

# Engineered Wooden Floors Property Owners' Guide

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wooden  
floors.

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## Our Terminology Explained

### Engineered Flooring

Engineered flooring is multi-layered in construction; with a hardwood timber wear surface, a middle core layer and a bottom layer of veneer. The boards are 100% timber and are finished in 5 or 6 coats of high quality UV hardened lacquer—in different sheen levels—or oil, depending on your choice of coating. These are applied in dust free conditions and are baked on to provide a flawless finish. Engineered flooring is precision made so each joint matches perfectly and no filler is required.

Engineered flooring comes in plank and 3-strip boards.



Plank



3-strip

### Subfloor

This is the structure your wooden floor sits on. It can be concrete, wood, a manufactured product such as plywood, or joists.

### Grinding of Concrete Subfloor

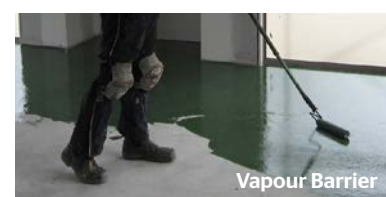
Grinding concrete subfloors removes contaminants—such as chemicals, paint, glue and silicon—which have a detrimental effect on timber and on the adhesive quality of the glue used to fix the wooden flooring to the subfloor. Therefore, it is necessary to grind all concrete subfloors, if your flooring is being installed as a 'direct fix'. This is not necessary if your floor is being 'floated'.



Grinding Subfloor

### Vapour Barrier System

Due to the porous nature of concrete it is necessary to apply a sealant to keep the amount of moisture coming into contact with the wooden flooring to a minimum. Moisture can cause the timber to swell and effect the adhesive quality of the glue. This is not necessary if your floor is being 'floated'.



Vapour Barrier

### Direct Fix Floor

A direct fix floor is when each board is glued firmly to the prepared subfloor. Engineered wooden floors installed using 'direct fix' have a more solid sound than floating floors.

### Floating Floor

A floating floor is when boards are placed over a reasonably level subfloor of any material. The boards are installed over a 2-3mm waterproof underlay or plastic sheeting and held in place at the skirting board edges. No grinding of the concrete subfloors or vapour barrier system is required, which reduces the amount of preparation and therefore cost.

### Underlay

For floating floors, underlays can provide a moisture barrier and have acoustic properties. With floors that are direct fix, an acoustic underlay will reduce noise transfer between floors.

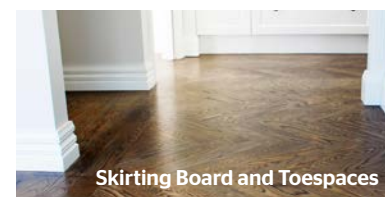
### **Skirting Boards, Toespaces, Trims and Gap Sealant**

Wood is a natural product which expands and contracts in reaction to the amount of moisture in its environment. A certain amount of movement is to be expected. We will leave an expansion gap around the edge of your floor to accommodate this. This gap is covered by skirting boards, toespaces, trims or gap sealant.

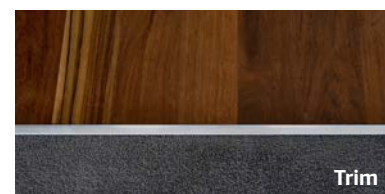
Trims are generally used between one flooring type and another, for example between wood and carpet or tiles.

Gap sealant can be used, on direct fixed floors, where skirting boards are not installed, for example at sliding doors.

Trims and gap sealant are generally installed by the builder some time after we leave. We can come back and install these for you, which is why we have listed them separately on your quote. Skirting boards and toespaces are to be supplied and installed by yourself or by your tradespeople.



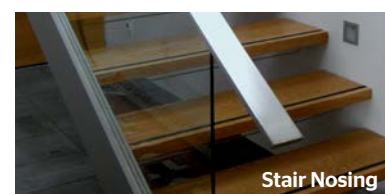
Skirting Board and Toespaces



Trim

### **Stair Nosing**

This is used to cover the front edge of the stair step—it makes the lip stronger. We recommend a solid wood, slip resistant nosing, which can match (or be stained to match) your flooring choice. The insert is generally black but an alternative colour can be chosen. Metal stair nosing can also be used. Slip resistant strips are usually required by the New Zealand Building Code.



