




Laminate Installation Guide

 **WARNING:** Drilling, sawing, sanding, or machining wood products can expose you to wood dust, a substance known to the State of California to cause cancer. Avoid inhaling wood dust or use a dust mask or other safeguards for personal protection. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.Ca.gov

IMPORTANT HEALTH NOTICE FOR MINNESOTA RESIDENTS ONLY: These building materials emit formaldehyde. Eye, nose, and throat irritation, headache, nausea, and a variety of asthma-like symptoms, including shortness of breath, have been reported as a result of formaldehyde exposure. Elderly people and young children, as well as anyone with a history of asthma, allergies, or lung problems, may be at greater risk. Research is continuing on the possible long-term effects of exposure to formaldehyde. Reduced ventilation may allow formaldehyde and other contaminants to accumulate in the indoor air. High indoor temperatures and humidity raise formaldehyde levels. Homes located in an area subject to extreme summer temperatures, an air conditioning system can be used to control indoor temperature levels. Other means of controlled mechanical ventilation can be used to reduce levels of formaldehyde and other indoor air contaminants. If you have any questions regarding the health effects of formaldehyde, consult your doctor or call your local health department.

WARNING! DO NOT MECHANICALLY CHIP OR PULVERIZE EXISTING RESILIENT FLOORING, BACKING, LINING FELT, ASPHALTIC "CUT-BACK" ADHESIVES OR OTHER ADHESIVES. PREVIOUSLY INSTALLED RESILIENT FLOORING PRODUCTS AND THE ASPHALTIC OR CUTBACK ADHESIVES USED TO INSTALL THEM MAY CONTAIN EITHER ASBESTOS FIBERS OR CRYSTALLINE SILICA. THE PRODUCTS IN THIS CARTON DO NOT CONTAIN ASBESTOS OR CRYSTALLINE SILICA. AVOID CREATING DUST. INHALATION OF SUCH DUST IS A CANCER AND RESPIRATORY TRACT HAZARD. SMOKING BY INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS FIBERS GREATLY INCREASES THE RISK OF SERIOUS BODILY HARM. UNLESS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THE PRODUCT IS NON-ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIAL, YOU MUST PRESUME IT CONTAINS ASBESTOS. REGULATIONS MAY REQUIRE THAT THE MATERIAL BE TESTED TO DETERMINE ASBESTOS CONTENT AND MAY GOVERN THE REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF MATERIAL. SEE CURRENT EDITION OF THE RESILIENT FLOOR COVERING INSTITUTE (RFCI) PUBLICATION "RECOMMENDED WORK PRACTICES FOR REMOVAL OF RESILIENT FLOOR COVERINGS" FOR DETAILED INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS ON REMOVING ALL RESILIENT COVERING STRUCTURES. ALWAYS USE SAFETY GLASSES AND WEAR A MASK WHEN USING WOOD OR WOOD COMPOSITE PRODUCTS.

Handling of Product

Handle cartons and flooring carefully to protect the locking edge profile. Always transport and store cartons in the original packaging, neatly stacked horizontally on a smooth, flat, solid surface. Never on their sides or ends.

Site Requirements

Southwind's laminates are a durable decorative floor covering, it does not add structural support. Laminate requires a clean, dry, secure subfloor that meets building codes. The following requirements are not intended to supersede federal, state, or local building codes, but as with many other interior finishes products, may require modifying existing structural components for successful installation.

By starting installation of this product, you are agreeing that you have read and understand all installer/owner's requirements and responsibilities and are aware that **deviating from the instructions**.

and recommendations in this installation guide may result in voiding the product warranty. If you need additional assistance, please contact Southwind Building Products' Technical Services at 1-800-272-2808.

Owner assumes responsibility for compliance with all building codes. Laminate flooring is suitable for use in climate controlled (35-65% RH and 60-85° F) indoor installations only and should not be installed in rooms with floor drains or sump pumps. Laminate flooring can be installed above, on or below grade. A moisture test is required to determine if high moisture exists in the subfloor. When using a calcium chloride moisture test for concrete subfloors (ASTM F1869), values must be ≤ 5 Lbs. or $<80\%$ RH with an in-site probe (ASTM F2170). Corrective measures must be taken if the level of moisture emission exceeds the limits given above. **Attention!** Without a documented measurement of residual moisture content before installing, a claim against the manufacturer for damages cannot be considered.

Moisture readings of wood subfloors must be $\leq 12\%$. Acceptable job site conditions, including relative humidity and subfloor moisture conditions, must be maintained throughout the lifetime of the flooring. Laminate flooring is installed as a floating floor and requires **the use of T-moldings** in doorways less than 32-inches (0.81m) or if the installation changes directions through the doorway (regardless of doorway size) and in rooms 50 feet (15,24m) or larger in length or width. Subfloor movement must not be constrained by glue, nails, screws, hardware, or other fixed obstructions.

Site and Material Preparation for a Successful Installation

In all residential applications Southwind's Laminate flooring products are intended to be a floating floor system and should **NEVER** have objects fastened through it to the subfloor. Do not install fixed objects, such as cabinets, islands, wall units etc. on top of the flooring or fasten trim/molding/transition pieces directly to the floor.

