

# Beare Flooring's

## Hard Flooring Purchasing Guide

Choosing the right hard flooring for your home can seem like a daunting task. With so many variations in product types and styles available for you the consumer to select from you can be left wondering am I really choosing the best product for my needs.

Well, the good news is that Beare Flooring is here to help. We have created a detailed yet easy-to-read guide to provide you, our valued clients, with the correct information.

### Hybrid Flooring

Hybrid Flooring is installed as a "floating floor" predominantly available in SPC & WPC, we explain these terms further below. Like all other hard flooring types Hybrid Flooring requires an adequate subfloor to lay on, so there should always be a consideration that floor prep is likely to be required explained further in our floor preparation section. Hybrid Flooring is the perfect all round hard flooring option suitable for the majority of flooring installations.

#### SPC - Stone Polymer Composite

Since its evolution SPC "Stone Polymer Composite" has taken the flooring industry by storm and for good reason, with main characteristics such as scratch resistance combined with the majority of SPC products being waterproof, this flooring makes a low maintenance and easy to care for base for any home. Combined with the products minimal expansion and retraction rates - it's easy to understand why SPC Hybrid Flooring has become a popular staple in many homes. Featuring a high density acoustic underlay the product is not only quiet underfoot compared with other hard flooring options but it is also warm and comfortable to walk on.

Available in realistic finishes such as timber and stone this product will leave your guests wondering if it is in fact real timber flooring.

#### WPC - Wood Polymer Composite

Hybrid WPC "Wood Polymer Composite" is a mix of Wood and Polymer. Polymer being a type of recycled plastic. This variation of hybrid flooring is typically softer than its rival SPC. Being a softer, more malleable product WPC is more flexible in general and more forgiving.

However the downside is having a proportion of wood in its construction results in this type of floorboard being open to things such as expansion and retraction with temperature changes and open to water damage.

Like its counterpart SPC, WPC is also available in realistic finishes such as timber and stone; this product will leave your guests wondering if it is in fact real timber flooring.

### Vinyl Planking

While SPC floors may have taken a considerable part of the market share, Vinyl Planking is also a major player in the flooring industry. Vinyl Planking is glued down to the substrate floor, making it an excellent choice for wet areas, such as kitchens and bathrooms. As the product is glued directly to your substrate there is a need for floor preparation, explained further in our floor preparation section. Vinyl Planking is not just hard wearing and easy to maintain but key features such as scratch and fade resistance combined with being waterproof make it a popular choice for homeowners and high traffic commercial applications. Available in realistic finishes such as timber and stone, Vinyl Planking can quickly and easily lift the appearance of a home or rental property.

### Laminate

Laminate Flooring is available in either realistic wood or stone looks. The majority of laminate flooring products are "water resistant" but not "waterproof" this is mainly due to the construction of the products baseboard being moisture sensitive high density fibreboard HDF. With this in mind it is important to note that laminate flooring is not suitable for any area where moisture is or could be present, such as laundries and bathrooms.

Laminate Flooring is installed as a “floating floor” and like all other hard flooring types requires an adequate subfloor to lay on, so there should always be a consideration that floor prep is likely to be required explained further in our floor preparation section.

The product also requires a thin foam underlay to be installed on the substrate floor prior to the laminate flooring being installed, this comes in a variance of types and quality. Laminate flooring is prone to expansion and retraction and is often limited to a maximum amount of metres in length and or width that it can be installed in, until an expansion joint is required. You should note that this expansion joint will be visibly noticeable as it is finished with a cover strip that sits on top of the floor.

## *Timber Flooring*

It is important to note that when dealing with natural materials such as Solid and Engineered Timber the planks may have visual defects in them, depending on the grade of timber you purchase; these may be knots or markings in the timber, which are unique characteristics that come from the tree the boards are made out of. It is essential to bear this feature in mind when deciding what flooring you want – Timber flooring is less predictable and will come with more character/less uniformity in its appearance than other human made hard flooring options. When selecting what quality of timber flooring you want to purchase remember the higher the grade of the timber the less knots and irregularities will be visible.

### *Solid Timber*

There is nothing more exquisite than a beautiful natural timber floor. Timber Flooring brings the outdoors in and is worth its weight in gold. Solid timber is more expensive than its human made counterparts, for this very reason it is considered an investment. Adding value to your property.

Natural timber is typically softer than its human made counterparts, meaning solid timber flooring can be prone to dents and scratches. It is inevitable that over time you will also encounter fading due to everyday environmental factors. All of these aspects however are actually considered an aesthetic feature of the product and over time creates character and depth to the floor. One of the main benefits of solid timber flooring is that the timber can be refinished time and time again.

Depending on the specific manufacturer's guidelines.

This re finishing process involves sanding back the planks to an exposed raw timber and applying a new coating, of which there are various options in colour available. This gives the timber floor a complete new look transforming the home immediately. The process of refinishing your solid timber flooring is a time consuming task, but this process will rejuvenate your floors bringing new life back into your flooring after years of use.

Solid Timber Flooring is fixed to the substrate floor, glued and or nailed down depending on what the substrate is. This process needs to be executed by a professional and is a meticulous process that takes time. Meaning your quote for Timber Flooring will involve a higher labour cost than other hard flooring types.

Solid Timber flooring creates a show stopping floor, a floor of your dreams, that you will cherish for years to come.