Stair Nosing



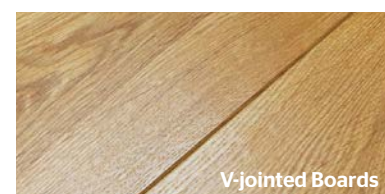
Stair Nosing

### **V-jointed and Micro-bevelled Timber**

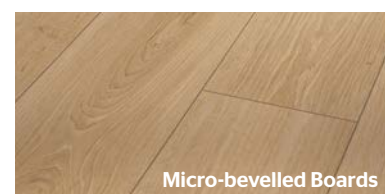
A chamfer—sloping edge—is machined on each board creating a groove between the floorboards. This can be of different depth/widths. V-jointed is deeper than micro-bevelled—for example a 1.5mm chamfer will create a 3mm wide groove.

Traditionally these joints were used in oiled floors with the expectation that, with regular topping up of the oil and careful maintenance, it would never need to be re-sanded. Nowadays they are being manufactured prefinished in polyurethane.

While these look good and are currently on-trend, please be aware of the limitations. Should the floor need to be sanded and have new polyurethane applied—when worn or scratched—we would have to sand back to below the groove, as it is not possible to keep the grooves even during the sanding process. Not only would you lose the 'look' of the V-joint but a substantial amount of the board thickness. The life span of a V-jointed floor is about half that of flooring without. You may be able to get one sand with a V-jointed board, two with a micro-bevelled board, as opposed to three to four with a straight edged board.



V-jointed Boards



Micro-bevelled Boards

Please see our website [swinard.co.nz](http://swinard.co.nz) for further information regarding your wood and floor finishing choices.

## Accepting your Quote

Your quote is valid for 30 days.

Please sign your quote and initial each page of our Terms and Conditions document—sent as an attachment to your quote—and return both documents to us. We will then schedule your job.

We require considerable notice to schedule work as we can be booked weeks ahead. It is best to contact us as soon as your decision is made.

On acceptance of your quote you will be invoiced for your timber in order to secure it at the price quoted. Once this invoice is paid, we will order it for you. Your wood can be stored on the work site, if conditions are suitable, or in our workshop. Timber owned by our clients, is covered by our insurance policy while in our workshop. We only deliver and install wood that has been paid for.

## Variations to Accepted Quotes

Variations to your accepted quote need to be formally recorded and signed before they can be carried out.

## Declining your Quote

You are not obliged to notify us, however your feedback is always welcome.

## Flooring Samples Disclaimer

Photographs of our flooring and samples lent to you by Swinard Wooden Floors are provided as a guide only. Please remember that photographic colour may vary from the actual wood due to translation and reproduction limitations. As a floor is made up of many pieces of timber there will be more variations in grain and colour than can be shown in either a photograph or sample; wood is a natural product and no two pieces are the same. Character variations are to be expected.

While we do our best to match stained samples, please be aware that stains are done by hand and that the timber they are applied to will not exactly match the sample's. Timber variation will affect the end result and subtle differences will occur. Stained samples should be considered a guide only.

## Installation and Site Requirements

**We will endeavour to make your wooden floor installation as convenient as possible.**

**We ask you to ensure that the owner and/or project manager are aware of and follow our installation and site requirements.**

We expect our clients to have their site prepared prior to our arrival. Site conditions are extremely important to ensure a high standard of work. These include temperature, humidity, subfloor condition, dampness and dust. Swinard Wooden Floors reserves the right to delay commencement of a job or completion of a floor if conditions are unsuitable.

Please advise us of any specific requirements or expectations that you may have. These may include the time frame, hours of work or security.

