

Engineered Timber Flooring Overlay System

FOR USE WITH GLUE-DOWN ENGINEERED PLANK FLOORING OVERLAY APPLICATIONS



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OVERVIEW



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1 . 1

APPLICATION & SAFETY STATEMENT

Read these instructions in full before starting installation

The information in this Installation Guide is intended for competent tradespeople who specialise in engineered timber flooring. It should be read together with council stamped project drawings and the current New Zealand Building Code (NZBC), particularly provisions relating to building performance (Clause B), Access (Clause D1) and wet areas (Clause E3).

Installer Obligations

- Forté timber products must be installed by a competent tradesperson experienced in timber flooring.
- Install the flooring strictly in accordance with the latest Forté timber flooring instructions, relevant standards, and local building regulations.
- Use only approved substrate preparation systems, adhesives, and safety procedures.
- When Forté engineered planks are used as wall & ceiling panelling, it must be installed as an overlay only, and not relied upon for structural or bracing elements.
- Verify that the product meets visual and aesthetic requirements **before fixing in place**. Forté is not responsible for aesthetic concerns that were visible before installation. Any concerns should be raised beforehand so we have the opportunity to rectify. Timber is a natural material, so some variation is expected.

Warning

Failure to follow these instructions may result in personal injury, property damage, non-compliance with the NZBC, and **will void the relevant Forté warranty**.

Exclusion of Liability

Other than the rights and remedies that cannot be excluded under New Zealand law, Forté provides the timber flooring product “as is” and excludes all other warranties, conditions, and liabilities (whether in contract, tort—including negligence—or otherwise). Forté is not liable for any indirect or consequential loss arising from installation or use of Forté timber flooring. Where doubt exists, seek advice from a Chartered Professional Engineer or Forté Technical Support **before proceeding**.

1 . 2

INSTALLERS RESPONSIBILITY

If a board isn't up to standard, set it aside; only install what you're happy to stand behind.

The person installing the flooring is solely responsible for thoroughly checking all boards for damage or defects before installing it. If you are not happy with a board, do not lay it. If there are any concerns about the material, the location, or the environment, contact Forté immediately.

Before starting, confirm all details with the client to ensure they are happy with the layout, colour, and finishes — this avoids surprises once the floor is down.

When installing in wet areas, you must confirm the method of installation specified in the council approved plans for each of the areas, to ensure compliance.

Boards with colour or pattern variations that are not defects can be used in less visible areas, such as inside wardrobes, cupboards, or under cabinetry.

Remember, engineered timber is a natural product and will display variations in colour, grain, and texture. These natural characteristics are part of the timber's charm and are not considered defects.

Once installed, the boards are deemed accepted, and defects that were obvious before installation cannot be claimed.

If you are unsure, contact Forté customer care on 0508 366 77

1 . 3

SCOPE OF USE

Know where the engineered timber can be used safely, and where it can't, so every installation performs the way it should.

As detailed in the Design Guides, the Forté Timber Overlay System is purpose-designed for non-structural interior use across flooring, wall, and ceiling applications in both residential and commercial environments. Installations beyond this intended scope fall outside warranty coverage.

- Always install flooring per the solution detailed in the consented plans and in line with NZBC compliance requirements.
- The flooring is suitable for all areas other than garages and commercial kitchens.
- The flooring should always be installed onto an approved substrate (refer to Approved substrates).
- Additional requirements must be adhered to for installations in wet areas (refer to Wet Areas). Please check whether the requirement for this are per the Forté Codemark or an Alternative Solution.
- Additional requirements must be adhered to for installations with underfloor heating (refer to Underfloor heating).
- The area with flooring should be protected against changes in environmental conditions. Refer to **Forté Care & Maintenance Guide**.
- The flooring should be separated from fuel-burning appliances, flues, and chimneys in accordance with NZBC Section C AS/1.
- For installations where a single length/run of the timber flooring will be over 15 lineal meters, please contact Forté to ensure suitability for installation.

1 . 4

STORAGE, HANDLING & ACCLIMATISATION

Careful storage keeps the timber stable, and ready to perform.

Proper storage, acclimatisation and handling are essential to maintain the quality and performance of Forte Engineered Timber Flooring. Failure to store or acclimatise the product correctly may result in excessive expansion, contraction, distortion, gapping, cupping or other installation-related issues.

Refer to ‘Caring For Your Timber’ in the [Care and Maintenance Guide](#) - Residential for guidance on conditions that may affect the product while the building is still under construction.

UPON DELIVERY

- Inspect all packs for damage.
- Store indoors only in a dry, weatherproof environment.
- Keep flooring flat and fully supported.
- Elevate packs off the ground using battens, dunnage or pallets.
- Protect from rain, moisture, direct sunlight and excessive temperature fluctuations
- Store away from external walls, heaters, radiators and other heat sources.
- Maintain storage temperatures between 18°C and 25°C.
- Keep flooring in its original unopened packaging until acclimatisation begins.

