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ComCork™ - Installation Instructions

Important: COMPLETELY READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES, AS THEY ARE PROVIDED TO HELP WITH THE INSTALLATION PROCESS. INSTALLATIONS SHOULD BE DONE BY A PROFESSIONAL FLOORING INSTALLER, AND THEY SHOULD ADHERE TO THE INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL WOOD FLOORING ASSOCIATION (WWW.NWFA.ORG; 800-422-4556). WHERE THESE INSTRUCTIONS DIFFER FROM THE NWFA'S, THESE GUIDELINES TAKE PRECEDENCE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT A SUSTAINABLE FLOORING REPRESENTATIVE PRIOR TO STARTING THE INSTALLATION PROCEDURE.

Pre-Installation Requirements

- **Material Inspection:** Carefully inspect all material before installation. Any material installed with obvious defects (grade, color, finish, quality, or other visual defects) will not be warranted, and should NOT be installed.
- **Color variation:** Please note that some shade variation is an inherent and attractive characteristic of natural products. Natural materials tend to change color to some degree when exposed to sunlight over prolonged periods of time. Though ComCork™ Naturale products are treated with shading protection to protect against fading over time, please note that shade changes do transition and occur over time.

Jobsite Requirements:

Prior to the installation of ComCork™ material, the installer must ensure that the jobsite and site conditions are suitable for installation. Sustainable Flooring is not responsible for flooring failure resulting from unsatisfactory jobsite, subfloor, and temperature/humidity conditions.

- **Structurally sound subfloor** - (5/8" plywood, 3/4" OSB, existing solid-wood subfloor, or concrete)
- **Clean and debris-free subfloor** - Remove paint, wax or any other substance that may prevent proper bonding. All subfloors must be smooth, dry, clean, and free of dirt, grease, wax or anything that would hinder a good bond.
- **Level subfloor** - (within 1/8" height difference over 10 linear feet in all directions);
 - On wood - wooden subfloors must be level and all cracks filled with a wood filler or similar material. The floor should then be sanded to assure uniformity. If wooden subfloor is used, ensure subfloor is well fastened to joists (6" on center nail pattern is suggested).
 - On concrete - concrete floors (new or existing) must be leveled with latex fill as needed. Prime the concrete with standard concrete primer. **NOTE:** We do not recommend installing cork floor tile on or below the grade, unless precautions are taken to guarantee that moisture will not penetrate through the subfloor.
- **Dry subfloor** – subfloor must remain dry year-round.
 - On wood - when installing on a wooden subfloor, the difference between the moisture content of the flooring and the subfloor must not be greater than 2 percentage points. If you are unsure how to determine this, contact Sustainable Flooring. **Note: Acclimating is one of the most important steps to ensuring a healthy floor.**
 - On concrete - when installing on a concrete slab, you must ensure that the flooring installed is separated from any potential moisture coming from or transferring through the slab (see NWFA guidelines if you have questions). In addition, slab must not exceed 3lb. - as per the Calcium Chloride test; a general rule of thumb is that 60 days is the minimum for a concrete to properly cure. While ComCork™ flooring is more stable than most woods, it is still subject to damage when in direct contact with a constantly wet slab. ComCork™ must be isolated from this type of slab by use of a reverse vinyl, sleeper sub floor, or alternative. Urethane adhesive will usually fail when vapor pressure exceeds 3 pounds per 1000 sq. ft. in 24 hours. ComCork™ flooring cannot be glued down under those conditions. **NOTE:** lack of sufficient adhesion is NOT a warrantable claim.
- **Site Conditions-** the temperature and relative humidity should be consistent for at least 10 days prior to installation (the minimum suggested acclimatization period; longer is always better). Natural component flooring functions best when the room temperature ranges from 60-70 Fahrenheit, and the room relative humidity stays between 40-60%.



- **Note: Room temperatures above 80 Fahrenheit, or below 50 Fahrenheit, or rooms with relative humidity's above 65% or below 35% will void all warranties.** These conditions must be met not only for installation requirements, but also for year-round conditions. A humidifier or dehumidifier may be needed to remedy these conditions, which not only will ensure a healthy floor; it will help ensure a healthy indoor air quality.
- **Note:** Direct or intense sunlight can exacerbate the floors movement even when the temperature and humidity levels are within the acceptable range, and it therefore is recommended that in locations of intense or direct sunlight, window 'treatments' (blinds, shades, coverings, etc.) are used to minimize and / or duration of light on the floor surface.
- **Note:** In extremely dry climates, care should be taken to avoid shrinkage by allowing flooring to acclimate under actual use conditions. Remove the planks from the box and expose to local conditions until the material has sufficiently acclimated to the site.