### All Wooden Floors

- Areas where flooring is being installed need to be clean, as well as clear of all materials and other trades people until the job is fully completed. Any exceptions to this must be made by prior arrangement.
- Any silicone or silicone based product which comes into contact with the floor will cause an adverse reaction with the floor coating. Silicone is used by—and therefore can be found on the footwear of—some tradespeople; for example plumbers, glaziers and kitchen installers.
- We suggest that your wooden floor is installed before your new carpets and top coats of paint. While care will be taken of your walls and other flooring during the installation process, we cannot be held accountable for any accidental damage to finished paint work or carpets. Please ensure that your project manager is aware of this right from the start—we would not want you to have to bear unnecessary additional costs.
- Any heating or air-conditioning systems, which are set into the subfloor, should be operational. However, heating systems must be turned off 48 hours prior to installation and must remain completely turned off for a minimum of 7 days after the job is completed. See **Heating**, page 9.

### New Properties

- For direct fix and floating floors we require the building to be fully enclosed and all 'wet' trades to have finished. All concrete slabs must be cured and we will apply a moisture sealant to them. We prefer to install the floor after all building work and painting, apart from the top coat, is completed.
- Skirting boards and toespaces must be left off until the floor is completed. Installation of these is to be carried out by the builder or joiner, unless specifically arranged with Swinard Wooden Floors.
- **Levelling of floors must be done by a qualified floor preparation specialist, in conjunction with ourselves.** Any levelling work required must be done after the floor has been ground and sealed with a moisture barrier. Levelling compound, applied underneath the moisture barrier, may be weakened by the presence of trapped moisture in the concrete slab. A primer is applied before levelling to ensure a strong bond between the moisture barrier and the levelling compound.

## Existing Properties

While every effort will be made to minimise disruption during installation, there will be some inconvenience. This may mean the kitchen, laundry or WC are out of service.

### How to prepare for your wooden floor installation:

- We require the removal of all items—including furniture, window treatments and electrical appliances—from the area in which we are to work, in order to prevent damage. It is advisable to empty cupboards. The work site should be completely cleared.
- The cost of us preparing the work site for you, including moving furniture, has not been included in your quote. We charge an hourly rate for labour, plus the cost of any materials required. We will need to know in advance if you wish us to move items for you, as time will need to be allocated. While all care will be taken with your belongings, Swinard Wooden Floors cannot be held liable for any damage, breakage or loss incurred.
- If you have a central carpet square, this will need to be removed and re-fitted by a carpet installer.
- Should a toilet pan need to be removed, if possible, this will be carried out by Swinard Wooden Floors. Its reinstatement will need to be done by a plumber.
- Subfloor preparation is usually required and is site specific. It could require sweeping and cleaning only, sanding/grinding and the application of a moisture barrier or levelling compound. Provision for your specific requirements will be included in your quote. Any unforeseen work under existing floor coverings—such as dry rot, an uneven surface or faulty concrete—are not included in your quote.
- Removal of skirting boards is often necessary before installation and can be refitted or replaced once the floor is completed. Alternatively, a beading can be fitted against the skirting board. This can either be finished to the colour of the skirting board or matched to the wood of the floor. The cost of replacement skirting boards and/or beading is not included in your quote. Unless previously discussed and quoted, we presume this work will be carried out by others.

## After Installation

Once the floor has been completed, its care becomes your responsibility.

You can walk on your engineered floor immediately after installation.

If tradespeople are still on site we advise that it is covered with cardboard—flat side down—until all building work is completed. Do not affix this to the floor with tape, as it may damage the polyurethane or oil coating when removed. You can keep it in place by taping each section of cardboard to the next.

Be aware that you may need to have your doors trimmed after your floor has been installed.

The reinstallation of all toilet pans, appliances and furnishings is your responsibility.

We will leave a tidy work site on completion of your floor. Cleaning of the work site and premises is to be done by others.

Please see **Cleaning and Maintenance**, page 11, for floor care thereafter.

## The Nature of Wood

**Your wooden floor is part of your building and the performance of the floor is dependent on temperature and relative humidity within the building.**

### Movement

Wood is a natural material, it absorbs and releases moisture to and from the air. While most timber used in engineered flooring is kiln dried to reduce the moisture content, the wood's ability to absorb moisture remains. This ability is lessened by applying a polyurethane or oil coating. To keep moisture from below to a minimum, all concrete subfloors are moisture sealed prior to direct fix installations.