ACCLIMATISATION (MINIMUM 48 HOURS PRIOR TO INSTALLATION)

- Building must be weather-tight and enclosed.
- Place flooring in the room in which it will be installed.
- Open packs and leave flat and fully supported., Protect from direct sunlight.
- Maintain room conditions per the Optimal Environmental Conditions. Ensure heating, cooling and ventilation systems are operating where applicable. Internal conditions should reflect normal occupied service conditions.
- Do not commence installation until flooring, substrate and room conditions have stabilised.

Optimal Environmental Conditions

AMBIENT TEMPERATURE (HEAT/COOL)	16-27 °C
AMBIENT RELATIVE HUMIDITY (DRY/MOISTURE)	40-60%
SURFACE TEMPERATURE	≤ 45 °C

DURING INSTALLATION

- Handle boards carefully to avoid damaging the surface finish, edges and locking profile.
- Do not drag packs or boards across one another.
- Lift and carry materials wherever practical.
- Protect flooring from dirt, moisture and construction traffic.

STORAGE OF SPARE PRODUCT

- Retain spare boards for future repairs and maintenance.
- Store indoors in a dry, well-ventilated area.
- Store flat and fully supported in original packaging wherever possible, protected from direct and indirect sunlight and away from excessive heat, moisture and humidity fluctuations.
- Suitable locations include cupboards, store rooms and dry garages. Do not store in lofts, attics, roof spaces or other areas subject to extreme temperatures or significant climate variation.

1 . 5

HEALTH & SAFETY – WORKING
WITH TIMBERS

The right gear and careful handling will protect you during preparation & installation.

Although our timbers are E0 & Super E0 rated for formaldehyde and contain no asbestos or silica particles, there are always Health & Safety precautions to be factored in to the installation methodology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)	When cutting or machining timber, appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn at all times. This includes a suitable dust mask or respirator, eye protection, and hearing protection. PPE must be selected and used in accordance with the level of exposure and the tools being used
DUST EXPOSURE	Fine wood dust may be hazardous to health. Prolonged or repeated exposure to wood dust has been associated with an increased risk of respiratory illness and nasal cancer. Exposure should be minimised through the use of appropriate controls, including ventilation, dust extraction, and PPE. Note: Some species are treated and therefore sawdust, shavings and offcuts should not be disposed of by burning. Check local Council By-Laws for disposal of treated wood.
VENTILATION	All cutting, sanding, and machining of timber products must be carried out in a well-ventilated area or with appropriate dust extraction systems in place. This is required to minimise exposure to airborne dust and maintain safe working conditions. Adequate ventilation must be maintained during installation where adhesives, sealants, or other chemical products are used. This is required to reduce exposure to fumes and volatile compounds and to ensure safe working conditions. Manufacturer safety data sheets for all products used must be followed.

SUBSTRATE PREPARATION GUIDELINES



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2 . 1

PREPARING THE SUBSTRATE

A well-prepared base lets the timber perform at its best.

Forte Engineered Timber Flooring is approved for installation over two substrate types:

- Timber substrates
- Concrete substrates

Prior to installation, all substrates must be structurally sound, clean, dry, and free from contaminants that may affect adhesion or performance.

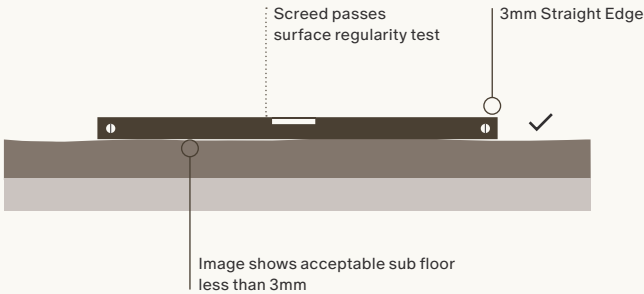
As a general rule, the total finished height of the flooring on top of the substrate is the thickness of the product plus 2mm for glue and moisture barriers.

The substrate must be assessed for unevenness and surface irregularities prior to installation.

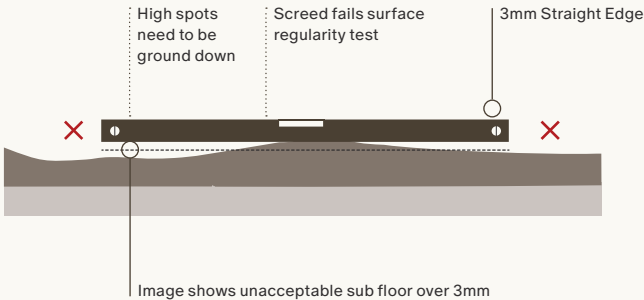
Under NZS AS 1884:2013 substrates must comply with the flatness requirements and must not exceed 3mm variation when measured beneath a 3m straightedge placed in any direction across the floor surface.

