

13 Flooring / Laminate

Laminate Introduction

Laminate flooring is composed of a wear layer, a pattern layer and one or two very dense engineered wood layers. It generally has a hard wear surface, but it can still be chipped and scratched. Because laminate is an engineered wood product, it is subject to dimensional changes (shrinking and swelling) when exposed to moisture. To minimize the effects of humidity changes on a laminate floor, it is installed as a “floating floor” where sections are secured to each other instead of being fastened to the sub-floor. As a result, laminate flooring expands and contracts in units or sections of floor rather than between individual planks. Gaps due to humidity variations tend to form between sections, such as between sections in adjoining rooms or at the perimeter of rooms.

Anything that interferes with the floating nature of laminate floors, such as the placement of heavy objects on the floor, can cause unwanted gaps, peaks or squeaks.

Peaks can occur when insufficient room is left for the laminate to expand and contract up against an object, such as a kitchen islands or around service piping.

Subfloor variations can also cause a seam to open up in adjacent laminate sections as the floor settles on each side of a raised variation under the laminate. Different grades of laminate may expand and contract at different rates and may have varying tolerances for sub-floor variations.

13.1 Laminate flooring sections are swelled.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Laminate shall be installed free of swelled planks or tiles.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Laminate flooring not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified unless noted during the walk-through inspection. Issues noted on the walk-through inspection are contractual matters that should be resolved by the builder and homeowner.

Swelling of laminate flooring resulting from actions of the homeowner is not covered.

Remarks:

The homeowner is responsible for following the manufacturer’s recommendations for care and maintenance for the flooring. Swelling of laminate flooring caused by improper homeowner maintenance is not a defect.

Notes:

13.2 Laminate flooring is separating.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Joints shall be tight at commencement of warranty. Gaps in laminate flooring greater than 1/16 inch (1.5 mm) are considered excessive.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Gaps exceeding the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Laminate flooring is an engineered product and, as such, is subject to expansion and contraction.

Damage to laminate caused by standing water or major swings in humidity levels within the home is not a defect.

Improper humidity levels within the home can cause separation of laminate flooring. Maintaining humidity levels is the responsibility of the homeowner. Separation of laminate flooring due to improper homeowner maintenance is not a defect.

Notes:

13.3 Laminate floor is chipped.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Laminate flooring shall be free of chips that are readily visible when viewed under normal viewing conditions.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Laminate flooring not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified unless noted during the walk-through inspection. Issues noted on the walk-through inspection are contractual matters that should be resolved by the builder and homeowner.

Chips in laminate flooring resulting from actions of the homeowner are not covered.

Remarks:

A localized repair is acceptable. Repairs shall be similar in colour to the original. Some variation in the colour should be expected.

Notes:

13.4 A uniform gap has developed between the edge of the laminate floor and the edge of the baseboard, or between the edge of the laminate and the edge of a trim strip.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Baseboard mouldings and transition strips between different flooring materials shall be of sufficient width to accommodate expansion and contraction of the laminate floor due to normal changes in humidity levels within the home.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Trims or transition strips not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be replaced.

Remarks:

Dimensions for trims and transition strips shall follow the manufacturer’s installation instructions.

An area of laminate flooring expands and contracts as a unit with changes in humidity. Low humidity levels in a home can cause a laminate floor to contract more than manufacturer’s tolerances causing a gap at the perimeter. If proper humidity levels are re-established and maintained, the fit of the flooring at the perimeter and transitions may return to its original condition without further remediation.

Maintaining proper humidity levels is the responsibility of the homeowner. Gaps in laminate flooring due to improper homeowner maintenance are not defects.

Notes:
