, dirt, paint, or likewise, must be removed from the installation surface.
- The floor surface must be flat and levelled with a scraper and putty knife.
- Maintain a temperature above 15C degrees (59F) before installation.
- Check that any doors or cupboards would still be able to open and close after the floor has been installed (minimum + 1cm (3/8")).
- Timber floors: The timber should be stable and solid with just little flexibility. All the loose boards must be properly fastened and all the gaps must be filled.
- Ceramic tile/Mosaics/Terrazzo and Quarry: Level any grout line with a width and/or depth of more 3mm
- It is the floor installers responsibility to determine what preparation a subfloor may require prior to installation.

#### Timber Substrates:

- All timber substrates (including tongue & groove, particle board & plywood) must have at least 450mm of good cross ventilation under the floor to prevent distortion and movement of flooring members. Timber substrates should be rigid, sound, free from excessive moisture, cupping and warping and constructed to relevant building standards.  
Old timber substrates should have all loose boards re-nailed and badly worn or damaged boards must be replaced. Sand timber floors to a flat, smooth finish without undulations before installing Floor Core Hybrid. Planeness is to be no more than 3.0mm gap under a 2.0 metre straightedge at rest on any part of the timber floor

#### Concrete Substrates:

- **IT IS A REQUIREMENT OF AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS 1884 – 2012 THAT A MOISTURE TEST IS CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPENDIX A 3.1.2.**
- Concrete substrates must be cured and completely dry. The surface must be steel trowelled to a smooth dense porous surface free of trowel marks, irregularities and undulation. Concrete slabs in contact with fill, hard-core or the ground must have a damp-proof membrane to prevent entry of moisture. Water proofing additives and curing compounds do not negate the need for a damp-proof membrane. New concrete slabs will dry at an approximate rate of 1.0mm per day, to be measured from the time the slab was last wet (for example, a 100mm slab will take 100 days to dry). This will vary depending on weather conditions and the surface of the concrete, (for example, a burnished concrete surface will take longer to dry). High spots and low areas on the substrate should be ground or levelled with appropriate self-levelling underlayment such as Ardex K15 (please ensure to follow the manufacturer's instructions). If there is any doubt about moisture in the slab it is recommended to protect the Floor Core Flooring by using a 0.2mm (200 micron) polyethylene plastic sheeting, overlapped by 200mm and taped using a waterproof tape. The plastic sheeting should extend up the wall and be trimmed to the top side of the floor after the installation has been completed but before installing any scotia, mouldings or trims.

## **DO NOT**

- Do not install it over a soft underlay (Soft underlayment or soft substrates will impact upon the products locking system and its indentation resistance).
- Do not install on loose timber or timber that has been directly glued on the concrete.
- Do not install on top of more than one sheet of Lino.
- Do not install over concrete with high moisture related subfloor. (Floor Core does not warrant or take any responsibility for performance issues should a floor be installed on a subfloor with high levels of moisture). A high moisture content in the subfloor may cause mould, mildew and moisture related issues.
- Do not install before testing the moisture levels. If a moisture level is over 40%, do not install Floor Core product. Your warranty will be null and void.
- Do not install if the concrete PH level exceeds a level of between 7-9.
- Do not install cabinets or island benches directly on top of the flooring.
- Do not fit flush against any fixed vertical surfaces like walls, permanent fixtures, door frames, pipes or staircases (minimum 6.0mm expansion gap is required).
- Do not attach to the substrate at any point (such as gluing the flooring directly to the subfloor).
- Do not compress the edges of the planks in any way when installing other flooring materials.
- Do not install over textiles of any type, such as carpet for example. It must be removed prior to installation.
- Do not install flooring into rooms without also having window covering such as blinds, shutters, venation and curtains to reduce the levels of direct sunlight and moisture to the new floor.
- Do not install in areas that are exposed to direct sunlight. Doing so may result in discoloration of the boards.

### **Pre-Installation checklist**

It is the floor installer responsibility to check the following:

- Is this the correct product, correct colour, correct dimension?
- Has the product installation guide been read fully and the steps to follow understood?
- Have the boards been inspected for any potential damage or defects prior to the installation? If you had any concerns, you can call your retailer that you purchased from for further information and assistance.
- Have you checked the lot numbers of the flooring boxes? Different lots may have shade variations. If you have more than one lot, we highly recommend you install planks from different cases at one time, randomly mixing them into the installation as you go. This will insure a more natural looking floor.

Please note that any concerns relating to any visual defects of flooring products may not be accepted after installation and Floor Core will not take any responsibility or warrant the product.