Where deviations exceed this tolerance, corrective preparation shall be undertaken before installation of the flooring system.

ACCEPTABLE: <3MM



UNACCEPTABLE: >3MM



The method of correction will depend on the substrate type, the extent of the irregularity, and whether the variation is localised or widespread.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DEVIATION FROM 3M STRAIGHTEDGE	RECOMMENDED ACTION
≤ 3 mm	Acceptable
3–5 mm	Sand, grind, patch or skim as required
5–10 mm	Patch or levelling compound
> 10 mm	Assess appropriate remediation method based on substrate type and extent of variation

2 . 2

RAISING SUBFLOOR HEIGHT
USING PLYWOOD

Smooth transitions in floor heights keep movement safe and spaces looking seamless.

Where the required height adjustment exceeds the practical application of these screed or self-leveling compound alone, Structural Grade Plywood underlayment can be used to raise the subfloor and achieve a flush transition. This method is commonly used in renovation projects where adjoining floor levels differ by more than 10–15 mm.

We strongly encourage consultation with the flooring installer for site specific advice.

KEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Cut plywood into 400x400mm squares before installation.
- Material Conditioning: The moisture content of the Plywood must be below 12%. Acclimatise the plywood underlayment for 72 within the installation environment prior to fixing. This helps minimise expansion or contraction after installation and promotes a more stable finished floor.
- Subfloor Condition: Ensure the existing subfloor is clean, dry, structurally sound, and free from dust, debris, and contaminants to support effective adhesion and long-term performance.
- Plywood Orientation and Support: Lay plywood sheets perpendicular to the existing timber subfloor, ensuring all sheet joints are adequately supported. This provides greater structural stability, improves load distribution, and helps minimise movement in the finished floor.
- Sheet Placement: Install plywood sheets with appropriate expansion gaps and without forcing sheets into position. Allowing for natural movement helps maintain a stable substrate.
- Adhesive System: Use an adhesive system that is suitable for both the substrate and the plywood underlayment, following the adhesive manufacturer's recommendations.
- Plywood must be sanded flat before overlaying with engineered timber flooring.

2.3

CONCRETE FLOORS

SLAB-ON-GRADE OR SUSPENDED

Preparation of Concrete Floor

GRIND

It is necessary to grind all concrete substrates to remove contaminants and prepare the surface for the next stage. Any high spots should be ground down to meet the levelling requirements (3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge).

Any remaining low spots should be built up with an approved levelling compound.

MOISTURE TEST

All concrete substrates must be tested and display a reading below 70% RH before installation can begin.

To measure the relative humidity above the slab, a hygrometer is sealed to the concrete and left for at least 16 hours. It measures the relative humidity of the air in the sealed chamber over the slab. If your initial test shows up below 70% then you can proceed without applying moisture barrier (possible where slabs have been installed for several years).

MOISTURE BARRIER
(IF REQUIRED)

If the hygrometer reading is above 70% RH (Relative Humidity), then a coat of moisture barrier approved for use with engineered timber flooring should be applied to the concrete slab before laying.

The RH reading of the substrate should be re-checked once the moisture barrier is dry. If the hygrometer reading is still too high, another coat of the moisture barrier should be applied to the concrete substrate. Ensure all guidelines in the suppliers TDS/ Installation sheet are followed when applying the moisture barrier. Continue this process or wait until the hygrometer reading is below 70% RH.

Refer to BRANZ Bulletin Issue 644 [“Solid timber strip flooring on a concrete slab – Section 2”](#) for more information.

PRIMING & LEVELLING

All products must be compatible for use with each other

If the substrate unevenness still exceeds 3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge after grinding, it is necessary to fill low spots with levelling compound.

- Mark out the areas required to be levelled.
- Before applying the levelling compound, prepare the areas marked out with a primer approved for use with engineered timber flooring. Ensure all guidelines in the suppliers TDS/ Installation sheet are followed.
- Apply a levelling compound approved for use with engineered timber flooring with concrete substrates to the areas marked out. Ensure all guidelines in the suppliers TDS/Installation sheet are followed.

Conduct a final check to ensure the sub-floor is completely dry, clean, level, free of any cracks, and structurally sound before proceeding with installation.

Note: Timber over concrete needs a steady, reliable foundation when prepared correctly. If the concrete substrate is mechanically weak, please contact Forté (if you are unsure) prior to installation to discuss preparation requirements.