General Precautions: It cannot be emphasized often enough that complete satisfaction and appreciation of your ComCork™ flooring is directly dependent on proper installation. Cork flooring problems are typically not caused by the product itself but by improper installation practices or not following the manufacturer's instructions.

Floating Floor Installation Process

Pre-installation procedures and thoughts:

Tools and Materials: Saw and/or utility knife, measuring tape, 30-degree wedge, crowbar, 10mm spacers, white T&G glue for small end pieces

Storage and Handling: Store the unopened planks at room temperature for at least 48 hours prior to installation. Planks should be stored flat in their original packaging. Room temperature should be at least 65 degrees Fahrenheit before and during installation.

Expansion Gaps: When laying the floor, be sure to leave a 10mm expansion gap between the plank and any 'fixed' vertical component, such as a wall, column, or door frame (or similar). This is very important for all floating floors, as it allows for movement of the planks that inherently occur with typical expansion and contraction as caused by fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity.

NOTE: It is important to note, that the use of heavy objects that have the potential to 'pin' the flooring to the subfloor (ex: slate pool table, etc.), can inadvertently cause the formation of gaps between the planks (as this weight effectively acts as a 'fixed' component that prohibits natural plank movement). This is not a product defect, nor a warrantable issue.

NOTE: In square rooms that are over 2500 sq. ft. flooring transitions must be used to disperse the expansion and contraction movement inherent within the product. NOTE: if you have specific questions as to location and/or number of needed expansion spaces (and/or transitions), contact your supplier prior to installation.

Installation Instructions:

1. Before laying the floor ensure there is less than 3mm/lineal meter sub floor variation. If there is any moisture present, lay 100um of plastic sheet with taped 500mm overlap
2. Cut 10mm of space under doorframes to allow for the expansion of the floor
3. Start with the longest dimension of wall (or choose desired orientation)



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4. Begin by placing the first plank so the (male) side with the tongue is facing the wall. Remember to use the spacers, leaving a 10mm space between the plank and the wall on front and side.

5. Place the second plank at a 30-degree angle to the first plank, making sure it is perfectly in line, and apply slight pressure to bring the seams of the two together. Fit the panels by hand and adjust them by using a piece of wood and a hammer or mallet. Never hammer directly on the panel

NOTE: Using a 30-degree wedge will simplify your install

6. When the plank is lowered it should 'click' into place. If it does not lay flat to the subfloor, angle the plank and apply more pressure while moving the plank down. The seam between planks should not have any gaps and both planks must lay flat to the subfloor

7. Continue this process until you reach the end of the first row.

8. Use a saw (compound miter or circular saw with a new carbide blade is recommended) or utility knife to cut the last panel of the first row making sure to leave a 10mm gap between the flooring and the wall. Place the cut-off piece at the beginning of the second row (if cutoff piece is over 6" and less than 24"). Stagger the seams from row to row. Make sure the groove and tongue are facing each other

9. Using a 30-degree angle, insert the tongue of the second-row plank into the groove on the first row of planks (Step 6 above)

NOTE: Using a 30-degree wedge to hold the plank in place will simplify your install

10. Insert the tongue of the next plank into the first plank and 'click' both planks together. They should now both be at a 30-degree angle

11. Push the second plank forward until the seams are flush between the first and second row

NOTE: Applying pressure close to the seam on the 1st and 2nd plank will ease the friction and allow for easier installation

12. Remove the wedge, allowing both planks to lay flat to the subfloor. All seams should be flush

13. Insert the wedge under the second plank and continue placing panels as above until you get to the last row. Remember to leave a 10mm gap around the perimeter of the floor as you end each row and begin the next. Stagger the seams row to row by utilizing cut pieces from the previous row

14. The last row may require the panels to be cut lengthwise to fit the space

15. Place the panels that need to be cut on top of the last row placed. Make sure that the (male) tongue is facing the wall

16. Mark and cut. Remember to leave a 10mm gap around the perimeter of the floor

17. After cutting, fit the panel. Adjust it with the help of a crowbar if necessary

NOTE: If the last row is very narrow and the planks are not lying flat, first make sure tongue and groove are properly joined. This is the only row where we recommend using a white T&G glue to hold last row in place. Then place a weight on the last row for 24 hours or until the row remains flat. No adhesive should be used between the floor and subfloor

