

# Laminate Floors Property Owners' Guide

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## Our Terminology Explained

### Laminate Flooring

A laminate floor has an imprinted textured image of wood on the surface—which imitates wood but it is not made from real wood. Natural timber characteristics (such as knots and imperfections), timber grain, sawcut marks and the true colour of wood are all captured in these realistic, embossed planks, which come with a subtle bevelled edge. Made up of 4 layers fused together plus 3 coatings, laminate floors are hard wearing, scratch resistant and easy to maintain. They are fade resistant (an important factor with New Zealand's harsh UV conditions), water resistant (making them ideal for kitchens, bathrooms and other wet areas) and conform with **E3 regulations**. A low- maintenance, hassle-free option.



#### Laminate Flooring Board Construction

1. Superior wear and scratch-resistance coating
2. Timber image
3. Impact-resistance layer
4. Moisture-resistant HDF core
5. Back stabiliser

Laminate floors are floated over a subfloor and can have a 2mm underlay in between, for noise reduction. They come with their own range of finishing bars—for where they meet carpet or tiles, for thresholds at doors and for stair treads. The planks come in varying widths and colours and range from 7-9.5mm thick. They have a unclick system along the edges, so that they fit together perfectly. A high-quality laminate floor, properly installed, should last 20-30 years depending on the usage and care it receives.

### Subfloor

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

### Grinding of Concrete Subfloor

Grinding the concrete subfloor would only be necessary if it is uneven, as laminate floors are floated.



Grinding Subfloor

### Vapour Barrier System

This is not generally required for floating floors but may be necessary under some circumstance. It is a sealant which protects the flooring from moisture in the concrete subfloor. Moisture can cause the timber component of the board to swell.

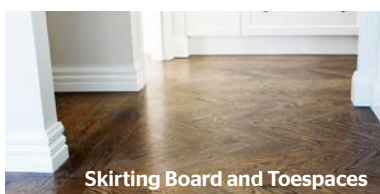


Vapour Barrier

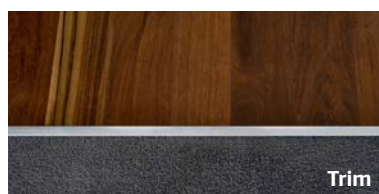
**Floating Floor** A floating floor is when boards are placed over a reasonably level subfloor of any material. The boards are installed over a 2-3mm waterproof underlay or plastic sheeting and held in place at the edges by trims and/or skirting boards. No grinding of the concrete subfloors or vapour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

**Underlay** Underlays can provide a moisture barrier and have acoustic properties.

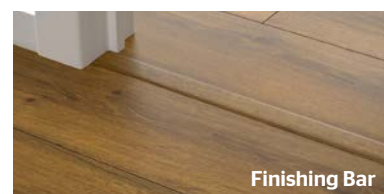
**Skirting Boards, Toespaces, Trims, Finishing Bars and Gap Sealant** Laminates contain natural products which expand and contract in reaction to the amount of moisture in its environment. A certain amount of movement is to be expected. We will leave an expansion gap around the edge of your floor to accommodate this. This gap is covered by skirting boards, toespaces, trims or gap sealant. Trims are also used between one flooring type and another, for example between laminate flooring and carpet or tiles. Laminates have matching trims and finishing bars.



Skirting Board and Toespaces



Trim



Finishing Bar

**Stair Nosing** This is used to cover the front edge of the stair step—it makes the lip stronger. Laminates have matching stair nosings or a metal stair nosing can also be used. Slip resistant strips are usually required by the New Zealand Building Code.



Stair Nosing

**Micro-bevel** A chamfer—sloping edge—is machined on each board creating a small groove between the floorboards.



Micro-bevelled Boards

Please see our website [swinard.co.nz](http://swinard.co.nz) for further information.