2 . 4

TIMBER FLOORING SUBSTRATE
(EXISTING STRUCTURAL OR OVERLAY, EXCLUDING
TIMBER JOISTS)

Preparation of Timber Subfloor

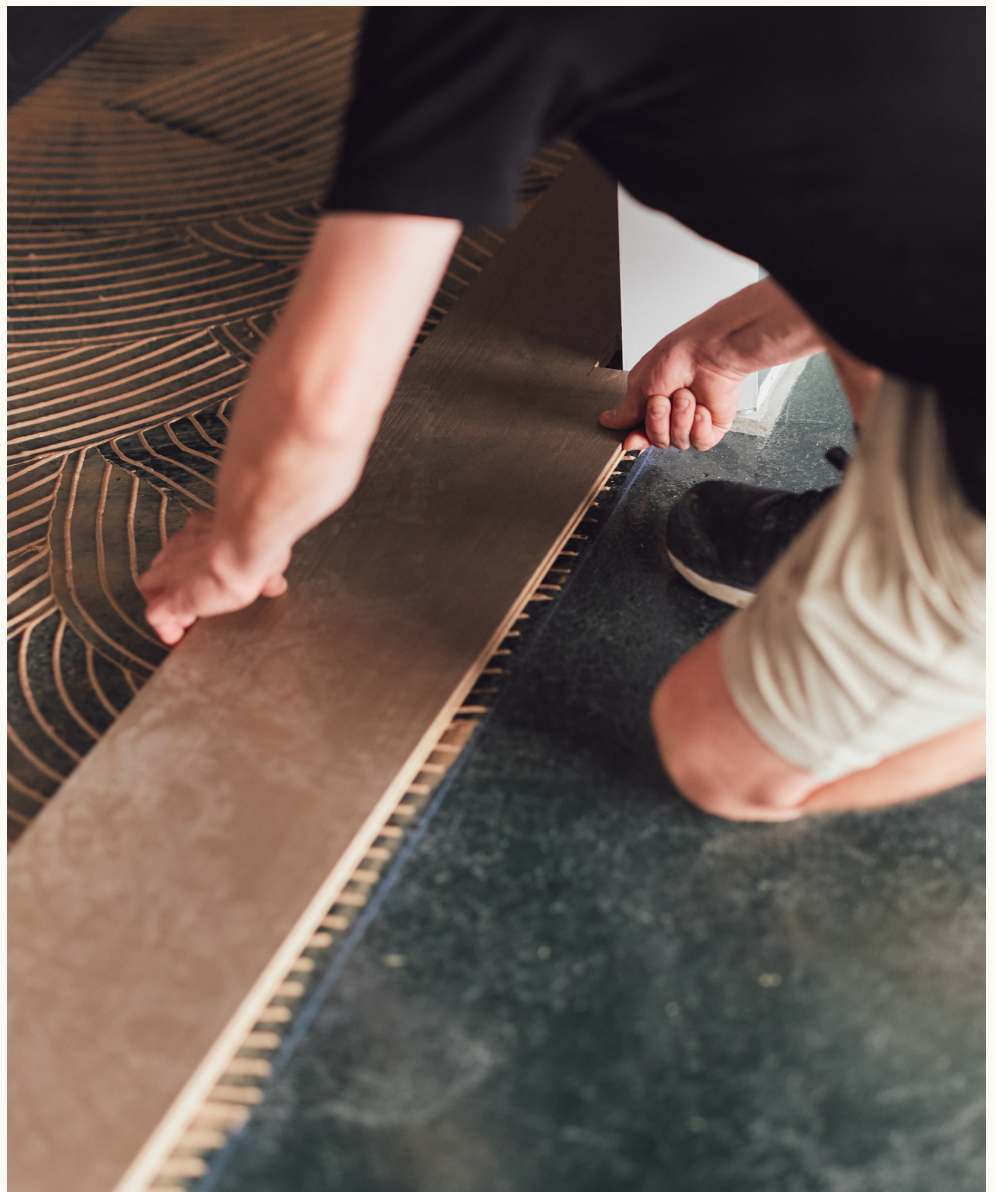
INSPECT	Ensure the timber substrate is well-fixed to the joists. If there is any movement/squeaking this needs to be remedied before installation. The timber substrate should be 18mm minimum, when over joists, and 15mm when over concrete.
SAND	The timber substrate should be machine-sanded to 40 grit to remove contaminants and prepare the surface for the next stage.
MOISTURE TEST	All timber substrates must be tested and display a reading below 16% Moisture Content before installation can begin per NZS AS 1884:2013 Use a Resistance (invasive) Moisture Meter to test both timber substrate and engineered timber flooring moisture content (MC) levels. The moisture content should be less than 16% MC with no more than 4% difference between the timber substrate and engineered timber oak lamella flooring. Do not install if the moisture content difference is greater than this. If the moisture content is too high, wait for the timber substrate to dry out sufficiently. A dehumidifier can be used to quicken the process.
MOISTURE BARRIER - NATIVE TIMBER OR PARTICLE BOARD SUBFLOORS (IF REQUIRED)	Existing Solid Native Timber: If subfloor is an existing Solid Native Timber, apply a 2-Component Epoxy Moisture Barrier to the subfloor before installation. This will provide additional protection to the structure in the case of a major flood/leaking. Particleboard & Oriented Strand Board: Forté does not recommend the installation of Timber Flooring over Particleboard or Oriented Strand Board without a Wet Area Membrane, as the scope of use statement on the product Appraisal / Codemark for these products generally require a wet-area membrane to be installed for use in wet areas. See section 5 of the Design Guide for additional wet area guidance.
PRIMING & LEVELLING	If the substrate unevenness still exceeds 3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge after sanding, it is necessary to fill low spots with levelling compound. — If the substrate is formed by wooden boards with open joints, these must be sealed with a sealer approved for use with engineered timber flooring. Mark out the areas required to be levelled. — Before applying the levelling compound, prepare the areas marked out with a primer approved for use with engineered timber flooring. Ensure all guidelines in the suppliers TDS/Installation sheet are followed. — Apply a levelling compound approved for use with engineered timber flooring with timber substrates to the areas marked out. Ensure all guidelines in the suppliers TDS/Installation sheet are followed. — The substrate should now be level (not exceeding 3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge).

