

# Rigid Core SPC Flooring Installation Guidelines

Our flooring products come with a Lifetime Structural (Residential) Warranty/ 15-Year Residential Finish Manufacturer Warranty/ 5-Year Light Commercial Finish Warranty. The warranty applies to the original purchaser of the flooring only and guarantees that the surface will not wear-through or peel off for the duration of install. Installation of the product confirms your acceptance of the product. Failure to follow Pre-Installation and Installation guidelines will void the manufacturer's warranty. The warranty does not cover damage from improper use, care, maintenance or installation, including scratching, water-leak or flood damage, denting, telegraphing, fading, or staining. Please review our warranty coverage information for specific terms and conditions.

## **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE INSTALLING AND ALWAYS REFER TO THE MOST RECENT INSTALLATION GUIDELINES**

Thoroughly examine the flooring prior to installation for grade, color, finish and quality. Ensure adequate lighting for proper inspection. If flooring is not acceptable, do not install the floor. Please contact the seller immediately and arrange for replacement. Industry standard allows up to 5% of material may be culled for blemishes or defects without being considered defective. Please note our products contain a standard pattern variation and installers should be working from multiple open boxes to ensure boards are blended throughout. The manufacturer cannot accept responsibility for installation of flooring with visible defects. Installation of this product warrants the acceptance by the installer or owner for the quality of the material, as well as conditions in which the material is being installed therein.

**It is the Installer/Owner responsibility to ensure that the conditions are acceptable prior to the installation of the flooring. The manufacturer declines any and all problems associated with the flooring that are related to or attributed to improper jobsite conditions. Any splits, cracks, grain raising, checking, edge fracturing, splintering, cupping, crowning/peaking, warping, twisting, expansion/contraction, telegraphing, buckling or chipping that occurs during or after the floor has been installed and as a result of abuse, misuse, improper maintenance or care, improper installation technique and improper environmental conditions including excessive heat from radiant heat systems are not covered under the manufacturer's warranty.**

Prior to installation of any flooring, the installer must ensure that the jobsite and subfloor meet the requirements of these installation instructions. All necessary accessories, including trim, must be present at the jobsite *prior* to beginning installation. The manufacturer is not responsible for flooring failure resulting from unsatisfactory jobsite and/or subfloor conditions.

When purchasing flooring, we recommend adding 5%-15% to actual square footage needed for cutting allowance and to compensate for culled material. It is acceptable that up to 5% of material be outside the range of acceptance and not be considered defective.

It shall be the responsibility of the Installer to document installation date, product SKU and Lot information, subfloor moisture content, site relative humidity and site temperature. This information must be documented by

the installer and a copy provided to the property owner to ensure product warranty coverage.

Failure to follow any and all of the Manufacturer's recommended installation guidelines will void warranty coverage.

### **Jobsite & Pre-Installation Guidelines**

SPC flooring should be one of the last items installed for any new construction or remodel project. This flooring product must be installed per the manufacturer's guidelines. For any questions or specifications not specifically outlined herein, please contact the manufacturer's technical department at 800-607-2414.

