BESWICK OAK

Wood Flooring General Installation Guide

Important Notes

The purpose of this booklet is to outline the basic principles of installing your Beswick Oak Engineered Oak flooring.

For more detailed technical information, refer to British Standards Wood Installation Guide BS8201-1987. The Subfloor must conform to BS8204: Part 1 1987

As we have no control of the storage and handling of the timber on site, site conditions or the quality of workmanship we strongly recommend you employ the services of an experienced, competent & insured wood fitter.

It is the responsibility of the owner/installer, whether professional or not, to determine that all internal site conditions are stable and suitable for the installation of the agreed flooring. The wood flooring must also be thoroughly checked prior to installation. No complaints regarding the appearance of the product will be accepted by the company once the wood has been installed.

Read the instructions on the packaging of all ancillaries and equipment very carefully. Keep everything meticulously clean and orderly as work progresses.

Disclaimer: The specifications and technical information given in this publication are intended for guidance and although they are, to the best of our knowledge correct, they are given without warranty. We cannot accept any responsibility for reliance placed upon the advice contained herein since practical expertise and site conditions are outside of our control. Neither do we accept liability for the performance of the product arising from such use. This does not affect your statutory rights.

Where to install engineered wood

Engineered wood floors are suitable for all rooms other than those that are subject to excessive moisture and high levels of humidity.

Glossary of Common Terms

Engineered Flooring – A product for modern living. With the aesthetic characteristics of a solid board. It provides more versatile fitting options. Top layer of 4 or 6mm oak glued to 11, 14 or 16mm of crossover glued ply. The construction increases the stability of the planks and reduces the natural tendency of wood flooring to expand, contract, warp and cup due to the changing room temperature or moisture in the air. Suitable for use over underfloor heating.

Brushed – The surface of the planks is roller brushed to remove some of the softer growth. This results in a textured surface that gently highlights the natural grain structure of the wood.

Oils – All prefinished boards are oiled with products giving deep protection against daily wear and tear.

Smoking – Smoking oak boards is a traditional method for enriching and darkening the floor's appearance. The tannin acid within the oak reacts with the smoking process to create a truly unique finish. Not every oak board contains the same quantity of tannin therefore the colour and appearance can vary significantly.

Cutting and wastage – For a standard area, a rough guide of 8% is recommended. For small, and complicated areas or if a greater deal of consistency is required, we would recommend 10%. For Herringbone floors, wastage will be higher, so we recommend 12%.

Tolerances – Due to the nature of wood some variation in the size and thickness of the wood will occur.

Natural features of wood – All our wood floors are carefully selected to offer a range of naturally occurring characteristics of the tree. This will include knots and splits of various sizes for our rustic grade oak. Our natural grade oak will have these natural characteristics but are generally smaller and appear with lesser frequency than our rustic grade.

Delivery, Storage and Acclimatisation of Wood

Please do not arrange delivery to site until all wet works (i.e. subfloors, plastering, painting, cement work and tiling) are completely finished and dry. Conventional heating systems should have been run for a minimum of two weeks and underfloor heating for a minimum of three weeks before taking delivery.

It is essential that engineered wood flooring is allowed to acclimatise and is stored correctly once delivered to site. We recommend the flooring is placed in the room where it is to be fitted or in one with a similar environment. Engineered wood should be left for a minimum of 7 – 10 days to acclimatise when being installed onto floors with underfloor heating. The room temperature should be at normal living conditions (minimum of 15°c and maximum 25°c and a relative humidity of 45-65%). Open the boxes each end and along the length of the box. Remove any plastic wrapping from the outside of the box. Some wood may be wrapped in plastic inside the box, ensure this is cut open at both ends and along the length. Stack the boxes, separated by battens, to allow air to circulate around them. The product should not be stored next to a radiator or on/near any direct heat source. Store at least 50mm off the ground and 500mm from any wall.

Considerations Prior to Installation - Planning the Room

Wood floors should be installed at the final stage of any site work, once all wet trades have been completed and dry. Generally speaking, the boards should be laid lengthways towards the main incoming light source and, where possible, down the length of the room.

