

Somerset Engineered Hardwood Flooring Installation Guidelines

INSTALLER / OWNER RESPONSIBILITY—VERY IMPORTANT

INSTALLATION CONSTITUTES ACCEPTANCE of flooring material, subfloor/substrate, the jobsite itself including the ambient temperature and relative humidity at the time of installation, and all impacting variables that may affect a wood floor. It is the responsibility of both the installer and owner to inspect and approve each piece of flooring prior to installation. **IF THE FLOORING AS SUPPLIED WILL NOT SATISFY THE CUSTOMER IN FULL, DO NOT PROCEED TO INSTALL.** The decision not to proceed should be made within the first 10% or 100 square feet of flooring opened, whichever is less. Industry standards allow a variance from grading and manufacturing tolerances of 5%. For hold harmless agreements check with legal counsel. (refer to NWFA, Ch 1, Part 1, C.).

Many important decisions must be made at the installation site, and therefore must be the sole responsibility of the installer/owner. These include but are not limited to proper storage and handling, complete evaluation and permanent recording of site conditions including moisture testing of the subfloor and flooring, acclimation of flooring to appropriate conditions, subfloor preparation, flooring layout, milling, grade, color and gloss, scraping, proper installation methods, sufficient quantity on hand to complete the job, and jobsite cleanup.

Site Conditions, Handling, and Storage (NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec. I):

Somerset engineered hardwood flooring may be installed above, on, or below grade. Somerset flooring should be installed only after all work that may affect the flooring is completed. Drywall, paint, and any other "wet work" should be thoroughly cured. Moisture testing should be performed before delivery of flooring to confirm the flooring will not be adversely affected by job site conditions. When handling bundles/packages avoid damage to the finished face and milled ends/edges of the flooring.

HVAC systems must be in operation before, during (except when installing over radiant heat), and after installation (refer to NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec I, Ch. 1, Part 1). A temperature of 70 degrees F +/- 10 degrees and a relative humidity between 35-55% is recommended. Heating units or ductwork adjacent to the flooring or under the subfloor may cause "hot spots" which must be eliminated prior to installation.

Keep flooring dry and maintain good air circulation at all times. Do not stack flooring bundles or cartons more than three layers high, and maintain a flat product. **RECORD FLOORING MOISTURE CONTENT UPON DELIVERY AND AT TIME OF INSTALLATION, AND RETAIN THESE RECORDS.** Acclimate Somerset Flooring to controlled site conditions; refer to NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec. I, Ch. 2 for detailed information.

Radiant Heat: Somerset engineered hardwood may be installed over some radiant heat systems. **VERY IMPORTANT: AS THE INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS ARE VERY DETAILED, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND CONSULTING NWFA INSTALLATION GUIDELINES, SEC. IV, APPENDIX H FOR DETAILS. PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE GUIDELINES ARE EXCLUDED FROM COVERAGE UNDER THE SOMERSET HARDWOOD FLOORING LIMITED WARRANTY.** When using Somerset adhesive products over radiant heat, the radiant heat must be turned off a minimum of 24 hours prior to installation and remain off for a minimum of 24 hours after installation.

Moisture Testing is Critical (refer to NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec. I, Ch. 3 and Sec IV, Apx C). Confirm proper drainage exists around the structure. In crawl spaces, exposed earth must be fully covered with minimum 6-mil polyethylene sheeting. Crawl space vents must be open at all times, and must equal at least 1.5% of the total square footage of the crawl space. Basements must remain dry.

Subfloor Types And Conditions (NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec. II):

General:

The subfloor must be clean, dry, flat (within 3/16" in 10'), and structurally sound. Panel joints must be flush. Correct any squeaks before installation of hardwood flooring.

Wood/panel subfloors: (NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec. II, Ch. 4).

CD Exposure 1 plywood and OSB Exposure 1 subfloor panels are appropriate subfloor materials (grade stamped US PS1-95). Solid board subfloors should be 1" x 6" nominal, Group 1 dense softwoods, #2 Common, KD. Minimum single layer panel subfloor thickness is 5/8" plywood or 23/32" OSB on 16" o.c. joists (APA Sturd-I-Floor stamped). The flooring must run perpendicular to the floor joists, or 1/2" additional subfloor thickness is required. See NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec II, Part IV for information on other joist spacing and panel thickness requirements, engineered flooring systems, etc. Wood subfloor should not exceed 12% m.c. (Sec IV, Apx C). If moisture tests indicate marginal moisture presence but the subfloor is visually dry, use Somerset 25 adhesive.

Concrete subfloors (NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec II, Sec. IV, Apx C). Concrete should be minimum of 3000 psi, cured a minimum of 30 days, between 7-9 ph.