- All "wet" work – i.e. – paint, drywall, concrete, masonry, plumbing must be complete and dry prior to the delivery of SPC flooring
- Gutters and downspouts should be in place and the exterior grade complete to allow for proper drainage of water away from the building's exterior perimeter.
- HVAC should be on, operational and maintained between 60 – 80 degrees with a relative humidity of 35%-55% range a minimum of 5 days prior to delivery, during and after installation of the flooring.
- If HVAC is not possible at time of installation the environmental conditions must be at or near normal living conditions between 60 – 80 degrees and at the average yearly relative humidity for the area.
- We recommend using a Hydrometer to monitor interior climate and the use of a humidifier/dehumidifier may be required.
- Test wood sub floors for moisture content using moisture meter recommended for wood flooring, such as Lignomat SDM or comparable. Take readings of the subfloor – minimum of 20 readings per 1000 sq. ft. and average the results. In most regions, a "dry" subfloor that is ready to work on has a moisture content of 8% or less.
- Test the concrete subfloors moisture content by calcium chloride testing or by using an appropriate moisture meter. The moisture content for concrete subfloors registered after a calcium chloride test should not be greater than 3 pounds per 1000 square feet of area. If it exceeds these limits, DO NOT install the flooring. Before moisture testing begins, the slab must be cured for a minimum of 30 days. The moisture vapor emission rate for concrete subfloors must not exceed 75% RH using ASTM 2170 or 3 pounds per 1000sqft per 24 hours using Calcium Chloride test ASTM 1869. If using a moisture meter, please refer to the recommended guidelines set forth for by that moisture meters' manufacturer.
- Basements and crawl spaces must be dry. Use of a 6-mil black polyethylene is required to cover 100% of the crawl space earth. Crawl space clearance from ground to underside of joist to be no less than 18" and perimeter vent spacing should be equal to 1.5% of the total square footage of the crawl space area to provide cross ventilation in accordance with local regulations.

### **ALWAYS CHECK MOISTURE LEVELS BEFORE INSTALLING**

Preparing and leveling the sub-floor:

1. The subfloor needs to be structurally sound; do not install over particle board.
2. The sub-floor should be free of any surface defect. If it is not, fill gaps with a Portland-based leveling cement (for concrete floors only) or sand/grind down any uneven areas. For wood floors, use a wood leveling patch or skim coat as needed.
3. The sub-floor must be level and flat to 3/16" (5mm) per 10' radius or 1/8" (3.2mm) per 6-foot radius.
4. Any gaps in the sub-floor should not exceed 3/16" (5mm).
5. Use flooring screws into floor joists if necessary, to minimize squeaks in subfloor.
6. The surface must be clean and free of any contaminants such as wax, paint, grease, dust, oil, nails, staples, old adhesive, etc. and thoroughly swept and free of all debris.
7. For concrete installation, ensure that the concrete is not low-density (below 3000 psi) or gypsum based.
8. Plywood must be CDX-rated at least 3/4" thick. OSB must be 3/4", PS2 rated, and installed sealed-side down. We required wood substrates as previously described to be affixed directly to joists and a max of 16" on center.
9. Moisture content should not exceed 12%.

Acceptable Installation Methods	
Above Grade	Float
On Grade	Float
Below Grade	Float

### Existing Floors

Installation over existing floor requires the installer to consider potential issues related to moisture damage, adhesive failure and fastener failure. Contact the adhesive and fastener manufacturers respectively for their specific instructions, recommendations and requirements.

Acceptable floor coverings include: Solid wood, linoleum (1 layer only), terrazzo, ceramic, and stone tile. Tiled floors with grout lines will require a cementitious leveling compound to fill any grout lines, voids, or cracks.

Unacceptable floor coverings include: Carpet (any type), foam underlayment\*, cushioned-back vinyl, rubber\*, cork\*, laminates, free-floating floors, and wooden floors over concrete.

\*Applies to products that include factory applied, attached underlayment.

### Recommended Installation Area

This product is not suitable for any outside use, sunrooms/solariums, showers, saunas, seasonal porches, camping trailers, boats, RV's or rooms that have a potential of flooding. Do not install in rooms or homes that are not temperature controlled.

Exposure to long term direct sunlight can cause damage to your floor. Failure to properly shade or UV tint windows can discolor, fade, or buckle vinyl planks. Use window treatments or UV tinting on windows. Vinyl planks are not intended for use on stairs or vertical surfaces. Do not glue, nail, screw or fasten to substrate. Install cabinetry, island and peninsula counters, vanities, tubs, and showers first. Then install vinyl planks around them.

