



**Atkinson & Kirby**  
Real Wood Flooring for Professionals

# LAYING GUIDELINES

## Unfinished Hardwood Block Flooring

**WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THE INSTALLATION OF SOLID HARDWOOD FLOORING OVER ANY TYPE OF UNDERFLOOR HEATING**

### PRE-INSTALLATION

To keep the wood in excellent condition it is imperative that the humidity level be controlled at all times, from delivery to laying the floor, and during the years that follow installation. The optimal humidity range for hardwood flooring is 45–60%; temperature should be maintained at about 18°C.

Flooring should never be stored outdoors, on a cement floor, in a garage or in any damp conditions. Care should be taken to store the wood flat; packs should never be lent against a wall. Unfinished flooring packs should be open and the boards spread around the room in which they are to be laid for at least 5 days. In a new constructed building, the heating must have been in operation for at least 10 days, prior to the minimum 5 day acclimatisation period required for unfinished flooring. For pre-finished flooring, this can be laid after the 10 day period mentioned. Upon delivery, check wood flooring moisture content with a moisture meter to establish a baseline for required acclimatisation. All flooring contractors should possess a moisture meter.

In a new construction all windows and doors etc should be installed and all wet trades should be completed.. Surface drainage should direct water away from the building. Basements and crawl spaces must be dry. For further information regarding crawl spaces, please contact Atkinson & Kirby. It is not recommended that any solid hardwood floor be laid below ground level. Test concrete for moisture. A Damp Proof Membrane must also be present underneath the concrete subfloor as well as over. The concrete subfloor must not exceed 5% and the humidity of the building must not exceed 60%. Prior to installation, ensure that wood flooring is within acceptable range of moisture content with the wood subfloor. If not within the acceptable range, then a suitable Damp Proof Membrane should be installed, over the wood subfloor, prior to installation.

In on ground applications, always add a suitable Damp Proof Membrane. All subfloors must be flat, clean, dry and structurally sound, free of squeaks, and free of protruding fasteners. All subfloors should be flat to within 3mm over a 3 metre length or 2mm over a 2 metre length.

When sticking blocks onto panels, these should have a 3mm expansion space around the perimeter of each panel, with panels fastened every 300mm along intermediate supports. Hardwood blocks should not be glued to a Chipboard subfloor.

Solid board subflooring should consist of boards no wider than 150mm.

Thin classification solid strip flooring (overlay/parquet panels) must have a 12mm or better plywood underlayment installed over solid board subflooring.

A wood block installation cannot be installed directly to solid board subfloors. A wood block installation over solid board subflooring requires 9mm or better underlayment panels.

Due to the variety of installations we can only generalise. We would always recommend that the floor layer satisfy themselves of the suitability of the conditions before laying the floor.



## **Do not lay the flooring in areas that are wet or humid, e.g. bathrooms, shower rooms etc.**

It should also be remembered that the floor layer is the last person to inspect the flooring. Care should be taken to ensure that a balanced look is maintained when laying out the floor; any pieces that are suspect should not be laid. The manufacturer cannot be held responsible for defects due to incorrect installation or boards with defects that have been installed. A waste factor of 5% should be taken into account. As a general rule we recommend at least 12-18mm expansion around the perimeter if the room and at doorways. At least 12-18mm expansion must also be left where the floor comes in to contact with any other vertical surfaces. These expansion gaps can be covered by mouldings after installation. Allow 15mm minimum expansion space at all vertical obstructions.

In areas where the flooring comes into contact with a fireplace, stove, heating system or un-insulated hot air vents a layer of asphalt or wax paper should be laid first. This will prevent excess drying out of the wood flooring. Adequate ventilation must exist beneath the wood flooring e.g air bricks around the perimeter of the building.

## **POST INSTALLATION**

The appearance of spaces between boards indicates a drying out of the wood and an insufficient degree of humidity.

The appearance of waves or noticeable swelling in the finish of the wood floor indicates the presence of excessive humidity. Heating systems may have to be utilised throughout the year to maintain the correct humidity level. The installation of a humidifier or an air exchange system can prove indispensable in controlling humidity.

Above all don't forget that wood is a natural, living material and that we must look after it for life. A proper maintenance program should always be carried out.

Barrier matting should be placed at all exterior doorways.

Remember that pets running round, stiletto heels, and dirt and grit left on the floor can scratch wood; regular maintenance should be carried out to prevent this.

For full maintenance guidelines please refer to the individual maintenance guidelines that apply to the finish of your floor.

## **ATKINSON & KIRBY RECOMMEND FITTING BY A PROFESSIONAL FLOORING CONTRACTOR.**

Hardwood Block Flooring is a very accurately machined product, allowing a floor to be laid interlocked with tongues and grooves in a range of timbers. The finished floor provides a natural resilient, hardwearing and easily renovated floor under almost all traffic conditions, including industrial wheeled traffic.

The plan of the finished floor is decided, and then the blocks are built into the design pattern, e.g. Herringbone, Brick, or Basket.

Blocks of different species can be mixed to give a more decorative floor.

We recommend the use of Laybond L16 adhesive for bonding the blocks to a suitably prepared sub floor. **Do not apply more adhesive than can be worked in 10 minutes.**

## LAYING

IF THE BASKET PATTERN IS REQUIRED, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SPECIFY SPECIAL SIZED BLOCKS.

Draw a line down the centre of the room. This line is known as the **crown line**.

Lay the first line of blocks down the crown line with the tongue facing inwards. For herringbones pattern the apex of the joints should fall down the crown line.

Continue to lay the floor outwards from the crown line until a space remains around the perimeter of the floor, sufficient for a border of two blocks wide plus a provision for an expansion gap.

Without adhesive, lay the last two lines of blocks, fringing the border area and mark and cut these blocks using a suitable template the width of two blocks plus a 12-18mm for expansion gap.

Cut blocks and finally the border blocks are then stuck down.

Finally, sand and seal the floor, using a suitable seal for the traffic conditions of the floor.

**Advice given is for general guidance only. It is the responsibility of the floor layer to ensure that site conditions are suitable for hardwood flooring. If specific advice is required, please contact Atkinson & Kirby.**