

Laminate installation instructions

Read completely before starting installation

IMPORTANT

All installed boards are considered accepted by the installer and/or homeowner. Report visible defects to the retailer before installation. FINfloor cannot accept responsibility for flooring installed with visible defects.

General precautions

FINfloor products are inspected before packaging and shipping. Complete a final job-site inspection for grade, colour, finish and quality under adequate lighting. Maintain normal year-round living conditions in the installation area for at least one week before installation. A room temperature of 15-30°C and relative humidity of 30-70% are recommended. Acclimatise closed cartons flat in the installation area for 48 hours. Install immediately after opening and never store cartons directly on concrete or against outside walls.

ALL LAMINATE FLOORS REACT TO HUMIDITY AND MOISTURE.

The installer and owner are responsible for installing an effective moisture barrier and maintaining appropriate environmental conditions.

- Room humidity changes with seasons and location. The floating floor must remain free to expand and contract in all directions.
- Install from several cartons simultaneously to create a balanced mix of décor, shade and grain.
- Pre-select boards that blend well with skirtings, beadings and mounted mouldings; use them next to those finishes.
- Stagger adjacent end joints by at least one quarter of the plank length (for example, at least 300 mm on a 1,200 mm plank).
- Where the recommended maximum continuous floor area is exceeded, install expansion profiles. Separate doorways and adjoining rooms, and undercut door frames to preserve free floor movement.
- Maintain the range-specific expansion gap around the full perimeter and every fixed vertical obstruction. Refer to the range table on page 4.

Underfloor heating

Laminate flooring may be used with a compatible underfloor-heating system only where permitted by the relevant product specification. Obtain the system and flooring requirements from an approved flooring dealer before installation.

Tools and accessories

- Tape measure, spirit level, ruler or straightedge, pencil and spacers.
- Metal hammer with the correct tapping block, and a lever or pulling iron.
- Fine-toothed saw; an electric jigsaw or circular saw may be used with appropriate safety equipment.
- Polythene moisture barrier and waterproof jointing tape.
- Suitable sound-reducing underlay such as FINlay Underlay. A separate membrane is unnecessary only when the underlay incorporates a compliant moisture barrier.
- Threshold profiles, beadings and pipe rosettes as required.

Subfloor preparation

Concrete

- The subfloor must be dry, clean, smooth, sound and level. Correct deviations greater than 3 mm over 1 m and allow levelling products to cure fully.
- The concrete slab must not exceed 12% on a Protimeter or 3% on a Tramex moisture meter before laminate installation.
- Check levels across the complete installation area using an appropriate straightedge, laser or level.

Wood and other surfaces

- The subfloor must be dry, clean, smooth, sound and level, with no deviation greater than 3 mm over 1 m.
- Secure loose areas, correct height differences and allow repair or levelling products to cure before installation.

Preparing to install

1. Clean and vacuum or sweep the subfloor thoroughly.
2. Lay the vapour barrier with joints overlapped and taped continuously. Install it in the orientation required by the membrane/underlay manufacturer.
3. Keep acclimatised cartons flat in the installation room until required; open cartons only as installation progresses.
4. Check door and frame clearances so they do not contact or restrict the floating floor.
5. Choose the laying direction. Planks are commonly laid toward the main light source or parallel to the longest wall. Dry-lay two or three rows to assess the visual distribution.
6. Set out the floor carefully and confirm quantities, first- and last-row widths, expansion gaps and transition positions.

Installation

1. Measure the room and calculate the last-row width. If it will be narrower than 50 mm, reduce the first-row width. Remove exposed tongues around the perimeter and scribe the first row to irregular walls.
2. Follow the saw manufacturer's safety instructions. The correct décor-face orientation depends on the saw and blade; make a test cut to minimise chipping.
3. Start in the corner and install in the direction specified for the relevant locking system. Insert spacers to maintain the range-specific expansion gap. End pieces must be at least one quarter of the plank length.
4. Complete the first row, keeping it perfectly straight. Engage joints according to the range-specific locking instructions; use only the correct tapping block and pull bar where permitted.

Installation continued

5. Use a suitable offcut to begin the second row, provided it meets the minimum end-length and joint-stagger requirements. Vary starter lengths to create a natural stagger without creating a repeating stair-step pattern.
6. Engage long- and short-side joints exactly as required by the locking system. Never force or damage the joint. If a joint is not closed, disengage the plank, inspect it and reinstall.
7. For the final row, measure at several points, allow for the specified perimeter gap, scribe the wall profile and rip the boards to width. Fit with a pull bar where permitted.
8. Separate adjoining rooms and doorways with the correct transition profile. Fix profiles to the subfloor only; never through or into the floating floor.