It is the responsibility of the owner/installer to determine that all internal conditions are stable and suitable for the installation of the engineered oak flooring. The wood flooring must be thoroughly checked to ensure the correct product and quantity has been received.

When fitting a floor subject to significant variation whether it be board length, colour, and/or natural features, the board selection has a significant influence on the overall look of the room. The fitter must be sensitive to this and distribute variation evenly (this is particularly imperative with the smoked floors) to achieve a natural looking floor. In addition, it is the installer's responsibility to ensure the suitable placement of distinctly featured boards. We would recommend dry laying the floor prior to installation. Any boards deemed too conspicuous can be used as cuts or installed in less obvious areas. We would also recommend the client and installer agree a starting point for installation as the first row of flooring sets the line for the entire floor.

Prior to laying the boards it may be necessary for the installer to under-cut the bottom of kitchen plinths, doorways etc to enable the boards to fit underneath.

Skirting Boards and Expansion Gaps: To accommodate the natural expansion and contraction movement of engineered wood 10mm expansion joints are required around the entire perimeter of the area to be fitted, this includes doorways. A narrow shadow-gap in front of fire-hearths will suffice and can be filled with silicon to match the colour of the hearth. Whenever possible the skirting boards are best fitted after installation of the wood as they can conceal the expansion gap around the perimeters. If this is not possible the expansion gaps can be concealed with hardwood beading or similar molding.

Site Preparation

Careful site preparation is essential to avoid potential problems with wooden floors after installation.

Moisture and Humidity:

All wood is hygroscopic (it will react to the moisture around and in contact with it) and as a result will expand or contract accordingly. A damp atmosphere can cause the wood to expand and dry conditions can cause the wood to shrink. Excessive action will create gaps between boards. Excessive variation in humidity can lead to boards distorting in shape and possibly lifting. All wet works (i.e. subfloors, plastering, painting, cement work

and tiling) must be completely finished and dry. Conventional heating systems should have been run for a minimum of two weeks and underfloor heating for a minimum of three weeks.

All possibilities of damp e.g. wall, drains, damp proof courses, plumbing, washing machines etc must be thoroughly checked and repaired if leaking. The suitability of the environment of particular room/s for a wood floor can only be assessed by the use of good quality testing equipment.

Do not use existing or previously laid floors as a guide to the suitability of laying a new floor. Failure to carry out the correct checks and take preventative action at this stage leads to the vast majority of wood flooring problems.

Subfloor preparation:

All construction dampness must be completely dry and the house should be at the temperature and humidity expected during occupation. The condition of the subfloor is integral to the stability and performance of the finished floor. All substrates should be structurally sound, flat, free of any debris, old adhesives and be clean and dry. The normal tolerances are +/- 3mm over a 2.0 metre straight edge. Uneven floors should be levelled with levelling compound or battens and packers depending on the fixing system to be used.

Subfloor Preparation: Sand and Cement/Concrete/Anhydrite screed

Prior to installing the wood floor, check and record the moisture level of the screed. The moisture reading for a normal sand & cement / concrete screed must be 2% or less while an anhydrite screed should be 0.05% or less.

Concrete subfloors at ground/basement levels must contain a damp proof membrane (DPM). If one does not exist or has been damaged then a new DPM must be fitted prior to installing the engineered wood floor.

Installing onto Sand and Cement/Concrete

When installing onto a sand & cement / concrete screed it is prudent to apply a sealant, the one we recommend is a BONA product: BONA R590 is a single part sealer, perfect for priming and strengthening weaker substrates as well as functioning as a highly effective moisture barrier on cementitious sub-floors where the relative humidity reading (R.H.) is as high as 90 - 100%. Note: Anhydrite screeds must not be sealed.

Engineered wood can be fully bonded onto suitably prepared screeds with Wood Adhesive. We recommend BONA Quantum flexible adhesive, applied with a 3mm notched trowel. There is no need to glue the tongue & groove when bonding the boards to the screed.