### *Engineered Timber*

Engineered Timber flooring is a more cost effective option vs solid timber flooring, the product features a layer of real wood compressed at high density that is glued to a hardboard core. Typically coming pre-finished, most Engineered Timber Flooring cannot be re-finished due to the relatively thin layer of real timber that is used as the products top layer. However there are certain Engineered Timbers which will allow for a specific number of refinishes.

Always check the manufacturers guidelines

Installing Engineered Timber flooring is generally a much faster and easier process than installing unfinished Solid Timber. Coming prefinished means there is no need to go through the sanding and staining process on site, in turn engineered timber floors create less mess during the installation because of this, while still providing a beautiful real wood finish and feel!

# Beare Flooring's Hand Flooring Purchasing Guide

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## *The Importance Of Floor Preparation*

Regardless of which type of hard floor you decide is the best suited for you, floor preparation is an essential part of the process. If the floor is not up to an acceptable standard and hard flooring is installed you are guaranteed to have problems such as hollow points and peaking boards along with a multitude of other issues. Such matters will ruin the floor almost immediately.

Different types of floor coverings have various requirements that the substrate floor must meet.

Starting with anything solid like Timber, Hybrid or Laminate flooring the substrate has to meet a minimum requirement. When the floor is being installed "floating" or not glued down, the floor must be level. Many houses unfortunately don't have very level substrates; therefore, almost every job requires some form of floor preparation. Concrete substrates can have their high spots ground down, and low spots built up with floor levelling compound. Wooden substrates can be sanded down and again built up with floor levelling compound.

This can be a costly exercise that you need to be aware of and prepared for.

Hard flooring installation is always quoted excluding floor preparation. This is due to the floor preparation process being relatively complex and challenging to quote. Many flooring sales representatives would be unable to price this accurately for you even if they wanted to.

For floor preparation to be quoted accurately the flooring installer needs to sight your substrate floor. Which means your existing floor coverings must be removed first. It is then during this process that the flooring expert can access the floor accurately with their level and evaluate to what degree floor preparation is required.

Vinyl Planking products require the floor to be smooth and bacteria free, which typically means a light grind (polyvac) or skim coat (for concrete) is needed prior to installation. Further floor preparation could be required if the substrate is in poor condition. Wooden substrate floors will typically just be sanded unless you have tongue and groove flooring or peaking joints in the particle board. In this instance, the floor will often have a thin board stapled over the top to cover up the imperfections and gaps, then the vinyl planking can be installed on top of this.

Depending on the amount of work required to bring the sub floor up to standard, floor preparation can be a costly part of the hard flooring installation process.

Regardless of what type of floor preparation happens in your home the process is a dusty one.

Installers run vacuums on their machines which assists with minimising the dust spread, however this will not catch all of the dust during this process, so please be prepared to cover up or remove items that you don't want to have to clean after.

## Installation Patterns

Hard flooring is available to lay in a mixture of patterns depending on the product type.

Factors to consider for alternative installation methods other than straight lay are the installation team's skillset, increased material waste and the cost associated with the labour component for the project.

Most click together floating floors like Hybrid Flooring & Laminate have an A & B click side to them, meaning that they can only be straight laid, unless they are specifically designed to be laid in Herringbone style. For example Herringbone Hybrid, this style flooring is typically supplied in shorter and thinner planks.

Vinyl Flooring can be laid straight, herringbone or chevron.

Solid & Engineered Timber often are available in straight lay, herringbone and chevron also.

## Expansion & Retraction

All products expand and retract with temperature and humidity change, much like your bedroom doors being tight in winter. Therefore, all floating floors require an expansion gap left around the edges where the product meets the skirting boards. Some products have greater expansion and retraction rates than others. This should be taken into account when you are selecting the correct floating floor for your property.

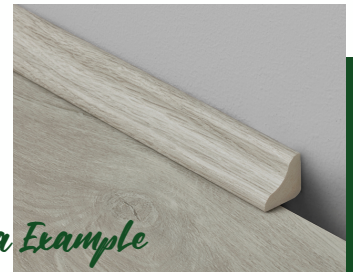
There are a few different ways the above can be achieved. Ideally, we would remove your skirting boards. The installer then leaves a gap between the gib board and the flooring product; once the flooring is installed we reinstall or replace (depending on your quote provided) the skirting boards back on top of your new flooring, leaving a seamless finish.

It is important to note that new skirting boards will require gapping and painting. These are supplied primed only.

Reusing your old skirting boards is an option, however the removal of these is a brutal process and damage to the skirting boards is often unavoidable, it's important to note that when we reinstate your existing skirting boards these will still require gapping and painting upon the project completion - This is not a service that we offer. A professional painter is best suited to this task.

Some products are available with a matching edging called "scotia", which is nailed straight into the skirting or gib board.

These are a visible fixture (refer to example image)



*Scotia Example*

## Caring For Your Flooring

Depending on what type of flooring you decide on, caring for it correctly is very important. With a vast amount of cleaning products readily available to purchase, it is all too easy to use the wrong product on your flooring and permanently damage it.

Chemicals break water molecules into smaller molecules, making it easier for them to get through gaps such as joint systems in floating floors. Most quality floating floor products will suggest a specific cleaner, typically PH natural to prevent water from getting through the gaps and deteriorating the floor from the inside out - It is always important prior to cleaning your floors to check the manufacturer's specific cleaning instructions.

Do not clean your floor with a steam cleaner! Steam cleaners, as we all know, are outstanding at cleaning surfaces due to their penetrating power. However, they will damage your flooring unless you have ceramic tiles. Most hard floors are best cleaned with a microfiber wet mop and a PH natural floor cleaner.