Throughout the year we experience a range of weather patterns; cold, damp conditions create high humidity levels causing the wood to swell, whereas heating and sunlight have the reverse effect. Therefore, a small degree of expansion and contraction is to be expected in any wooden floor and this can be visible. To allow the wood to expand and shrink, we leave expansion gaps between the floor and the wall, these gaps are covered by skirting boards or beadings and trims. Fine gaps may appear from season to season, especially in rooms which experience unusual or significant changes in humidity and temperature, from both heating and sunlight. To help minimise these effects, owners can stabilise the environment of the building through temperature and humidity control.

It is not recommended that a house is left unheated for long periods during winter, as the moisture content of the building will rise without the drying effect of the heating and venting associated with normal occupancy. After a period of being unoccupied, do not suddenly heat the house. This may dry out the surface of the flooring faster than the middle and bottom of the timber, leading to differential shrinkage. This can cause cracking of the polyurethane along the joints and cupping of the boards.

### Heating

All forms of heating, including freestanding heaters, radiators, heat pumps and under floor heating, affect the temperature of the floor. The floor should remain at a temperature below 24°C or 75°F, no matter what type of heating is used. **Heating temperatures must be adjusted gradually as any extreme temperature change can damage the floor.** For this reason we recommended that any manual control units are enclosed and positioned so that only experienced people have access to them.

**Each time the heating is turned on, start at 15°C and increase the temperature by 1 to 2 degrees per day over a period of 7 days, until the required level is reached—below 24°C. It is recommended that you reduce the temperature in the same manner.**

The moisture content of the floor should still remain within the acceptable range of 9-13%. Should you be considering a water controlled system, it is important that the unit is controlled by the temperature of the floor, not the temperature of the water in the system. Experience has shown that misuse of temperature controls will prove too much for any wooden floor and will eventually lead to floor failure. Insulation in concrete slabs, dehumidifiers and heat transfer kits will also impact on the temperature and humidity level of your wooden floor.

## Sunlight and UV

All natural products are affected by light, particularly strong sunlight and UV rays which will have a detrimental effect on wooden floors. It will dry out the timber and splits may appear. It can also cause a distinct change in colour, particularly noticeable with darker woods which can become significantly lighter. This can happen over a period of time, but occasionally it can happen almost immediately after the floor has been installed. Colour change is most obvious when rugs are placed on the floor. It is advisable not to place rugs down initially, to enable any fading to happen evenly throughout the floor.

The chemical reaction which causes materials to fade is accelerated by high temperatures. We therefore strongly suggest that you attach UV filters and/or blinds to windows, not only to protect your wood flooring but also your furniture, fabrics and carpets. We also recommend that the temperature of the room is considered. Please be aware that we cannot be held responsible for fading.

## Timber Flooring in Wet Areas

A wet area is an area within a building with a water supply system. Wet areas are problematic for all types of flooring and nothing is 100% waterproof, including most vinyl and tiles with grouting. There are many conflicting views with regards to timber flooring in wet areas. Whether you have a slow leak or a major flood it can be a costly repair. Ultimately it is often the insurance companies that bear the costs and it is worthwhile checking with your insurance company to find out exactly what type of flooring they cover in such an event. They are not all the same. That said, there have been many instances when flooded timber floors have dried out, given sufficient time, and require no remedial work at all. The most important remedy for any major spill, is to remove the liquid as soon as possible, without causing product shrinkage (see cleaning and maintenance).

We apply a waterproofing membrane to all concrete subfloors, this helps stop damp coming up through the concrete and into contact with the timber. Similarly, with a plywood substrate in a wet area, we will apply a waterproof barrier. Both these protect the timber from below.

Timber flooring, whether prefinished or finished on site, will not have a continuous membrane above. Timber flooring moves seasonally, as it reacts to the humidity level within its environment and the coating will crack between the boards during this process. A gap sealant is applied to the expansion gap left around the edge of the flooring when skirting boards/toespaces are not being installed, it can also be placed under a skirting board in bathrooms, WCs, laundries, etc. However, as with tile grouting, water can still work its way in and through capillary action, travel some distance.