Subfloor Preparation: Existing Timber Floor

E.g. Joists, tongue and groove floorboards, plywood/chipboard and floating floors.

A final moisture check should be carried out and recorded immediately prior to installation. The wood to be installed should be within +/- 2% moisture of the surface onto which it is to be fitted. Only 20mm thick engineered boards can be fixed over sound and secure joists. When laying 20mm thick boards directly onto existing joists the gap between joists should not exceed 450mm.

All our engineered wood flooring (except the herringbone patterns) can be fitted onto floating floors, which must be sound, flat, firm and free of any deflection. Herringbone must be glued-down and thus the only appropriate installation method is the glue-down method.

Existing wood floors must be dry, level and firmly fixed. Loose boards not secured may cause the new floor to squeak. Take care if using nails and screws not to damage pipes or electrical cables beneath. If the floor is on or below ground level the installer should ensure there is no moisture build up beneath the boards, there is adequate ventilation beneath and between the joists, and air bricks are present and not blocked. Suspended ground floors must have sufficient cross ventilation to prevent condensation occurring on the underside of the flooring. It is advisable to lay a suitable membrane over the joists to help protect the undersides of the new boards from moisture.

Installing onto Existing Timber Floor

A new wood floor should be laid at a 90degree angle to the existing boards. If the new boards are to be laid in the same direction as the old, flooring grade plywood sheets, minimum 6mm thick, should be nailed or screwed down to cover the existing floor. Engineered wood can be either fully bonded onto a suitably prepared timber base with BONA Quantum flexible adhesive and/or secret nailed* using the Portanail system (*appropriate for 20mm thick boards only). Please follow the adhesive manufacturer's installation guidelines. If gluing onto timber, then the timber should be primed with a suitable primer before installation; we recommend BONA R540 Moisture Barrier & Primer though many installers do use a weak solution of PVA glue as a primer.

Engineered boards can be installed using the floating system where the glue-down method isn't achievable – over mixed substrates for example. We would recommend the pre-laying of a suitable, best quality underlay to provide a cushion between the floor and the subfloor. Float the floor on top of the underlay gluing the tongue and grooves. As above, Herringbone patterned flooring cannot be floated and must be installed using the glue-down method.

Other floor finishes

Porcelain tile, Natural stone/slate tile, lino and carpet should be removed prior to installation. Please follow installation guidelines above.

Underfloor Heating

Please ensure your underfloor heating supplier is aware that a wooden floor is to be installed over their system. The underfloor heating must be installed according to the manufacturer's guidelines and run as per their guidelines for at least three weeks prior to wood installation.

The heating should be turned off and the floor allowed to cool prior to installation. Over water systems we would recommend gluing with BONA Quantum flexible adhesive. For re-starting the heating post installation, we would recommend starting with a low temperature, gradually building up so as not to shock the wood. We would not recommend covering the floor with rugs or protective sheeting as this may compromise the timber, glue and/or finish. The surface temperature of the new timber floor must not exceed 27ºC. Significant damage may occur to the flooring if this is not adhered to.

Please request a copy of our 'Oak with UFH Installation Information Guide' for more info' on installing with underfloor heating. This is also available for download off our website.

Cleaning & After Care

Please request a copy of our 'General Cleaning & Maintenance Information Engineered Wood Flooring' guide for recommended practices and products. This is also available to download off our website.

General Advice:

Entrance Mats: to protect against dirt and grit being brought in from outside and damaging your floor we would recommend the use of high-quality entrance mats.

Pads and Castors: to prevent unnecessary scratches and damage to your wood floor fit suitable felt pads or castors with castor cups to items of furniture which move across the floor without being lifted.

Sharp heels, particularly stilettos will dent and/or scratch wooden floors.

Ageing: as with any natural product, direct sunlight may alter the colour of the flooring. Areas of the surface that are covered (for example by furniture and rugs), may not change colour to the same extent. If possible, these items should be moved regularly.

Spills: Don't let spills stand on your wood floor. Individual spillages should be removed immediately using a slightly damp or dry cloth. Do not allow moisture to remain on the floor.

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