2 . 5

SPECIALISED INSTALLATION SOLUTIONS

A well-prepared base lets the timber perform at its best.

Additional preparation and installation requirements apply where the flooring system is installed under special site conditions or within specialised floor constructions. These applications may require additional substrate preparation, moisture management, acoustic treatment, heating system commissioning, or other project-specific considerations beyond the standard installation requirements. Common applications and their associated requirements are outlined in the following sections.



Wet Areas - Applications Outside of Codemark Scope

SCOPE OF USE

Where Forté Engineered Timber Flooring is installed in a wet area, the consented plans and project specification shall identify the nominated compliance pathway before installation commences.

Forté's preferred compliance pathway is the Forté Alternative Solution, which provides an approved method of achieving compliance without the need for a wet-area membrane where the project falls within the applicable scope of use.

Where the project is outside the scope of the Forté Alternative Solution, or where specified by the designer, install over a compliant wet-area membrane in accordance with E3/AS2.

The Forté Timber Overlay Flooring System is CodeMark certified (CMNZ70143) when designed and installed in accordance with the applicable Forté Design Guide and this Installation Guide, including the requirements for wet-area installations.

Only one compliance pathway should be used for each wet-area installation. Do not commence installation until you have confirmed the nominated compliance pathway.

APPLICATION – E3/AS2

Install over a compliant wet-area membrane installed in accordance with the membrane manufacturer's requirements and the Waterproofing Membrane Association Code of Practice. The membrane shall be fully cured and approved prior to installation of the Forté Timber Overlay Flooring System. Prior to application of the Wet-area membrane system, the subfloor should be prepared in accordance with the 'Substrate Preparation Guidelines'.

Concrete: Section 2.3

Timber: Section 2.4

- Ensure the membrane system supplier states their system is compatible with Glue down Timber Flooring Installation.
- All timber flooring installation components (sealers/ primers/ levelling/adhesives) used when installing over a wet-area membrane system must come from the same supplier as the wet area membrane.

APPLICATION - FORTE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

Install in accordance with the Forté Alternative Solution Guidance for Timber Flooring, including all specified joint sealing, perimeter sealing and substrate requirements.

In kitchens, laundries, bathrooms, and WCs, apply a water-resistant PVA joint sealer adhesive (minimum D3 rating) to all plank joints in accordance with the supplier's technical documentation to assist in achieving an impervious surface requirement under NZBC Clause E3. Remove excess adhesive immediately.

SYSTEMS APPROVED FOR USE WITH FORTE TIMBER FLOORING

Forté have worked with wet-area membrane suppliers to ensure there is a suitable membrane available for use with all of our products. The three systems we commonly recommend are;

- Ardex WPM002 (refer to system recommendation)
- Mapei Aqua Defense (refer to system recommendation)
- Selley's VBS Rapid (refer to system recommendation)

Laying Over Hydronic Underfloor Heating (Concrete Substrates Only)

SCOPE OF USE

Where Forté Engineered Timber Flooring is specified over a concrete slab containing hydronic underfloor heating, additional substrate preparation and commissioning requirements apply.

The heating system must be tested, commissioned and confirmed suitable for use with engineered timber flooring prior to installation.