The polyurethane we use is waterborne. This is a two-pot coating with a hardening agent in it. It is much more waterproof and hard-wearing than water-based polyurethane. We would not recommend either oiled floors or floating floors in wet areas.

In summary, we feel that a wooden floor in a wet area is as suitable as any other flooring type. Please discuss any concerns you have with regards to "wet areas" at the time of quoting.

## Bathrooms and Laundries

These environments can often have higher moisture levels. In these areas the timber should be well looked after and the following steps should be taken:

- Use venting kits to vent clothes dryers to the outside.
- Prevent water leaking from washing machines, shower doors and other plumbing fixtures.
- Do not leave puddles of water, damp towels, bath mats or clothes on the floors.
- Use extractor fans, heaters and/or heated towel rails.

Please see our website [swinard.co.nz](http://swinard.co.nz) for comprehensive information on caring for and maintaining your wooden floor, controlling and heating your environment, as well as wooden floor expectations.

## Cleaning and Maintenance

### Cleaning Products

Only use the recommended cleaning products for your particular flooring/coating type and follow the manufacturer's instructions. These will be emailed to you, when the work has been completed, along with your invoice. Should we be working through your builder, please ensure they pass them on to you.

**Always remove all spills and excess moisture immediately.**

As a rough guide the following apply for the two main floor coating types:

### Polyurethane Coated Floors

1. Vacuum – using soft setting – or sweep the floor to remove surface dust and grit.
2. Wipe your floor using a microfibre mop.

We recommend using a specialised cleaning mop that works with a floor cleaning fluid, particular to your coating type. Should you prefer to use an alternative mop – microfibre mops work best – please ensure that you keep the amount of water/specialised cleaning product used to a minimum and apply this with the use of a spray bottle.

**We recommend Bona Polyurethane cleaning products. These are available from Look Floors, 25 Shakespeare Road, Waltham, 03 366 2551.**

### Oil Coated Floors

Once your floor is completed you will be supplied with a cleaning kit that is to be used with your particular oil coating. Follow the instructions that come with it. Should you be unsure about its use, please contact our office, as it is important that oiled floors are cared for correctly.

Generally for oiled floors, the following is required:

1. Remove dirt with a soft broom or a vacuum cleaner—using the soft setting.
2. Then, using a microfibre mop and the appropriate cleaning product for your type of oil, clean the floor. The amount of liquid used for mopping must be kept to a minimum—the mop needs to be damp rather than wet – and applying the cleaning product through a spray bottle is recommended. Some of the cleaning products we recommend also nourish your timber.
3. Regular maintenance care, to top up the oil in your timber, is also necessary. This can be applied to the whole floor or specifically to high wear areas – such as through doorways and in front of kitchen sinks—when they begin to look dehydrated. When the floor is looking greyish or tired, clean the floor as above and allow it to dry, then apply oil as directed by the oil manufacturer. It will need to be the same type of oil as originally applied to your floor. It is difficult to estimate how frequently this will need to be done as it depends on the amount of floor use. We would recommend, in residential areas, that it be re-oiled once a year but more regularly in commercial situations where there is heavier foot traffic. Larger areas can be maintained mechanically.

## **To Protect your Floor from Scratches**

- We recommend you attach protective pads to the base of all furniture. A wide range of protective pads are available from hardware stores. We have found Bunnings to have the best selection.
- Care must be taken when moving furniture; remember to lift and not drag.
- We recommend you keep your pets nails/claws trimmed.
- Be aware that stiletto heels will leave dents in your floor.
- Be aware that sports shoes and work boots can retain sharp stones and grit.
- Use entry mats and rugs—not rubber backed—to trap grit and small stones.

## **What Not to Use**

- Do not use abrasive, silicon or solvent-based products, soap-based detergents and other cleaners which will leave a dull film on your floor that is extremely difficult to remove.
- Do not use abrasive pads, steel wool or scouring powder.
- Do not use steam cleaners on your wooden floor.