### Inspect the Flooring

Inspect material for color, finish, milling, texture and grade. Set aside pieces that may not be acceptable once installed. A maximum of four boxes may be opened for inspection prior to installation. *The floors have been thoroughly inspected during the manufacturing process, but it is the responsibility of the installer/homeowner to do final inspection and cull-out boards that are not acceptable before installation.*

### Blending of Cartons

To achieve a uniform appearance across the entire floor, we require that you open and work from a minimum of four cartons at a time and lay out the flooring ahead of time. Be sure to mix the planks for the best aesthetic appearance. Make certain the room is well lit to ensure color is consistent and that any visual defects can be seen and removed prior to installation. "Racking the Floor" is essential to achieve a random appearance. Start by cutting several boards in random lengths, differing the lengths by at least six inches. As you continue working across the floor remember to maintain a six-inch minimum space between the end joints. Randomly install different lengths to avoid a patterned appearance. Never waste materials; the end cuts from starter rows should be used at the opposite side of the room to complete rows or may be used to start the next row.

### Expansion Space

An expansion space of ¼" must be left around the perimeter of the room and at *all* vertical obstructions. More or less spacing may be needed depending on the geographical region, interior climate, and or time of the year. Your SPC flooring WILL move/shrink/expand. This is a normal occurrence of flooring products.

### **Undercut Door Casings**

Undercut all door casings 1/16" higher than the thickness of the flooring being installed. To do this, use a scrap piece of flooring as a guide. Lay it on the substrate and cut the casing with a handsaw or use a power jamb saw set at the correct height. Failure to undercut casings will result in automatic void in warranty coverage.

### **Coordinating Transition Moldings**

Always have all necessary transition moldings on site *prior* to beginning installation. Make sure all transitions and moldings have been coordinated with planks that have similar color and graining. Set them aside for use when a transitioning is necessary. The Manufacturer cannot be held liable for color variations that may exist between flooring and coordinating trim accessories under any circumstances.

We require any installation of this floor that is installed in the floating method to use a T-Molding once the installation has gone more than 35 feet in any single direction. Installations of the flooring beyond this distance must use a T-Molding to release stress from the floor and allow the floating installation to properly expand and contract. T-moldings are also required in narrow flooring areas 36" or less in width; floor areas interrupted by wall sections extending out of the wall, including cabinets; floor areas which are not rectangular; wall openings-with or without a door; L shaped rooms or otherwise not rectangular rooms will require T-moldings to split into rectangular sections. Failure to use appropriate T-moldings will void warranty coverage.

### **Underlayment**

Additional underlayment may be used in any floating installation and be no more than 3mm in thickness (cork products up to ½"). We approve the use of 2-in-1 underlayments with attached poly-backings for moisture protection. Foam, Cork, Rubber, EVA and similar underlayments are acceptable. Please contact our technical department for specific product compatibility.

### **Floor Protection During Construction:**

Always protect the surface of the installed flooring during construction. Cover the floor with quality rosin paper or other paper that will allow the floor to breathe and secure it to the baseboards; never tape directly to flooring. Do not use plastic or polyethylene sheeting to cover the floor. The flooring must be cleaned and completely free of any and all debris to minimize damage.

If you have any questions regarding installation of flooring not addressed in our guidelines, please contact our technical department at 800-607-2414.

### **Radiant Heat Installations**

The following guidelines must be followed to maintain warranty coverage. Failure to follow ALL guidelines will result in termination of warranty coverage.

- Concrete must be allowed to properly cure and dry a minimum of 4 weeks prior to operation of radiant heat system.
- Over concrete, moisture vapor emission rate for concrete subfloors must not exceed 3 pounds per 1000 sf per 24 hours using Calcium Chloride test ASTM 1869, or 75% RH using ASTM 2170 k and documented for warranty coverage.
- Wood subfloors must not exceed 12% moisture content.
- Subfloor must be flat to 3/16" over a 10' radius or 1/8" over a 6' radius.
- T-moldings must be used to separate heating zones.