### **SETTING OUT**

- You must place flooring horizontally in the room of installation for 48 hours prior to installation and remove the tops of each case during this period.
- Calculate the room size before installing the product and always allow for wastage for. The required wastage will vary depending on the sizes of the job. You may need less wastage for a bigger job and more for small size jobs.
- Install Floor Core Hybrid towards the main light source (for example, large windows or of incoming light from any windows) or, if lighting is not a concern, parallel to the longest wall in the room.
- Confirm the direction of the planks (which way you wanted to lay) with your customer prior to commencing of the installation.
- Plan the job to have as large a piece as possible on the long sides of the room, you may need to scribe the first row to the wall to achieve this. For the best result, make sure to always work from 2 to 3 cartons at a time mixing the planks during the installation.

### **Required Cutting Tools**

For best results and successful installation you may need the following tools:

- A good quality 60 tooth carbide-tipped cutting blade.
- A drop saw, a table saw and jig saw with a fine tungsten carbide tipped blade.
- If using a hand saw, cut with the decorative side of the plank facing up.
- When using power saws, the direction of blade must cut into the decorative side of the plank to minimize chipping.
- Mark the plank using a square to keep your cut line straight.
- Cut the marked piece in another area to keep the sawdust away from the installation site.
- Carpenters square and long straightedge.
- Pencil & tape measure.
- Utility knife for trimming.
- Spacers to maintain expansion gap around the edge.
- Bradding gun to fix skirtings or quads/mouldings.
- Vacuum cleaner/broom and dustpan.
- White rubber mallet.

- **Installation Instruction**
- All materials must be installed in accordance with AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS 1884 – 2012 Floor coverings – Resilient sheet and tiles – Installation practices.
- Floor Core products utilise a “locking/floating” system and are installed using a combined floating floor and angle tap (angle on long side & tap/drop lock on short side) system.
- These floors are intended for indoor use only and can be installed over virtually any existing floor structure.
- This floor may expand and contract with changes in heat and relative humidity, therefore the use of an expansion gap of 6.0mm will be required. These expansion gaps will be covered when the skirting is reinstalled or new skirting is installed. If the skirtings are left in place, a scotia/moulding system will be required to cover the expansion gap.
- Proper conditioning of both the job site and the flooring is required.
- Floor Core products should not be exposed to sudden changes in temperature or moisture/humidity. The area to receive the flooring materials and adhesives should be maintained between 15°C and 28°C for 24 hours before installation, during installation and for 24 hours after completion. Maintain temperatures between 15°C and 28°C thereafter. Store, transport and handle all Floor Core products so as to prevent any distortions. Store cartons flat – never on edge. If distortions do occur, they will not disappear over time.
- Ensure that the planks are flat at time of installation.
- Installations of carpet, metal strips and other transition mouldings should not pinch the flooring and should allow for slight movement wherever practical.
- Install the product after all the other trades have finished the work that could potentially damage the flooring.
- Take care to ensure that dust, dirt or foreign particles remain away from the locking strip of the floorboards so as not to compromise the locking mechanism.

#### **Installing First Row**

1. Installation should begin with a corner (right hand) and proceed from the wall with the tongue facing out and away from the wall.
2. Lay the first full piece with the small, tongue side facing the wall. When laying the first row in a straight line interlock the short ends by inserting the tongue into the grooves at an angle of about 15 to 20 degrees.
3. Install second and subsequent full pieces in the first row by aligning short ends of planks and locking into place.
4. Make sure to keep the seams between planks tight. You will feel and hear a click when locking the planks together to create a tight seam. There should be no gap visible between planks. If the seam appears not to be tight, you should immediately pull apart the planks and reassemble them. Slowly lift the top plank away from the bottom plank and simply reinsert it by following the previous steps.
5. Use spacers along all sides that butt up against walls to maintain 6.0 mm expansion gap.
6. Continue laying planks in the first row until you need to cut the last piece.
7. Measure the distance between the wall and the face surface of the last plank. Subtract 6.0mm and cut the plank using the drop saw. (See Required Cutting Tools above). If this distance is less than 250mm go back to the first full plank and cut approximately 250mm from the end closest to the starting wall. This will leave a longer piece at the end of the first row.

#### **Installing Remaining Rows**

We strongly advise to stagger rows so that the short edge seams are not in a straight uniform line.

