

HARDWOOD FLOOR DISCLOSURE

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR HARDWOOD FLOORS:

As dirt and dust accumulate on any surface, it is important to keep it clean. Dirt and grit can scratch any surface, even steel. It can be removed simply by sweeping and vacuuming. As with any floor covering material, a few moments of care goes a long way in keeping your hardwood floor looking its best.

If your floor abuts exterior doors, put outside door mats at the entrances to keep dirt and moisture from being tracked inside. You may want to add an area rug to further prevent dirt and moisture from being tracked onto your hardwood floor. Do not use rubber, foam back or plastic as they may discolor the floor.

Sweep or vacuum your floor as often as required to remove loose dirt before it can scratch the surface of the floors.

Use floor protectors on the legs of furniture to avoid scratches. Ball type casters on furniture may damage hardwood flooring. Be certain that the barrel type wheels or the wide flat glides are used to protect your hardwood floors.

Spike or stiletto high heel shoe traffic causes denting and related damage to hardwood floors due to the extremely high compressive force they generate. Such footwear can produce dynamic loads in excess of 1000 pounds per square inch even when worn by persons of slight or average build.

A humidifier is recommended to prevent excessive shrinkage in wood floors due to low humidity levels. Wood stoves and electric heat tend to create very dry conditions.

Proper humidity levels can be maintained by use of any air conditioner, dehumidifier or by turning on your heating system periodically during the summer months.

Wash your hardwood floors with any of the following brands of cleaning products: Dura Seal, Wood Wise, Bona X Swedish Formula, SH Magic or Polyglow Floor Cleaner. These cleaning products are specially formulated for cleaning hardwood and do not leave a dulling residue. In spite of what you may have heard in the past, vinegar and water are not recommended for cleaning hardwood floors, and it will cause the finish to dull over time. Be sure that your mop or rag is only slightly damp. Do not saturate your floor with water. The use of a rag or mop that is too wet can water damage your floor.

Never use any products with silicone, wax or oil on your hardwood floor. (This includes "Murphy's Oil Soap".) To do so would void your warranty.

Wood is one of man's oldest natural resources. It is also one of man's most revered resources. Since ancient time, wood has provided fuel, tools, food and shelter. It has also provided hardwood floors that in some cases have lasted for literally hundreds of years.

CRACKS IN YOUR HARDWOOD FLOOR?

In the winter months in the Rocky Mountains we start to see "cracking" in wood floors. This is seasonal and common in wood flooring.

Wood flooring, being a product of nature, has some water in it at all times. The moisture content in the wood changes. As the moisture in the environment changes, the ambient air dries out, and the wood loses moisture and shrinks, resulting in "cracking" between the boards.

Cold winter weather affects wood flooring in the following ways. Temperatures drop, homeowners turn on the heating systems and keep doors and windows closed. Heat dries out the home and moisture is pulled from the wood, causing the wood to shrink and “cracks” to appear. Shrinkage can be minimized by having a humidifier attached to the heating system. Wood stoves are especially bad for drying out the inside air. Areas directly around furnaces, heating ducts, and base board heaters also show drying.

Secondly, as the air temperatures fall below freezing, the moisture in the air falls as snow, frost or ice. Therefore, long, cold spells with ice or snow reduce humidity, resulting in more shrinkage and cracking in hardwood flooring.

As temperature and humidity changes occur during the summer, seasonal cracking should remedy itself. When moisture is replaced back into the air, moisture is also absorbed back into the wood. (Expansion occurs, and wood floors return to their original state prior to the winter season.)

It is recommended that you DO NOT FILL your wood floor throughout the winter months. When the wood expands in the summer, the wood will either force out the excess filler or boards will warp. Wood must go somewhere as it expands and the force of this expansion can be significant.

It is important to remember that this shrinkage is not a flaw in the wood or an installation related problem. If you desire additional information concerning wood flooring seasonal movement, please contact the National Oak Flooring Manufacturer’s Association (NOFMA) (901) 526-5016.

CRACKS BETWEEN BOARDS: CAUSES

Cracks are the most common cause for complaints on wood floors. This problem, in recent years, has been exacerbated by pastel and white (or pickled/bleached) finish colors, which tend to make normal cracks appear much larger than when earth-toned or natural finishes are used.

It is normal for the interior of homes to become dry during heating seasons for obvious reasons. As explained in the introduction, under this circumstance wood floors also dry out and shrink slightly. Properly installed wood floors should be expected to have “hairline cracks” between boards in dry months, in most areas of North America. Depending on the width of the boards (or parquet members) used, the size of the room and the severity and duration of low outside temperatures (and hence the intensity of heating), the term “hairline cracks” can have various interpretations.

Generally, “hairline cracks” can be considered normal if, in strips 2¼” wide or less:

1. They close up during the non-heating months.
2. They are not wider than the thickness of a dime in some locations, and vary from the thickness of a piece of stationary in most areas to scattered larger cracks up to the thickness of a dime.

Plank or strip floors sometimes “panelize” due to movement of under-floor construction, or if the finish cements individual boards into panels, so that all the shrinkage is concentrated into only a few cracks, with other joints remaining tight together. In this event, the cracks that do appear will be considerably wider than the thickness of a dime.

Plank floors, because of widths involved, and some parquet floors, can shrink individually up to 2½ times as much as 2¼” strip floors. Cracks that result can therefore be much larger than in strip, and still be normal. If the floor expands so that cracks disappear in high humidity seasons, it should be considered normal.

Purchaser (Date)

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