18. Remove all spacers and clear the floor of debris and abrasive particles. The floor may be used immediately following installation



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Optional: Apply at least a 10mm thick/deep skirting board to fully cover the expansion gap

Glue-down Installation Process

Installing with adhesive is also an option with the ComCork™ flooring material. The installation procedures and concerns as listed above (with the Floating Floor Installation Procedures) carry over to this installation method, with the obvious caveat and addition that you are adding a layer of adhesive to the subfloor to bond the ComCork™ material down. **IMPORTANT NOTE: It is imperative that you follow the instructions provided by the manufacturer of the adhesive used. Improper installation is NOT a warrantable claim, and the supplier will accept no liability for installation related issues.**

Here are the accepted and recommended adhesives to which the ComCork™ is being applied:

Dritac – 5500 or 7700
Taylor – Dynamic or Pinnacle

Please note, that when installing on 'concrete'. Moisture testing must be completed prior to the start of the installation process, and with the readings within the recommended ranges as published as acceptable by the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA). If any readings in excess of the 'NWFA limits' occur, installation should not occur until the moisture levels are brought within 'spec', or a different method of installation is developed for the specific application. Taylor Resolute is an option on 'concrete' when moisture levels exceed those recommended (by this adhesive can NOT be used on 'wood' subfloors).

General additional installation guidelines when gluing down:

1. The subfloor must be clean, dry, and void of any components that would affect adhesion.
2. A urethane modified flooring adhesive (like those referenced above, should be used and applied in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions). NOTE: pay attention to 'open time', method of spreading, clean-up procedures, and cure time.
3. Apply the selected adhesive using a trowel to spread (must be level, and without clumps).
4. Lay the floor in the adhesive, following the application/installation instructions of adhesive producer for the material used. The backing of the planks need to be moistened with adhesive to ensure suitable and complete coverage. In case of doubt, check by lifting it. When laying the tiles, use only manual pressure.
5. Ensure that you clean as you go, and immediately remove any adhesive that gets on the top surface of the flooring plank(s).

Installation on Gyp-Crete Underlayment:

If installing on Gyp-Crete, it is essential that the slab material is completely dry (Delmhorst BD 2100 or G79 are recommended for an accurate moisture reading in gyp-Crete). For detailed recommendations on installing over the Gyp-Crete line of products, contact Maxxon Corporation (800-356-7887) - "Procedures for Attaching Finished Floor Goods to Maxxon Underlayment's" .

Installation over Hydronic Radiant Systems:

ComCork™ planks can be installed over "hydronic" radiant systems or electric systems. The surface temperature must never exceed 82 degrees Fahrenheit. Due to the nature of radiant heat, the relative humidity must be kept between 40-60% (the use of a humidifier/ dehumidifier will likely be needed). It is important to ensure that the "hydronic" system is running for at least 7 days prior to the installation, and then turned off prior to and during the installation. For detailed information of the installation procedures over hydronic systems, contact the Radiant Panel Association 800 660-7187, or your ComCork™ plank supplier).



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If you have any questions regarding the installation, contact your Sustainable Flooring representative. Sustainable Flooring does not accept liability for material improperly installed, or that which is installed in a situation/condition that is not recommended.

Care and Maintenance

Cleaning and Spills: Sweep or vacuum the floor frequently to avoid a build-up of abrasive particles. Regular, damp mopping is also suggested to keep the floor surface free of dirt and grit. Clean up spills and excess water immediately. Never flood the floor surface with any liquid or use harsh abrasive cleaners.

Furniture: Furniture foot pads are recommended to prevent indentations in the tiles.

Entrance Mats: Entrance mats are recommended in order to keep dirt and moisture from coming in contact with the floor. Do not allow a moisture saturated floor mat to remain on the cork floor.

Refinishing: Cork floor tiles may be refinished. When the floor starts to show a traffic pattern and signs of wear, the surface of the floor must be recoated with a high-quality water-based urethane. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on the finish. Under normal conditions, the protective coating should last at least 5 years for light commercial and 15 years for residential applications. It is the responsibility of the owner to judge when the floor needs recoating. Most cork decorative patterns are made of thin veneer laminated to a cork base. Failure to maintain the finish could result in irreparable damage. A reapplication of urethane will make the floor look new again and prolong its lifespan.