



Design aspects

When designing the floor covering one shall establish which class of agglomerated cork floor covering is suitable for the intended intensity of use. For suitability see European Standard *EN 685 - Classification*.

Potential problems of installation

The most common problems and source of dissatisfaction are not caused by the product itself but by inappropriate installation procedures (deficient sub-floor preparation, use of wrong adhesives or finishes...). Installing cork floors in areas with excessive sub-floor moisture should be avoided. When using levelling compounds the complete drying of compound is essential for a good adhesion. It is, therefore, important to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Only recommended adhesives and finishes should be used.

Conditioning

Packaged tiles, adhesive and varnishes should be acclimatised on site for at least 48 hours before installation. Remove the tiles from packages just before spreading the adhesive.

Sub-floor

Preparation of the sub-floor is essential for a successful installation. Concrete floors must be quite smooth, levelled, permanently dry and free of dust and grease. On non-floating sub-floors and on sub-floors that are not sufficiently ventilated, adequate moisture insulation should first be applied. The percentage of moisture of the sub-floor must not exceed 3%. Irregularities in the sub-floor must not be filled with glue but should be smoothed with adequate filler. Wooden floors have to be made smooth (it may be necessary to machine sand the floor). Linoleum or vinyl must be removed or, if not possible, must be made quite rough to ensure adhesive bond.

Under-floor heating

If under-floor heating has been implemented in the sub-floor, the following basic rules apply:

- Turn off the heating 48 hours before installation starts.
- Turn on the heating in steps not earlier than 72 hours after installation.
- Do not exceed the temperature of 26 °C measured at the surface of the floor covering. Higher temperatures are not only giving discomfort to feet but may have influence on the bond of the adhesive used.

It must be taken into account that expansion and contraction of the cork floor will occur. This is a natural consequence of changes in interior temperature as well as in the structure's moisture content. So, gaps may occur during the months of heating.

Planning the layout

Before installation, please control the tiles. If you come across a defect in production please register the complaint at your supplier immediately and do not install!

Cork is a natural product. Variations in colour or structure are natural and give cork a special character. Therefore, mix the tiles in order to obtain the most pleasing blend of shade.

Start in the middle of the room by stretching a so-called adjusting string. For this purpose you measure the middle of the wall and the opposite wall. Start along the string and determine the way and the pattern by laying some loose tiles. The layout of the installation is to be determined by the installer (who may consult the end-user if appropriate). Principles, which should normally be followed, are:



- Minimise the number of joints necessary;
- Lay strips along passages, in the direction of traffic, along the length of a room, or towards the wall containing the main window;
- Avoid the use of sensitive patterns where there is a risk of fading from high temperatures or intense sunlight;
- Ensure that, as far as possible, material from the same batch is used in the same area;
- Position tiles to avoid forming joints within 4 cm of the skirting.

Gluing

The recommended adhesive for installing cork tiles is contact cement (solvent or water-based). Apply adhesive to perimeter of the room using a paintbrush. Using a low nap roller or a proper trowel apply the adhesive to the sub-floor. Apply adhesive with the roller to the backing of the cork tiles. Any adhesive stains should be removed immediately.

Laying

When the adhesive is dry (normally it turns clear and is tacky to the touch, roughly 15 to 30 minutes depending on humidity), place the first tile and press it against the floor with the help of a rubber hammer. Once the first cork tile is in place, align the next tile to the edges of the first and press it tightly against the edges of the first. Special attention should be paid to the alignment of each tile. Tiles must be hit with the rubber hammer for positive contact between sub-floor and tile, particularly around the edges and corners. The floor must be rolled in both directions with a 50 Kg roller every 30 minutes, to ensure that the tiles are firmly bedded into the adhesive.

Light pedestrian traffic may normally be allowed after 1 day.

Finishing

We recommend that cork floor tiles should be varnished after installation (sealing of joints and improving wear resistance). Always varnish with a specially recommended cork varnish. It is essential to follow the varnishing instructions of your supplier strictly.

After the laying is completed, wait at least 24 hours in order to let the adhesive coat drying completely (depending on the type of adhesive, temperature and relative humidity of the air). Clean the floor thoroughly, vacuum it and remove any adhesive stains, if necessary by sanding slightly. Apply 3 coats of varnish (when varnishing pre-varnished cork floor tiles, 1-2 coats is enough). It is recommended to sand slightly between the varnish coats with fine sandpaper (grain 240), and then vacuum.

Light traffic is normally allowed after 1 day, but final hardening of the finish is achieved after 1 week. Wait 2 weeks before using the recommended maintenance products.

Note: Always apply adhesives and varnishes at temperatures among 15 and 25 °C and keep them from freezing.

Preventive care

The cork floor must be kept clean. Never use cleaning products with abrasive ingredients or solvent based.

Furniture legs should have protective pads to avoid scratches. Furniture and other heavy objects must be placed carefully.

A doormat should be laid inside the front door to help protect against dirt and sand.



Chair castors should be of type W (soft). For additional protection, polycarbonate mats under castor chairs should be used.

Avoid sharp or pointed objects with concentrated weight such as high heels on your cork floor.

Prolonged contact of plasticizer-containing material (e.g. rubber, latex, plastics...) with the varnish may cause non-reversible stain of the floor.

Cork is a natural product and may tend to fade when exposed to sunlight over long periods of time. Use blinds or curtains to prevent cork fading by direct solar radiation.

Cleaning

The cork floor must be kept clean using a mop or vacuum cleaner. Dust and dirt behave like sanding paper and are thus to be removed immediately. If necessary (heavier soiling) the floor can be damp-mopped using an appropriate cleaning product.

Maintenance

Maintenance caring can become necessary from time to time to refresh the protective layer. First clean your floor and then apply a thin layer of a recommended maintenance product.

Please observe the particular maintenance instruction for your cork floating floor. For the correct use follow the instructions on the packaging labels of each product, as well as the information from technical data sheets.

Basic cleaning

Manual or mechanical basic cleaning can become necessary in case of heavy stains which cannot be removed during maintenance cleanings. To basic-clean your floor, use an appropriate "remover", applying as little solution as possible and working in sections. Damp-mop the floor subsequently with clean water. After the floor has dried completely, a new maintenance care must be performed.

Basic cleanings should be carried out as seldom as possible.

Renovation

All varnished floors need refurbishment depending on the intensity of use. When refurbishing, sand the old varnish carefully and remove wax, maintenance products, dirt, etc. Remove the dust by vacuuming and apply 2 coats of a recommended varnish.

Attention

Cork floorings are high quality, natural materials and should be handled accordingly. In spite of all due care given when manufacturing the cork tiles, there is always a possibility of variations in structure and/or shade. Verify this by daylight before you start laying the tiles. Proceeding in this manner, you can distribute the tiles in such a way that variations in structure and/or shade are not striking.

Cork (as wood) may change colour when exposed to sunlight over long periods of time. Cork fading is subtle and do not change the beauty of this material under normal wear and proper maintenance.