## **Floods**

If the timber floor is inadvertently flooded, damage can be minimised by removing the surplus water as fast as possible and gradually adding extra atmospheric heating—definitely do not turn up the underfloor heating. Short term use of dehumidifiers and improved air circulation can also help to remove the moisture that may have got between the boards or underneath the boards. Do whatever is possible to remove the water quickly before the timber has time to absorb and hold too much moisture. A well installed floor can recover from flood damage, to a large degree, if prompt action is taken.

## **Heating/Sunlight and UV**

Refer to page 7 and 8.

## Health and Safety

**Swinard Wooden Floors is committed to providing a safe workplace for everyone involved.**

Our staff undergo regular Health and Safety training and the company has been awarded the gold status through Site Wise. This is the highest level.

All our staff are first aid trained through St John. They are also aware of, and abide by, all health and safety regulations.

It is in everyone's best interests that our designated work area be kept clear. Please ensure that only employees from Swinard Wooden Floors touch, move and/or operate the equipment and materials we bring to site.

Where we are the main contractor—not a subcontractor of a builder—you and any visitors will be inducted on to the site and asked to comply with all health and safety requirements relevant to the site. Please follow our staff's instructions. Should you or any members of your family or workforce notice any potential hazards, please ensure that these are brought to our attention.

A Health and Safety compliance fee is included in your quote and a SSSP—Site Specific Safety Plan—will be drawn up for your job site.



## Our Guarantee

### Prefinished Engineered Timber Flooring

**This guarantee is provided by Swinard Wooden Floors Limited and applies for a period of 2 (two) years from the completion date. Completed, signed guarantees will be sent on request.**

This guarantee is not transferable. It applies to the Construction Company (if applicable), plus the first owner of the floor.

#### **A. What our guarantee covers.**

Subject to paragraphs C and D below, we guarantee:

1. Our workmanship, so that you will receive a quality prefinished engineered timber floor finished to a high standard of workmanship, which will perform for at least 2 years from the completion date.
2. The installation system used, including the processes and fixing materials.

This guarantee applies to our workmanship. Product Guarantees vary with the brand, a copy of your product guarantee can be issued on request.

#### **B. What we will do in the event of a claim under this guarantee.**

Should the floor behave in any way significantly different to what is expected, (e.g. significant gaps or cupping appearing, timber lifting, polyurethane delaminating, etc.) then we will take all practical steps to determine why it is doing this. Should the problem relate, in any way, to fault on our part in the preparation of the timber or laying, then we will take all steps possible to repair or replace the floor to your satisfaction.

#### **C. What our guarantee does not cover.**

Your new wooden floor is a "living" product, with shrinkage and expansion being a natural phenomenon – it should respond to normal everyday changes in moisture content. Some movement is to be expected, particularly with seasonal variations. This can be minimised by keeping the surrounding environment relatively stable.

Our guarantee does not cover damage or changes to the floor in the following situations:

1. General wear and tear, fire or flood.
2. Irregularities or movement in the subfloor, including earthquakes.
3. This guarantee does not apply where the concrete subfloor has not been ground and sealed by us (where necessary), or where timber products not recommended by us have been used.
4. If modifications or alterations have been made to the floor by others.
5. Damage due to lack of maintenance, improper cleaning and/or inadequate protection against dirt.
6. Damage due to intense point loading pressure (e.g. stiletto heels and unprotected furniture feet).
7. Abnormal use or damage from dragging furniture, burning, dropping of sharp objects or other such accidents, indelible staining such as ink, dye, tar, waxes etc. and scratches from animal claws.
8. Marks left by the use of rubber mats or rubber protectors; wear from abrasive matting.
9. Damage due to exposure to excessive sunlight, temperature, lack of adequate ventilation, water/ moisture or humidity.

#### **D. Your responsibilities**

It is your responsibility to follow our cleaning, maintenance and heating instructions. Please also see our website [swinard.co.nz](http://swinard.co.nz) for subfloor preparation, controlling your environment, cleaning and heating instructions, as well as timber floor expectations and how to avoid problems occurring. Your guarantee is only valid when these directions have been followed. All claims under this guarantee must be made in writing. In no event will our total liability for a claim or claims in respect of this guarantee exceed our quotation price for the floor.