

The ultimate source of information for wood flooring professionals

National Wood Flooring Association of Australia



TECHNICAL BULLETIN #8

WARNING TO CONSUMERS

Since the former NSW Government removed the requirement of Licensing to major portions of the wood floor industry, this has made it easier for the unsuspecting consumers to be “conned” by unscrupulous traders.

The National Wood Flooring Association of Australia has seen the necessity of alerting potential users of wood floor systems of those tactics that are most commonly employed in the cutting of corners and in cheating people from obtaining quality wood floor systems that are installed using only those methods that reflect best trade practise.

Our executive has decided, that due to the growing number of consumers that are told incorrect information, that it was essential that the following information be published to inform potential consumers of the dangers used by unscrupulous and unprincipled operators.

The following information reflects industry best practise as promoted by the National Wood Flooring Association of Australia.

- a) Timber floors installed over pier & beam / bearer and joist construction must be exposed to a full **cross-flow of ventilation** in accordance with the requirements of the **Building Code of Australia**.
- b) **No wood floor** should be installed over an **un-ventilated** sub-floor void.
- c) All wood floors installed over concrete or similar sub-floors should be installed over a **minimum** thickness of **18 mm Exterior Waterproof, Structural Grade, Plywood** (conforming to the minimum requirements of Australian Standard A.S. 2269

It is **essential** that this plywood should be **firmly anchored to the concrete** sub base with a **minimum of 15** off x 5 mm diameter x 65 mm long steel “Spike” Anchors (*each with a 2050 lbs pull-out load.*)

This process is essential to avoid un-ventilated air trapped beneath raw floor boards, which is the most common cause of “**cupping and curling**” of the finished floor as the environment beneath the floor is often a totally different environment, to that on the surface of the floor.

BE WARNED

There are now operators who, to cut corners and to reduce their price, are installing floors directly on top of **loose-laid 12 mm plywood (rather than 18 mm) and mostly of very inferior Chinese origin.**

This plywood is not stamped and does not conform with Australian Standard A.S. 2269

These floors are not anchored to the sub-floor at all. (Where they should be secured by a minimum of 15 anchors per 2400 x 1200 sheet)

As the "correct" nails or cleats used to install your wood floor require a minimum of 18 mm to accept the fixing, guess what happens to the nail in any 12 mm floor. Why they just fold up as they crush into the concrete sub-floor, and are then prone to be a major source of generating "squeaks" etc within the floor system.

- d) Due to the phenomenon of "**EDGE BONDING**", an event that occurs when certain floor coating weld together the T & G joints of a strip floor, best trade practice requires that "**only**" **oil based finishes** should be used over any T & G wood floor system.

Clients who require the application of any finish, other than an oil based finish over any T & G wood floor should expect to sign a document which will "**indemnify**" the contractor against the incident of any future damage to the floor by use of alternative products, contrary to best professional advice.

PRACTICES BY WHICH WARRANTY IS AVOIDED

Many clients in their effort to introduce savings in their construction process are duped into thinking that, to be purchasing their timber from **one supplier**, having the installation of their floor undertaken by their builder or **some other independent contractor** and then having the sanding and finishing process undertaken by a **third independent party**, will deliver them a good result and be in their best financial interest.

However, many home owners fail to recognize that often this is a means by which they inadvertently, fall into the trap of being **without any performance warranty** on their timber floor whatsoever !

Regrettably, many find out the hard way, that unless you have **one contractor** with the responsibility for the **supply** of the timber, its **installation** and **sanding and finishing**, then indeed the home owner is actually left with **zero guarantees** at all.

Indeed, the experience of many is, that because there exists this total "**lack of accountability**", no one extends themselves to do all the little but very necessary things, required to deliver a professional result, as the generally held view is, "that they are not being paid" to take on that responsibility.

When something goes wrong, as very often it does in these **reduced care** situations, each party then denies that the responsibility is theirs and there is ultimately a very expensive legal battle to try and allocate responsibility, which everyone insists, "is not theirs", but someone else's responsibility.

As at this time all moneys have been paid, it is most usually left to the home owner to “**fix**” the problem and what may have looked like a saving in the first instance, can often become a huge headache and a most unsatisfactory result.

For these reasons **the National Wood Flooring Association of Australia** strongly recommends that the installation of any wood floor system should **only** be undertaken by a “*specialist*” wood floor contractor.

Indeed, it defies logic the number of people who choose to give a carpet company the job of effecting a “*specialist*” **wood floor installation**, and wonder why there is such a range of complaints to the Departments of Fair Trading, reflect this scenario.