- Operation of radiant heat system should be set to run at 2/3 of the maximum output for a minimum of 2 weeks prior to installation of flooring to further allow moisture from concrete to dissipate and reach a final moisture content. **This must be done in both heating AND non-heating seasons.**
- The use of a separate thermostat for each individual zone is required. An outdoor temperature sensor is highly recommended to adjust temperature according to anticipated heat loss.
- Reduce heat to a temperature of 65° 4 days prior to installation
- After 48 hours post-installation, we recommend to slowly raise temperature of the heating system to its preferred operating level. Please exercise caution and expect to achieve peak after a period of 5 days.
- Do not allow the surface temperature to exceed 80°F with no more than a 5°F variance in surface temperature over a 24-hour period.
- Seasonal expansion and contraction is expected and does not mean a defect is present within the product.

## GENERAL INSTALLATION TOOLS

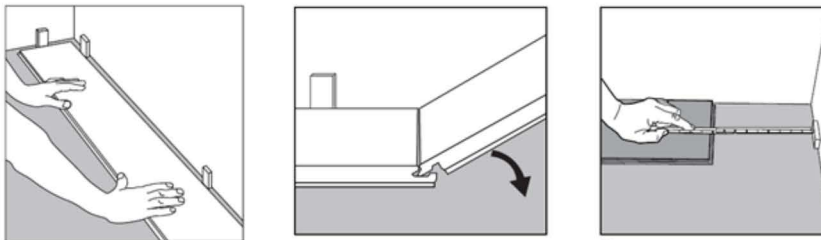
- Moisture Meter
- Tape Measure
- Pencil
- Chalk Line
- Hand Saw or Power Saw
- Utility Knife
- Tapping block
- Crow Bar or Pry Bar
- Wood or Plastic Spacers (¼")
- Rubber Mallet

## FLOATING INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

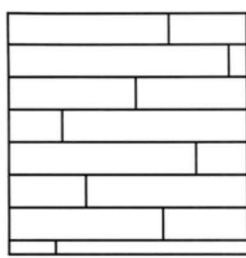
### Step One - Establish a Starting Point

- 1.1. Remove any existing wall base, shoe molding, quarter round or doorway threshold.
- 1.2. If installation is above or at grade, poly-film is recommended but not necessary.
- 1.3. Determine the longest, straightest wall to begin installation; this is usually an exterior wall.
- 1.4. Measure the total width of the flooring (including the tongue), plus ¼" for expansion. Measure out this distance in at least 2 places from the starting wall and 12" from the corners. Then, snap a chalk line parallel to the starting wall.

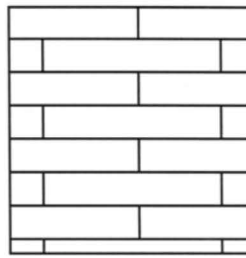
### Step Two - Lay Out



- 2.1. Choose the longest and straightest boards and align the planks tongue with the working line, cut the last plank to the proper length leaving a ¼" from the end wall. Repeat this step for the second row, making sure to stagger the joints. The minimum end stagger is 6 inches.



Stagger End Joints

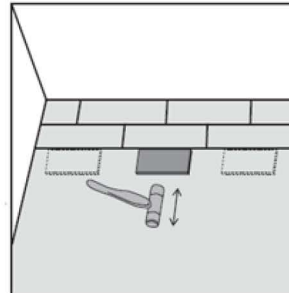
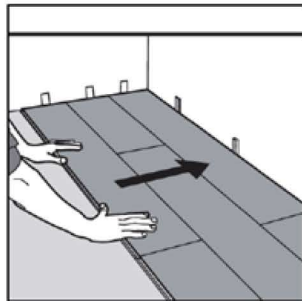
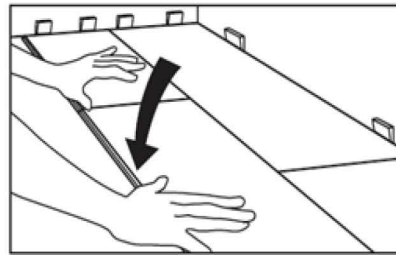
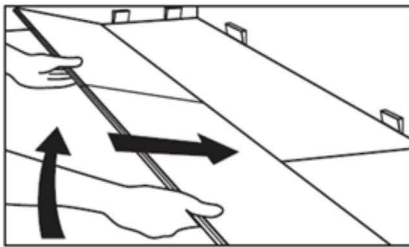


Avoid "H" Joints

### Step Three – Rack the Floor

- 3.1. Once the first row is in place, continue to lay out the planks. Be sure to blend the planks and stagger the end joints a minimum of 6" apart to ensure a favorable appearance.

