



FAQs: LAMINATE FLOORING

How is laminate flooring made?

Laminate flooring is made of wood fibers, wood chips and pulp bonded together under high pressure to create a high-density fiberboard (HDF) core. The top surface of the laminate is printed with a high-resolution photographic image paper, which is then treated with a clear coating or wear layer. A variety of finishes are available.

What is an E1 rating?

This rating indicates the amount of formaldehyde released by the laminate floor. E1 is the lowest amount of emission, compared to E2 and E3. All Quality Craft products come with an E1 rating.

What is an AC rating?

The AC rating is a standardized measure adopted by The Association of European Producers of Laminate Flooring (ELPF) to measure the hardness of laminate flooring. It is measured by tests of durability such as abrasion resistance, impact resistance, resistance to staining, and resistance to cigarette burns. See the chart below for more information about which AC rating to choose:

- **AC1:** For areas that receive very light traffic, such as bedrooms or closets
- **AC2:** For typical residential use, such as dining rooms, hallways, foyers and living rooms
- **AC3:** For high traffic use, such as small offices and other light commercial locations
- **AC4:** For higher traffic commercial use, such as lobbies, boutiques, busy offices and restaurants
- **AC5:** For heavy traffic commercial use, such as department stores and public buildings

Are there formaldehyde emissions from laminate flooring?

The formaldehyde emissions from laminate flooring are extremely low. Laminate is virtually emission free, registering levels between 0.005 ppm and 0.03 ppm. The maximum emission level for laminate flooring to receive E1 status is 0.1 ppm.

What temperature and humidity levels do I need to maintain in my home?

Preferable temperature should be approximately 17-23 °C (62-73 °F) with a relative humidity of 45-60 percent. Humidity should never be able to drop below 30%, as this may cause gapping.

How much laminate flooring should I buy?

Multiply the length of the room by its width to get its area. Add 10% for waste during installation and for replacement repairs in the future. Divide the total area by the area in each carton to get the number of cartons that you need to purchase.

Where can I install laminate flooring?

You can install laminate flooring in almost any room or over any subfloor in your home. It is, however, not recommended that you install laminate in damp locations such as bathrooms, saunas, rooms with damp concrete, rooms with floor drains, rooms that could potentially flood or anywhere that may require wet mopping.

Can I install laminate flooring over carpet?

No, all carpet and padding should be removed completely prior to installation.

Can I install laminate flooring over concrete?

You can install laminate flooring over concrete that has cured for at least 60 days prior to installation. It is crucial to avoid all direct contact between the concrete and the laminate floor because the soil beneath the concrete can transmit humidity into the floor. You must install a 4 mil (or thicker) polyethylene vapour barrier under your foam underlay or use a convenient 2 in 1 foam underlay that has a vapour barrier built-in.

Can I install laminate flooring over radiant heating?

Our laminate flooring is suitable for radiant heated floors, but not for electric heated floors. We recommend that an outside thermostat be installed to minimize the effect that rapid changes in temperature will have on the flooring product.

Can I install laminate flooring on steps?

Yes, you can install laminate flooring on steps but, for safety, the planks should be glued down with wood glue and the moulding should be nailed down.

Do I need to use underlay?

Laminate flooring floats and, therefore, there will always be a slight space between it and the subfloor, so you will need to use foam underlay to minimize these gaps. Underlay also helps with subfloor imperfections, prevents uneven or unstable flooring, minimizes hollow sounds when walking on the floor, and mutes sound transmission.

Do I need to use transition moulding?

Yes, use transition moulding where two floors meet, such as in doorways and archways. They protect the edges of flooring, make walking from one floor to another smoother and safer, and give your floor a more finished look.

Which direction do I install laminate flooring?

First consider which way the light enters your room, as it is best to install laminate with the planks running parallel to the light coming in windows or doors. The starter wall should also be as long and straight as possible.



FAQs: LAMINATE FLOORING

What should I do before installing laminate flooring?

1. Read all installation instructions included in your carton before you begin, as improper installation will void warranty. Inspect each laminate plank under good light conditions for defects, for colour or sheen differences, and for debris in the channel. Do not install damaged planks. Our warranties do not cover materials with visible defects once they are installed.
2. Leaving the cartons closed, let your laminate flooring acclimate in a horizontal position for 48 hours prior to installation.
3. Gather your tools. You will need foam underlay (if you have not purchased a laminate product with attached foam) and pressure sensitive polypropylene adhesive tape such as Tuck Tape or equivalent. If installing over a crawlspace or on a concrete floor, you will also need a 4 mil (or thicker) polyethylene vapour barrier or a 2-in-1 foam underlay that has a vapour barrier built in.
4. Ensure your subfloor is dry, clean and even before installation. To check for evenness, hammer a nail into the center of the floor. Tie a string to the nail and push the knot against the floor. Pull the string tight to the farthest corner of the room and examine the floor at eye level for any gaps between the string and floor. Move the string around the perimeter of the room noting any gaps larger than 3 mm (1/8"). Any floor unevenness of more than 3 mm (1/8") per 1 m (3' 2") must be sanded down or filled with an appropriate filler.

Should I stagger planks during installation?

Yes, always stagger the laminate planks when installing the floor. Start the first row with a full plank, the second row with 2/3 of a plank and the third row with 1/3 of a plank. The distance between joints from one row to the next must be 20 cm (8") or greater for the remainder of the installation.

What happens if my first row of planks is not straight?

It is very important that your first row be absolutely straight as it is the foundation of your installation. If your first row is not properly aligned or joints are not sealed tightly, there may be gaps between the planks. This will allow residue or unwanted particles to get caught in the grooves and result in poor alignment. Do not continue to install your second row of planks if your first row is installed incorrectly.

What kind of sealant can I use?

Use any sealant that is specifically recommended for laminate flooring.

How do I make my laminate flooring last?

- Avoid scratches by applying felt pads to your furniture legs and only using soft rubber casters with a minimum of 2.54 cm (1") of surface contact - replace when worn or dirty.
- Protect high traffic areas with runners and area rugs.
- Use mats in front of the kitchen sink and dishwasher to protect against dropped utensils and spills.

How do I clean my laminate flooring?

- Sweep, dust or vacuum your laminate floors on a regular basis - once or twice a week. Use a broom with soft bristles and/or a vacuum with the hard floor attachment only. By performing a regular routine, you will remove tough spots, dirt and grit which may cause scratches or stains.
- Clean and remove spills as soon as they happen as excess water can damage the surface and seep into the seams of the flooring. Use a damp cloth to blot the spill then dry the surface thoroughly.
- Use a cleaner specially formulated for laminate flooring. Spray a small amount onto a dry cloth or mop to clean up any dirt and footprints. Avoid using excessive moisture, and do not pour or spray directly on to the floor. Too much moisture can cause warping, which is not covered under warranty.
- Do not use a wet spray microfiber mop. Never use ammonia-based products, oil-based detergents, wax, polish or any other household cleaner, as they can damage the finish. Never use scouring agents as they may dull or distort the finish. Do not use a buffing machine of any kind.
- Be careful using chemical cleaners on laminate flooring with beveled edges. These may stripe the paint of the beveled edge, which is not covered under warranty.

How do I repair minor scratches or nicks?

You can use colour fill or laminate floor repair paste to repair minor scratches or nicks.

Can I refinish or recoat my laminate?

Unlike hardwood flooring, laminate cannot be refinished or recoated. If the laminate is too old or worn, or you want to update the look of your home, you will need to replace the floor.