1. Begin the second row of planks with the piece cut from the last piece in the first row. If the piece is shorter than 250mm cut a new plank in half and use it to begin the second row. Whenever practical, use the piece cut from the preceding row to start the next row. End joints of all planks should be staggered 250mm or more.
2. Install the long end of the first plank at an angle to the plank in the previous row. Keep this plank at its natural angle, which is slightly raised off the substrate. Use a scrap piece of floorCore Flooring to support the row if needed.
3. Continue installing full planks in the second row by angling the short end of the next plank in the row to lock into the previous plank. Position the plank so that the long side of the plank is close to planks in the previous row and overlapping the groove of the planks in the previous row. Avoid any gapping between the planks, as any gapping can compromise the whole installation.
4. Angle up and push forward until the planks lock together.
5. Continue installing full planks in the second and subsequent rows until you reach the wall on your right.
6. After all planks in the row are installed, press or walk all planks flat to the substrate before beginning the next row. A tapping block may be used to fully engage the planks.
7. Mark the last piece, cut and install.
8. It may be necessary to use a pull bar to ensure end joints are tight.
9. To make holes for pipes, measure the diameter and position of the pipe and drill the hole approximately 6.0mm larger than the diameter of the pipe. A) To allow piece to be installed, cut a piece from the back side of the plank making a slight ‘v’ shape.  
b) Sit piece into place, insert the v piece in behind the pipe and glue in place with construction glue, use spacing wedges to hold the ‘v’ piece in place while the adhesive sets. Warning: Failure to properly line up the end joint and attempting to force it in while out of alignment could result in permanent damage to the end joint.

### Installing the Last Row

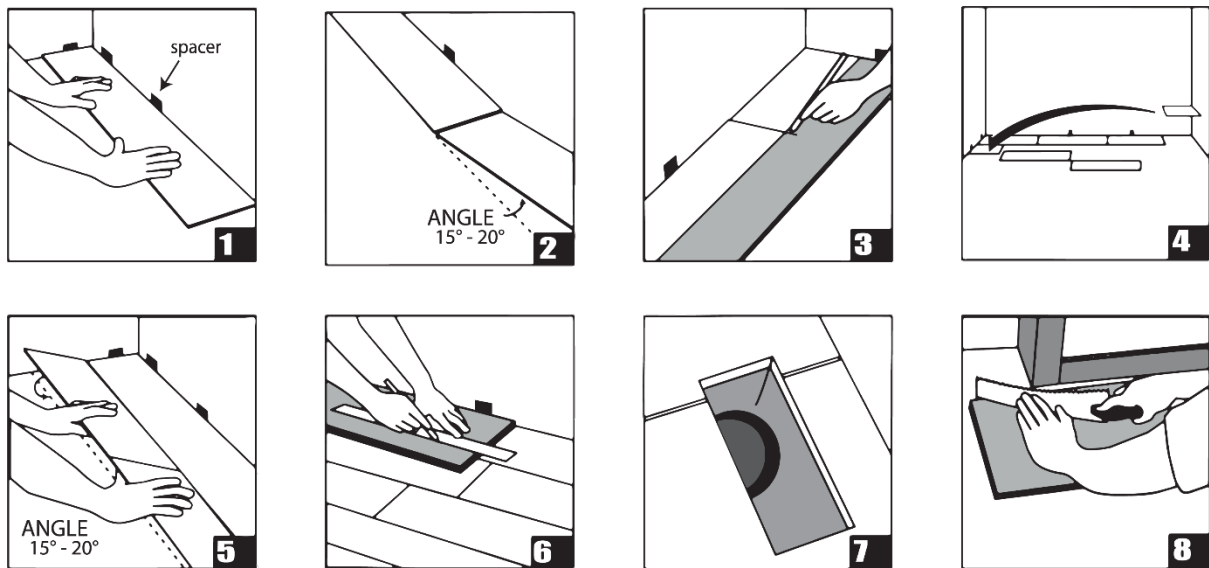
1. The last row of the installation will need to be cut lengthwise.
2. Place the row of planks to be fitted on top of the last row of installed planks. Use a piece of the plank as a scribe to trace with a pencil the contour of the wall.
3. Cut the plank to fit using the table saw and allow for the required expansion space.
4. Lay the piece into position (you may need to use a pull bar to tighten the joints).

### Fitting around irregular objects

Fitting around irregular objects is no problem. Simply make a pattern out of heavy paper to fit around pipes or irregular objects. Place the pattern upon the plank and trace. Cut along trace lines using a utility knife or heavy-duty scissors and lay the plank. Be sure to leave the required expansion gap around all fixed objects, floor vents and door frames.

### Spare planks

Be sure to keep some extra planks in case there is an unforeseen need for replacement.



### Protection & caution

- When installing ensure to protect all Floor Core products from heavy rolling loads, other trades and appliances by using sheets of plywood or MDF.
- Floor Core Flooring does not recommend the use of plastic sheets (for example, builders' plastic, corflute or sticky back carpet films) as protection for vinyl flooring.
- When replacing appliances, or whenever moving heavy furniture over the flooring, place a wood panel under the object.
- Without moving the panel, slide or roll the object over it. Follow with additional panels as needed as this prevents scratches and tears to the Floor Core Planks.
- Floor Core Planks should not be exposed direct to the sunlight for prolonged periods, this can result in discolouration.
- **The use of curtains or blinds to minimize sunlight exposure is recommended (the covering of windows to assist in providing a stable environment before, during and after installation is recommended).**