### Step Four - Installation of Flooring



- 4.1. Once enough of the planks have been racked out, begin installing the planks by fitting the short side of the click system into the long side of the click system. Make sure that the click system is engaged evenly; any gapping can compromise the integrity of the installation. To ensure a tight fit, use a tapping block and rubber mallet on the long seams and tap down on the top of the plank at the short seams. Continue installing planks across the room ending at the far wall.
- 4.2. It may be necessary to rip the last row to allow for the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " expansion. If the last row is 2" or less click the pieces to the last full uninstalled row and install them together. If needed use a light rubber mallet to make the remaining rows tight to the installed planks.

### Step Five - Completing the Job

- 5.1. Clean the floor with any high-quality, p/h-neutral vinyl cleaner.
- 5.2. Install transition pieces -i.e. – stair nose, reducer, end cap, t-molding and base shoe. Please follow manufacturer's installation guidelines for transitions.
- 5.3. Any unused material should be stored in a dry place in case future repairs are needed. We recommend saving at least 2 boxes.

# Care & Maintenance

With today's advances in vinyl flooring stains and finishes, cleaning vinyl has never been easier. There are other steps you can take to minimize maintenance and maintain the beauty of your vinyl floors. Regular maintenance requires little more than sweeping with a soft bristle broom if your floor includes a beveled edge that could collect debris.

- Clean your floors periodically with a professional vinyl floor cleanser. The Manufacturer recommends a P/H Neutral vinyl cleanser, such as Bona®.
  - For moderately soiled areas, use a mild solution of isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol and distilled water. Dilute the mixture by mixing one-part alcohol and 2 parts distilled water. For tougher spots, use a higher concentration of isopropyl alcohol and distilled water.
- Avoid using any cleaning agents containing wax, oil or polish. Left over residue will form a dull film.
- Always spot test in an inconspicuous area.
- Do not use any wood care floor cleaning products on vinyl floors. Self-polishing acrylic waxes can cause the surface to become slippery and appear dull quickly.
- Do not use vinegar as a cleaning solution, its acidic properties will harm the finish.
- Use area rugs both inside and outside doorways to help prevent grit, dirt and other debris from being tracked onto your floor. Please use a breathable rug pad underneath all throw rugs to prevent scratching.
- Place an area rug in front of the kitchen sink.
- Do not wet-mop the floor. Standing water can dull the finish, damage the floor and leave a discoloring residue.
- Do not use a steam mop of any kind. Damages associated with steam mop use will void warranty coverage.
- Wipe up spills immediately.
- Protect your floor with floor protectors that are made of non-staining felt under the legs of furniture to help prevent scuffing and scratching; Larger pads may be required on bigger objects. Scratching due to insufficient protection are not covered under by the warranty.
- Avoid walking on your vinyl floors with cleats, sports shoes and high heels.
  - A 125-pound woman walking in high heels has an impact of 2,000 pounds per square inch. An exposed heel nail can exert up to 8,000 pounds per square inch. This kind of impact can dent any floor surface.
- When moving heavy furniture, do not slide it on the flooring. It is best to pick up the furniture completely to protect the floor from damage.

## Floor Repairs

- Very light and small surface scratches can be repaired with a staining "touch up" pen of the appropriate color or by using an almond stick. Please refer to manufacturer's recommendations on proper application.
- Slightly deeper scratches can be repaired by means of colored putty, acrylic and/or stains. Fill the scratches with the putty, level with putty knife and use terry cloth towel to wipe off excess.
- Very deep scratches or gouges may require the replacement of planks.