## 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 flooring in order to secure it at the price quoted.

Once this invoice is paid, we will order it for you. Your flooring can be stored on the work site, if conditions are suitable, or in our workshop. Flooring owned by our clients, is covered by our insurance policy while in our workshop. We only deliver and install flooring 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 product due to translation and reproduction limitations. As a floor is made up of many different boards there will be more variations in grain and colour than can be shown in either a photograph or sample; character variations are to be expected.

## Installation and Site Requirements

**We will endeavour to make your laminate 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 Laminate 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.
- We suggest that your laminate 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 surfaces 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 7.

### New Properties

- 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, if required. 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 may be required and 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. If in doubt, please call us to discuss.

### 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 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. 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 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 laminate 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. 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 reinstatement 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 9, for floor care thereafter.

## 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.



## The Nature of Laminate Flooring

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

### Movement

These floorboards contain wood which is a natural material, it absorbs and releases moisture to and from the air. While the timber used in their manufacture is dried, its ability to absorb moisture remains. Depending on the condition of a concrete subfloor, it may be necessary to grind and seal it. A moisture barrier and/or underlay will be placed beneath the floated floor. 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 based product 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.

### 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 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

Laminate flooring can be affected by light, particularly strong sunlight and UV rays which can have an effect on its colour.

This can happen over a period of time and 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.

We suggest that you attach UV filters and/or blinds to windows, not only to protect your 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.

## Laminate Flooring in Wet Areas

A wet area is an area within a building with a water supply system. It always includes bathrooms, showers, laundries and WCs. 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 flooring in wet areas. Please see **E3 regulations** found on our website under Information. 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.

We can apply a waterproofing membrane to a concrete subfloor, if required—this helps stop damp coming up through the concrete and into contact with the flooring. Similarly, with a plywood substrate in a wet area, we can apply a waterproof barrier. Both these protect the flooring from below. Laminate flooring will not have a continuous membrane on its surface and can move seasonally, as it reacts to the humidity level within its environment. 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.

In summary, we feel that a laminate floor is suitable for a wet area. 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 flooring 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, bathmats 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 floor, controlling and heating your environment, etc.

## Cleaning and Maintenance

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

As a rough guide for laminate flooring the following apply:

**Maintenance** - this should be done on a regular basis.

- Vacuum (using soft setting) or sweep the floor to remove surface dust and grit.

**Cleaning** - this should be done when the floor looks dirty or there are marks on it.

- Wipe your floor, using the Pergo Floor Cleaning Kit, as directed. Ensure you keep the amount of liquid used to a minimum, using just sufficient to keep the mop moving.

**Stain removal** - Pergo is one of the most stain resistant floorings available.

- Remove as soon as possible. Acetone can be used on nail polish, permanent markers, etc. Use sparingly, rubbing along the length of board and avoid excessive acetone on or near joints.

## Protecting your floor from scratches

- To protect your floor from furniture scratches we recommend you attach protective pads to the base of all furniture. A wide range of protective pads are available from hardware stores.
- Care must be taken when moving furniture and appliances; remember to lift and not drag.
- Be aware that sports shoes and work boots can retain sharp stones and grit.
- Use entry mats and rugs to trap moisture, grit and small stones from all footwear.
- Office chairs on castor wheels (and any hard plastic wheels) can cause excessive wear. We recommend you use Type W castor wheels and/or place protective, clear vinyl mats under them.

## Cleaning Products

Only use the recommended cleaning products for your laminate flooring 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. A specialised mop kit will be left on site. Laminate flooring can also be cleaned with Quickstep and Bona products, which are available from hardware stores, retail flooring companies and Look Floors on Shakespeare Road, Waltham.

## What Not to Use

- Do not use abrasive, silicon or solvent or ammonia-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.
- Do not apply wax or polish to your laminate floor.
- Do not wash your mop cloth in fabric softener.

## Floods

If the 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 wood component 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.

## Our Guarantee

### Laminate 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 laminate 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, board lifting, 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 or installation, 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 laminate floor is prone to shrinkage and expansion - it should respond to normal everyday moisture changes. 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 laminate 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 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.