Important PRIOR TO INSTALLATION

A hydronic-heated concrete slab must be fully cured, flat, dry, and operating within Forté's moisture and temperature limits before installation.

The heating system must be commissioned and run through its cycle so any latent moisture is released prior to laying the floor.

- Ensure the timber flooring being installed is suitable for use over Underfloor Heating
- The spacing (width) between heating pipes should not be more than 150mm.
- The surface of the slab from the heating pipes may not be less than 30mm and the recommended thickness is 60mm deep.

Refer to **Forté Timber Overlay Flooring System Design Guide** for more information.

INITIAL COMMISSIONING OF THE UNDERFLOOR HEATING SYSTEM

The underfloor heating should be working at least 3 weeks before flooring is to be installed to allow enough time for commissioning and substrate preparation.

Always follow the underfloor heating manufacturers guidelines for commissioning. If these conflict with our guidelines, please contact Forté Customer Care for more information.

PREPARE SUBSTRATE

Prepare substrate as per section 2.3 Concrete Floors (slab-on-grade suspended)

CONSISTENT TEMPERATURE DURING TIMBER FLOORING INSTALL

Once the slab has been commissioned and prepared, turn on the underfloor heating, and increase in daily increments of 5°C until the installation surface temperature is 15°C.

- The installation surface temperature should be maintained at 15°C during installation.
- The underfloor heating should remain at 15 degrees until at least 48 hours after installation has been completed.

Allowing changes in temperature (particularly overnight) may compromise the adhesive and the timber flooring.

POST INSTALLATION

Once the timber flooring has been installed can be kept running at a maximum of 27 degrees, by increasing in increments of 5 degrees per day until reaching the desired temperature. If underfloor heating is running, it is recommended to not cover the timber flooring as this may result in delamination of the lacquer due to trapped excess moisture and heat.

Preparation For Laying Over Electric Underfloor Heating

SCOPE OF USE

Where Forté Engineered Timber Flooring is specified over an electric underfloor heating system, additional substrate preparation and commissioning requirements apply.

The heating system must be installed, tested and confirmed suitable for use with engineered timber flooring prior to installation.

Important PRIOR TO INSTALLATION

We recommend the flooring installer to work directly with the underfloor heating contractor to ensure that the subfloor is prepared correctly.

- Ensure the timber flooring being installed is suitable for use over the Underfloor Heating system
- The surface of the screed should be at least 8mm above the cables.
- The screed must be structurally sound and free from laitance.

Refer to **Forté Timber Overlay Flooring System Design Guide** for more information.

INITIAL COMMISSIONING OF THE UNDERFLOOR HEATING SYSTEM

The underfloor heating should be working at least 3 weeks before flooring is to be installed to allow enough time for commissioning and substrate preparation.

Always follow the underfloor heating manufacturers guidelines for commissioning. If these conflict with our guidelines, please contact Forté Customer Care for more information.

PREPARE SUBSTRATE

Prepare substrate as per:

Concrete: Section 2.3

Timber: Section 2.4

This should include moisture and humidity checks to ensure the substrate is within the correct range prior to installing the Forté Engineered Timber Flooring

CONSISTENT TEMPERATURE DURING TIMBER FLOORING INSTALL

Once the slab has been commissioned and prepared, turn on the underfloor heating, and increase in daily increments of 5°C until the installation surface temperature is 15°C.

- The installation surface temperature should be maintained at 15°C during installation.
- The underfloor heating should remain at 15 degrees until at least 48 hours after installation has been completed. Allowing changes in temperature (particularly overnight) may compromise the adhesive and the timber flooring.

POST INSTALLATION

Once the timber flooring has been installed can be kept running at a maximum of 27 degrees, by increasing in increments of 5 degrees per day until reaching the desired temperature. If underfloor heating is running, it is recommended to not cover the timber flooring as this may result in delamination of the lacquer due to trapped excess moisture and heat.