Concrete must be tested for moisture when using Somerset 40 adhesive. Tramex Concrete Moisture Encounter Meter must not exceed 6% when using Somerset 40 adhesive. Calcium chloride testing must not exceed 10 lbs/1000sf/24hrs. If concrete fails to meet either Tramex or Calcium Chloride testing standards but is visually dry, use Somerset 25 adhesive. No Somerset adhesive is designed as a moisture remediation and abatement product for concrete slabs with a history of moisture related failures.

Installation (NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec. III):

Preparation

Allow expansion space (equal to flooring thickness) between the wood flooring and any walls or obstructions. Undercut door jambs, casings, etc. as needed so flooring has adequate expansion space.

Layout

Establish a primary working line, realizing the room is not square and no wall is perfectly straight. The best appearance is usually parallel to the length of the room, but always install perpendicular to the floor joists (wood subfloors) unless the subfloor meets special qualifications (see wood panel subfloors section). Always rack out the entire job before installing to avoid clustered joints or patterns, and to achieve a good color blend.

Installation with Mechanical Fasteners (Cleats/Staples):

Over the subfloor, install a layer of #15 building felt (or equivalent perm rating), overlapped 4" at the seams. See NWFA, Sec. III, Ch. 8, Part 4 for more detail on acceptable moisture barriers. Use caution to avoid edge and face damage during installation. Special footer plates are available for flooring nailers to protect factory finished flooring from nailer damage. Use a tapping block as required.

Fasten a backer board of minimum 1/2" plywood ripped to an appropriate width to establish straight working lines. Backer boards should be secured to the subfloor and carefully aligned with the primary line.

Use flooring fasteners (NWFA Installation Guidelines, Sec. IV, Appendix F) designed for engineered flooring (staples—minimum 1" long, maximum 3/8 crown, or cleats—1" to 1-1/4"). Air pressure and tool settings should be adjusted so the fastener seats properly in the nail groove, does not split the wood, and does not distort ("dimple") the face. Fastening schedule should be every 3-4" (staples) or 4-6" (cleats), with a fastener 1-2" from each end, minimum two fasteners per piece. **DO NOT USE TOOLS OR FASTENERS DESIGNED FOR 3/4" SOLID FLOORING.**

Face nail only as required with 1" (4d) finish nails or cleats, 1/2" from the groove, pre-drilling the nail holes to prevent splitting. Face nails should be countersunk and filled.

Adhesive Installation:

We recommend Somerset 25, or Somerset 40 adhesive. Note these adhesives are different formulations applicable to different site conditions and installation requirements. Refer to the pail label or www.somersetfloors.com for appropriate application information. Other adhesive brands may be used, but choosing another product will defer all adhesive related issues to the adhesive manufacturer. Refer to the adhesive container label regarding adhesive storage, proper ventilation, trowel notch size/pattern, spread rate, open time, safety procedures and equipment, cleanup and cure time. Spread adhesive to accommodate installation, chalking lines to guide spreading adhesive, but do not leave voids. Work off the floor to avoid shifting the flooring in the adhesive. Avoid allowing adhesive residue to contact the face of the flooring. Odorless mineral spirits will clean Somerset adhesives from the finish; immediate cleaning is recommended for Somerset 25; Somerset 40 allows longer lag time in removing adhesive residue.

Floating Installation:

Somerset engineered flooring may be floated over a structurally sound subfloor, using a quality tongue & groove glue (must remain elastic when cured) applied in a continuous bead along the bottom of the grooves (both edge and end groove). A quality floating floor underlayment pad should be installed between the subfloor and the flooring installation. Other installation guidelines remain unchanged.

Finishing Touches:

Somerset offers five standard molding profiles factory finished to blend with your Somerset wood floor. These moldings will address most trim and transition situations quickly and cost effectively. **Moldings should be ordered and delivered with the flooring so they can be cut and placed before the flooring, then flooring can be chosen to best blend with the specific piece of molding.**

Fill any nail holes or small cracks with an appropriate colored filler. Somerset Touch-Up Kits are available; leave the Touch-Up Kit with your customer for their use as needed.

Remove all debris and clean the floor thoroughly using Somerset Ultimate Wood Floor Cleaner. If using an alternate cleaner, be aware that some solvents may attack the finish, so test any cleaner for finish compatibility before using on installed flooring. Leave care and maintenance information for the consumer. A Somerset floor care kit makes a good closing gift, and starts them on the right maintenance program. Additional care and maintenance information is available at www.somersetfloors.com.

Applying additional finish over the factory finish does not improve durability or permanently seal the joints, may cause problems, and will void your limited warranty.

If you have installation questions, contact Somerset, your Somerset distributor, or the National Wood Flooring Association (www.nwfa.org).

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IMPORTANT: Visit our website at www.somersetfloors.com for the most recent versions of Somerset Installation Guidelines.

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