



Simple guide to correct Installation of laminate flooring:

1) Before Installation:

Correct moisture readings: Tremex = 3% - Protimeter = 12%

1a) Acclimatisation:

- Store on site for 48hrs before installation.
- Unopened packages.
- At least 500mm from all walls in the room in which, it is to be installed.
- Store flat on floor – Off concrete substrate by at least 20mm.

DO NOT PLACE DIRECTLY ON RAW CONCRETE.

1b) Prepare floor:

- Check the sub floor to ensure that it is dry and level.
- Floor surface should not vary by more than 3mm per metre - Refer to manufacturer specifications.

1c) Installation direction:

- Always try to have the light falling along the length of the planks and not across. This will prevent an optical illusion of a wavy floor.
- In long rooms, lengthways parallel to walls.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN WOOD AND LAMINATE FLOORING ASSOCIATION

Postal Address: P.O. Box 1996
Bedfordview
2008
South Africa

Telephone: 011 455 2822
Web Site www.sawlfa.co.za
E-mail: sawlfa@mwebbiz.co.za
Fax: 086 614 1491



1d) Vapour barrier:

- 200-micron virgin plastic overlapped by at least 200mm at the join and securely taped with a moisture resistant duct tape. Other combi foam underlay should only be used with the approval of the flooring manufacturer.
- Taking the underlay 50mm up the wall is a highly recommended practice. This will help prevent damage/moisture to the floor and skirting e.g. in the instance of outside wall boxes, inside shower walls or any area where rising damp is present.

SAWLFA does not sanction the use of old wooden strip, block, carpets or slasto floors as a base or sub floor.

If the installer is pressurised in using the original floor as the sub floor, a letter of indemnity stating clearly, that should the original floor fail or burst under the new floor, the risk is with the client.

1e) Underlay:

- Use a 2/3mm thick PE foam underlay according to requirements.
- If using Combilay, locate foam on screed. Both methods are acceptable, provided underlay used is moisture/water resistant. Plastic on top will facilitate the floating ability of the product in the event of there being heavy weight on the floor panels and also you get a complete seal when taping.

1f) Provision for expansion:

- To enable natural expansion or contraction a gap of at least 8/10mm space next to all walls, joining strips and fixed objects e.g. Pipes, columns, doorframes, stairways, balustrade or any other obstructions. In coastal conditions or areas of high temperature and humidity it is recommended that a gap of 12-15mm be left between the flooring, walls and joining strips. This flooring should never be glued or nailed to the sub floor.
- Floor should not exceed 10mx8m without expansion joint – Check manufacturer specifications.
- Do not join rooms together.



1g) Expansion profiles:

- Needed at – doorways.
- Offset passages.
- Rooms over 10mx8m

Expansion profiles should not under any circumstances be glued or siliconed into position thus preventing the floor from expanding or contracting.

2) Installation:

2a) Basic Tools required:

- Moisture meter
- Aluminium straight edge 3m
- Broom and or vacuum cleaner
- Saw
- Hammer
- Knife
- Ruler or tape measure
- Carpenters square
- Drilling machine
- Tapping block – Check manufacturer specifications
- Spacers
- Jig saw and blades (Use correct blades for laminates)
- Electric mitre saw (Use correct blades for laminates)
- Table saw (Use correct blades for laminates)

2b) Cleaning & Underlay:

- Vacuum the sub floor thoroughly.
- Spread out the underlay. Combilay 200 - micron virgin plastic or 200 – micron virgin plastic DPC and 2mm Aerothene/Rubber underlay.

2c) Check Panels:

Check carefully before installing for any defects e.g. chips, scratches or discoloration on:

- Surface.
- Tongue and groove.
- Design.



2d) Starting off:

- Calculate the number of planks required per length and width of room to prevent working with short or narrow pieces.
- Calculation - length of room divided by panel length.
- Only work out of 1 box at a time.
- When all else fails - **Read the instructions on the box.**

2e) First Row:

- Start at the appropriate corner considering the light source.
- Use spacers alongside head joints.
- Expansion gap 8mm – 10mm.

2f) Second Row:

- Start with offcut from first row, if 300mm long – Check manufacturers specifications.
- If not, cut new plank in half.
- Distance between header joints (stagers) at least ¼ length of plank.

2g) Complete second row:

- Lay out the rest of the planks in the second row.
- Check if wall is straight. Gap between wall and floor should be 8-10mm.
- If not, trace wall contour on first row and cut accordingly.

2h) Sawing:

- Hand saw, décor up.
- Jig saw, décor down.
- Circular saw, décor up

For more in-depth information read instructions on manufacturers packaging labels or SANS 10043:2009

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