Laying Over Acoustic Underlay

SCOPE OF USE	Where Forté Engineered Timber Flooring is specified over a glued acoustic underlay system, additional substrate preparation and installation requirements apply. The acoustic underlay shall be approved for use with engineered timber flooring and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements prior to flooring installation.
PREPARATION	It is important to ensure the underlay and adhesive system are suitable for timber floor installation. These recommendations are for use with the Forté Acoustick-Mat Heavy-Duty Rubber/Cork 5 mm Acoustic Underlay and may be used where acoustic performance is required as part of the flooring system with an approved adhesive system.
UNDERLAY INSTALLATION	— Confirm the substrate complies with all moisture, flatness and preparation requirements including being free from debris and dust. — Apply the approved acoustic underlay adhesive to the substrate using the trowel profile recommended by the adhesive manufacturer. — Lay the Forté Acoustick-Mat Heavy-Duty Rubber/Cork 5 mm Acoustic Underlay into the adhesive and ensure full contact with the substrate. — Cut the underlay neatly around walls, doorways and penetrations using a sharp utility knife. — Roll or press the underlay into the adhesive to achieve a consistent bond and eliminate air pockets. — Butt adjoining sheets tightly together without overlapping. — Inspect the completed underlay installation and ensure the surface remains smooth, flat and free from wrinkles, gaps or raised edges. — Allow the adhesive to cure in accordance with the adhesive manufacturer's recommendations before installing the timber flooring. Refer to our Acoustick-Mat Underlay Installation Guide or other systems refer to manufacturers instructions.
OTHER UNDERLAY SYSTEMS	Where an alternative acoustic underlay is used, all adhesives must be compatible with the complete flooring system, including the substrate, underlay and Forté Engineered Timber Flooring. Adhesives from the same manufacturer or system should be used wherever possible. Follow manufacturer installation and curing requirements. Confirm suitability for heated slab applications where applicable. Other Underlay systems may include: — Regupol 4515 Acoustic Underlay — Mapei Mapesonic CR Underlay

INSTALLATION GUIDELINES



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3 . 1

INSTALLATION SETUP &
LAYOUT

A well-planned layout and aligned expectations shape a smoother install.

Planning the layout prior to installation helps achieve a balanced, visually refined floor while ensuring sufficient allowance for expansion and movement. Confirming board direction, floor centring, transitions, and perimeter detailing before installation begins reduces installation issues and ensures alignment with project expectations.

Key Recommendations

BOARD DIRECTION & PLANK LAYOUT	— Confirm installation direction with the client or site lead prior to installation. — Flooring generally performs best visually when installed parallel to the longest dimension of the room or primary direction of travel.
FLOOR LAYOUT	— Dry lay the first 2–3 rows where required to confirm layout and wall contours. — Avoid narrow “sliver” cuts at perimeter walls where possible. — Aim to maintain at least half a board width along perimeter edges for a more balanced finish. — Use a laser, chalk line, or string line to establish a straight starting line. — Do not assume walls are straight or rooms are square. — Begin installation from the most suitable wall, typically working away from the primary access point. — Draw planks from at least five packs and install them in a randomised mix to ensure natural tonal variation is evenly distributed across the finished surface.
CLIENT APPROVAL	Where possible, open and review flooring packs with the client prior to installation to confirm expectations specifically regarding: — Colour, variation, and overall appearance of the product — The plank layout — Board direction
EXPANSION ALLOWANCES	— Plan around natural breaks in the floor, either through transitions or joints, allow the timber to expand and contract naturally without stress. — Carefully consider where the flooring meets other surfaces, such as tiles, carpet, or concrete. — Plan transition points to accommodate height differences and movement. — Allow 5–10 mm expansion gaps around the perimeter and all fixed penetrations, including doorways, cabinetry, pipes, and thresholds. — Remove or undercut skirting boards where required prior to installation. — Use spacers or wedges to maintain expansion gaps during installation. When installing Forté timber flooring over large areas or runs longer than 15m, it’s important to plan for expansion and movement. Long runs may also require special attention to layout and board mixing to maintain a consistent appearance. If you’re unsure about expansion requirements, transitions, or suitability for a particular site, contact Forté on 0508 366 677 before starting the installation.

PLAN FOR SHORTS

Plan for the use of the nested short planks throughout the installation to achieve a balanced look. Distributing these thoughtfully assists with installation efficiency and minimises waste.

Short planks are well suited for:

- Starting or finishing runs
 - Stair landings, under stairways
 - Under fixed cabinetry
 - Irregular spaces
 - Wardrobes
 - Hallways
-

**ADHESIVE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ensure the adhesive is approved for use with the prefinished timber flooring and the substrate you are installing on. Commonly used adhesive brands with Forté timber flooring include

- **Mapei Ultrabond ECO® S955 1K**
- Selleys Liquid Nails Timberflex
- Ardex AF 480 MS
- Uzin MK 95

Best Practice:

- We recommend using a water-based flexible adhesive as these are relatively easy to clean from the surface of a prefinished plank (rigid adhesives can be used in more challenging environments). Use additional caution as it cannot easily be removed from the prefinished surface of boards.
 - Solvent based adhesives should be avoided where possible as if any residue touches the surface of the plank, it will cause long-term and irreparable damage.
 - We recommend a trowel application for installation. We do not recommend squiggle or spot gluing as this can potentially cause hollow spots, squeaking, and movement.
 - Always follow the glue manufacturer's instructions and be sure to choose the correct size trowel.
-

3 . 2

INSTALLATION METHOD

If a board isn't up to standard, set it aside; only install what you're happy to stand behind.