Finishing

- Remove all spacers.
- Cover perimeter gaps with skirting or quarter round fixed to the wall, never to the floor. Do not pinch or trap the flooring.
- Install transition profiles at doorways, between adjoining rooms and wherever maximum continuous coverage is reached.
- Store spare boards flat in a dry, stable environment for future repairs. Furniture may be replaced carefully once installation is complete.

Cleaning and maintenance

- Sweep or vacuum regularly to remove grit; switch off rotating beater bars.
- Use protective entrance mats, but avoid rubber-backed mats that may discolour the surface.
- Fit felt protectors beneath furniture and replace them when worn.
- Lift furniture and appliances; never drag or roll heavy items directly over the floor.
- Remove spills promptly and damp-clean only. Never flood the floor or use steam cleaners unless expressly permitted by the product warranty.
- Do not use oil, soap, wax, abrasive cleaners or unsuitable household chemicals.
- Keep pet nails trimmed and maintain relative humidity between 30% and 70% where possible.

FLOATING FLOOR RULE

Never silicone, glue, screw or otherwise fix the laminate to walls, cabinetry, profiles or the subfloor. Fixed items and profiles must not restrict natural floor movement.

Expansion and coverage requirements

Maximum continuous installation dimensions and minimum expansion gaps must be observed together. Install expansion profiles when any listed dimension is exceeded, and separate doorways and adjoining rooms. Coastal/high-humidity guidance applies to uncontrolled humid environments.

LAMINATE RANGE	MAXIMUM CONTINUOUS COVERAGE	INLAND / JHB	COASTAL / HUMID
Parador 9 mm	8 linear m long × 12 linear m wide	Minimum 12 mm	12-15 mm recommended
Black Forest+ 12 mm	20 linear m long × 20 linear m wide	Minimum 10 mm	Minimum 12-15 mm
AGT Bella 8 mm	9 × 9 linear m in any direction	Minimum 10 mm	12-15 mm recommended
AGT Natura 8 mm	10 linear m long × 12 linear m wide	Minimum 10 mm	12 mm recommended
AGT Armonia 12 mm	10 linear m long × 12 linear m wide	Minimum 10 mm	12 mm recommended
Authentic Herringbone	12 linear m long × 12 linear m wide	Minimum 10 mm	12-15 mm recommended

These requirements must be read with the current instructions and warranty for the exact product supplied. Where a product-specific document is more restrictive, the more restrictive requirement applies.

PARADOR 9 MM	Maximum 8 linear m long × 12 linear m wide
Maintain a minimum 12 mm gap around the full perimeter and every fixed vertical obstruction. In humid or coastal environments, use 12-15 mm as recommended and introduce additional expansion profiles where required.	Never restrict the floating floor. Fix profiles to the subfloor only.
BLACK FOREST+ 12 MM	Maximum 20 linear m long × 20 linear m wide
Maintain a minimum 10 mm gap inland. In Durban, coastal or other moist/humid uncontrolled environments, provide a minimum 12-15 mm gap around the full perimeter and every fixed vertical obstruction.	Never restrict the floating floor. Fix profiles to the subfloor only.
AGT BELLA 8 MM	Maximum 9 × 9 linear m in any direction
Maintain a minimum 10 mm gap inland. In Durban, coastal or other moist/humid uncontrolled environments, 12-15 mm is recommended around the full perimeter and every fixed vertical obstruction.	Never restrict the floating floor. Fix profiles to the subfloor only.
AGT NATURA 8 MM	Maximum 10 linear m long × 12 linear m wide
Maintain a minimum 10 mm gap inland. In Durban, coastal or other moist/humid uncontrolled environments, 12 mm is recommended around the full perimeter and every fixed vertical obstruction.	Never restrict the floating floor. Fix profiles to the subfloor only.
AGT ARMONIA 12 MM	Maximum 10 linear m long × 12 linear m wide
Maintain a minimum 10 mm gap inland. In Durban, coastal or other moist/humid uncontrolled environments, 12 mm is recommended around the full perimeter and every fixed vertical obstruction.	Never restrict the floating floor. Fix profiles to the subfloor only.
AUTHENTIC HERRINGBONE	Maximum 12 linear m long × 12 linear m wide
Maintain a minimum 10 mm gap inland. In Durban, coastal or other moist/humid uncontrolled environments, 12-15 mm is recommended around the full perimeter and every fixed vertical obstruction.	Never restrict the floating floor. Fix profiles to the subfloor only.