1. (**Uncontrolled storage**) Acclimate all materials in the area to be installed between the temperatures of 60°F to 85°F (15.56°C to 29.44°C) a minimum of 48 hours before, during, and after the installation. Protect flooring from excessive heat/cold during storage. If the product is stored in an environment different from the installation site and the temperature ranges are controlled within the 60°F to 85°F (15.56°C to 29.44°C) the offsite acclimation can be considered acceptable. Please note the material will need to be delivered directly to the installation site with no stops in between.
2. Identify the tongue side and the groove side. The tongue side (the smaller extension without a ridge on it) goes against the beginning wall.
3. Before cutting, plan your installation so each plank is at least 12" long and that the first and last rows are at least 2.5" wide. Allow a 12" minimum end-joint stagger row to row.
4. Remove carpet and padding. Also remove any wood flooring installed on concrete. Do not remove products unless they are asbestos-free.
5. Undercut door frame and wall base. Slide the flooring at least 1/4" underneath the door frame and wall base. Also leave a concealed 3/8" minimum expansion space under each.
6. Remove bumps or peaks in subfloor and fill depressions with a Portland based self-leveling compound to ensure subfloor is flat, with the tolerance not exceeding more than 1/32" in 1' (.30m), 1/8" in 6' (1.75M) or 3/16" in 10' (3m) span.
7. Clean debris from subfloor before installation.
8. For planks with attached underlayment installed over concrete subfloors, barrier with overlapped seams of 8" or more is required.
9. For planks without attached underlayment, install over single layer of underlayment appropriate for laminate floors with attached vapor barrier for installations over concrete.

Laminate Flooring Installation

1. Inspect each plank. Floor should be installed blending planks from several cartons at the same time to ensure good color and shade mixture throughout the installation.
2. For the first row along straight walls, remove the tongue on all long side joints and on the short side of the first plank only.
3. For uneven walls, trace contour on tongue side of plank and cut.

4. Assemble the first-row tongue side toward wall. Insert the end tongue into the end groove and rotate downward to assemble. Keep the planks aligned and the joints closed.
5. Two spacers thick side to thick side equals 3/8".
6. Provide 3/8" space for expansion on all sides. First piece must be at least 8" long. Start new rows with pieces trimmed from previous row. Ensure at least a 6" end joint offset.
7. At a slight angle, insert the tongue of plank 2 into the groove of plank 1 until the laminate plank edges meet, and then rotate down until the joints lock.
8. Join the short end of the plank first. There will be a gap on the long side joints when the plank is rotated down.
9. Raise the outside edge of the plank upward approximately 1". Maintain this angle as you push the plank in until the plank's edges meet. Rotate downward on the plank until the joint locks. Repeat these steps to complete the installation.
10. Alternate Tap Method: Align the tongues into the grooves of the long and short sides of the planks. Install the long side first with a tapping block by tapping lightly along the long side until the joint is closed tightly. Then tap the end using the tapping block into a locked position. Note: Uneven tapping or use of excessive force may damage the joint.
11. Ensure there will be a 3/8" gap (after the joint is closed) to the wall for expansion.
12. For the last row, align the plank to be used on top of the second to last row. Using a full width plank as a spacer, trace wall contour and cut plank.
13. For the last row, install the long side tongue into the groove with the end joint aligned. Using a pull bar and hammer, work evenly along the length of the plank and lightly tap the joint closed.
14. After tapping the long side joint closed, tap the short side closed, using a tapping block or a pull bar.

Installation Under Doorway Frames

15. Slide plank under pre-cut door frame.
16. Tap the long side joint closed first. Then tap the end joint closed.

Installation Around Fixed Objects (Such as Pipes)

17. Allow 3/8" expansion space around pipes or other fixed objects.

Finishing the Installation (Create watertight seal)

18. Remove all spacers.
19. Create a watertight seal by applying **flexible 100% silicone sealant** to the entire perimeter of the installation. **DO NOT** use acrylic sealant. **(this is a required step that must be performed, or you will void the water warranty).**
 - First fill all expansion spaces with 3/8" compressible PE foam backer rod and cover with silicone sealant.
 - Prior to installing the moldings, apply silicone sealant to the portion of the molding or transition that will contact directly with the laminate flooring surface.
 - Install moldings and immediately wipe away any excess silicone sealant.
 - Apply silicone sealant at connections to doorframes or any other fixed objects.

Care and Cleaning (See Laminate Care Guide for full details)

Place felt floor protectors under legs of movable furniture.

Chair casters should be rubber – not plastic or metal. A hard-surface chair pad is **REQUIRED** under rolling desk chairs, damage from rolling traffic is not covered under warranty.

Place walk-off mats at entrances.

Dust mopping is the primary cleaning method. Vacuuming can be performed, vacuum must be set on hard surface, beater bar must disengage, suction only.

Occasionally wet mop with water only, using a well rinsed out mop; DO NOT pour liquid directly on floor or use an excessively wet mop that will puddle or leave moisture standing on the floor. **Never** steam clean or use a steam mop on the floor.

If needed, use a solution of 1 cup of vinegar per gallon of water OR 1/3 cup non-sudsing ammonia per gallon of water.

DO NOT use detergents, abrasive cleaners, soaps, waxes, or polishes. Use correct hard surface vacuum tools.

DO NOT use rotating beater bars, floor scrubbers, jet mops, buffers, or similar products. Wipe up spills immediately.

DO NOT allow topical moisture to remain on the floor. Always remove promptly.

All instructions and recommendations are based on the most current information available. If you receive a printed copy of these instructions, please refer to www.southwindfloors.com or our technical service line @ 800-272-2808 to ensure you have the most up to date version of our installation instructions.