Timber flooring should be installed progressively in accordance with the adhesive manufacturer's instructions and project-specific requirements. Care should be taken to maintain board alignment, expansion allowances, adhesive coverage, and joint integrity throughout the installation process.

INSTALLATION STEP	GUIDANCE
Adhesive Application	Follow the adhesive manufacturer's spread rates, working times, and curing requirements. Install boards into the adhesive before skinning occurs, and only spread as far as you can reasonably reach.
Board Installation	— Install the first row following the established setout line, with the groove side facing the wall maintaining perimeter expansion gaps with spacers. — Stagger end joints a minimum of 300 mm between adjacent rows. — Maintain consistent board alignment throughout the installation. — Follow the spread rate and curing time, spread the glue evenly on the substrate ensuring the installer can lay the planks in time for best result of the glue. — Immediately place the boards into the adhesive, prior to the adhesive skinning over. Place spacers between the boards and the wall to keep the expansion gap whilst the adhesive is curing. — Add each additional row of flooring, offsetting or staggering the end joints at least 30cm apart. — Where installation extends over multiple days, strap, wedge, or weight unfinished rows to prevent movement or board lift during adhesive curing. — Weight the boards down with unopened packs or other methods. — When installing over a timber substrate, we recommend secret nailing each board at 300–400mm intervals, in addition to trowel gluing. This is to provide additional fixing and stability.

INSTALLATION STEP	GUIDANCE
Transition Bars	— Ensure the flooring and trim are clean, dry and free from dust, debris and adhesive residue. — For brass or other heavy trims, lightly abrade the bonding surface with a Scotch-Brite pad or fine sandpaper to improve adhesion. Perform all abrading away from the flooring surface. — Pre-drill 1.5 mm pilot holes through the trim at 400mm centres and dry-fit, using packers where required to achieve the correct height. — Apply a continuous bead of Forté recommended adhesive, such as Selley's 650FC Adhesive sealant, to the underside of the trim — Flip the bar into position and press firmly into place. Secure with 1.0mm × 12.7mm wire nails. — Use low-tack tape to hold the trim in place while the adhesive cures and remove within 2 hours. — Immediately remove any excess adhesive and inspect the completed installation. — To maintain the polished look of a brass bar, seal with a clear brass lacquer, prior to installation
Adhesive Clean-Up	Immediately remove adhesive residue from the flooring surface during installation using approved cleaning methods and in accordance with the adhesive manufacturer's recommendations.
Completion	Once installation is complete, maintain perimeter spacers and restrict traffic until adhesive curing is achieved in accordance with manufacturer requirements.

3 . 3

POST-INSTALLATION CHECKLIST

A thorough final review secures quality, consistency, and client confidence.

- Perform touch-ups and clean up marks/glue spillages as required.
- Remove expansion shims and install any trims/bars/skirting boards/toe kicks as required. Always fix the mouldings to the wall, never to the flooring.
- Fill any gaps around planks with a matching filler.
- Caulking where required. (This is required in wet areas – refer to note below).
- Vacuum/sweep and clean the floor using fresh water and a clean microfibre cloth.
- The floor should naturally air dry within 2-3 minutes of passing over, ready for client inspection.

Sealing around perimeter & any fixed items in kitchens, laundries, bathrooms and WCs:

After installation has been completed, use a water-resistant gap filler to seal any parts of the perimeter and any fixed items within the area (ie. floor to wall junctions, kitchen waste pipes) that are exposed to water-splash in the room/area. In open-plan spaces, this should extend 1.5m from each sanitary fixture/sanitary appliance. This is to be done to achieve an impervious surface, which is required by Clause E3 of the New Zealand Building Code.

Note: Recommended, Colour Matched Caulk can be found in section 8.2.2 of the [Design Guide](#)

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SURFACE PROTECTION

A well-protected surface maintains their beauty and stability as the building work continues.

Protect installed flooring from dust, debris, moisture and construction traffic until practical completion. Minimise foot traffic for the first 24 hours and do not place furniture or heavy items on the floor during this period to allow the adhesive to fully cure:

- Any protection system used must be breathable, such as Protecta Board, to allow the timber to acclimatise naturally and prevent moisture becoming trapped beneath the covering.
- Avoid using tape directly on the flooring. If tape is required, use a delicate masking tape, remove within 48 hours, and do not apply in areas exposed to direct sunlight.
- Ensure all cutting equipment is fitted with dust extraction and remove any dust from the floor by vacuuming prior to applying protective coverings.
- Keep underfloor heating systems switched off while protective coverings are in place.
- Maintain internal temperatures between 16°C and 27°C and avoid excessive fluctuations in temperature or humidity while the floor is protected.
- Where ongoing construction works are occurring, protect adjacent walls and finished surfaces from dust, debris and accidental damage.

Forté