Forté

INSTALLATION GUIDE

Engineered Timber Flooring Overlay System

FOR USE WITH GLUE-DOWN ENGINEERED PLANK FLOORING OVERLAY APPLICATIONS

ISSUE 2026.Q1

CONTENTS

1.0 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**.

SCOPE OF USE

Forté engineered timber performs best when installed in the right environments and within the limits set by the Building Code. Clear conditions around moisture, temperature, and substrate help ensure the finished surface stays stable and durable over time.

Understanding where the product is suitable – and where extra care or alternative solutions are needed – sets the foundation for a successful install. These parameters support safe, consistent work and a product that lasts.

2.1 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.

— 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).

— 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.

STORAGE & HANDLING

Good storage and careful handling protect the boards before they ever reach their installed location. Keeping timber dry, flat, and in stable conditions helps prevent bowing, cupping, and moisture issues later on. Safe lifting, clean environments, and steady temperatures make installation faster and smoother. Looking after the product from day one sets up the whole job for success.

3.1 STORAGE & HANDLING

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

Proper storage and handling of our product are essential to maintain its quality and performance. Following recommended practices helps prevent damage, preserve appearance, and ensure safe use. The guidelines below provide practical steps to protect the product during transportation, storage, and on-site handling.

Recommendations

— The timber planks should be left flat in the original unopened packaging in the areas it is to be installed in for at least 48 hours prior to installation. This allows the product to acclimatise to the room temperature and minimise the likelihood of any shrinkage or swelling.

— The timber should be stored out of direct sunlight, away from walls and radiators.

— It is recommended to place stored packs on battens/dunnage to minimise moisture absorption from the ground.

— The product should be kept in a shaded and protected dry place (18°C to 25°C).

— Do not store the timber products outside.

— Spare product should be stored in a dry and ventilated area, such as under stairs, garage or store room. Lofts and attics are not suitable due to high temperatures and dramatic changes in climate.

— Spare boards should be stored flat and out of sunlight, direct or indirect.

— Where possible boards should be kept in their original packaging, with board faces protected.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Working with timber and tools comes with risks, so following safety rules keeps everyone on site safe. Protective gear, correct lifting, and safe handling of tools reduce accidents and injuries. Good habits prevent product damage to the flooring and help the job run smoothly. Awareness and care make every install safer and more efficient.


Makita

4.1 CUTTING OF TIMBER

Stay safe — the right gear and careful handling protect people and timber.

Although our timbers are E0 & Super E0 rated for Formaldehyde and contain no asbestos or silica particles, cutting of timber is to be done in well-ventilated areas and a suitable dust mask, eye protection and ear protection must be worn.

Note: Some fine wood dust can cause nasal cancer. 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.

SUBSTRATE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

A solid base is the secret to a timber floor that looks and performs beautifully. Flat, clean, and stable surfaces give the boards room to settle naturally and stay strong over time. Checking moisture, levelling, and repairing the subfloor prevents problems before they start. Careful preparation makes installation smoother and ensures the floor lasts for years.

5.1 SUBSTRATE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

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

The entire substrate should always be checked for any unevenness and must also be level in accordance with NZS AS1884:2013 (not exceeding 3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge).

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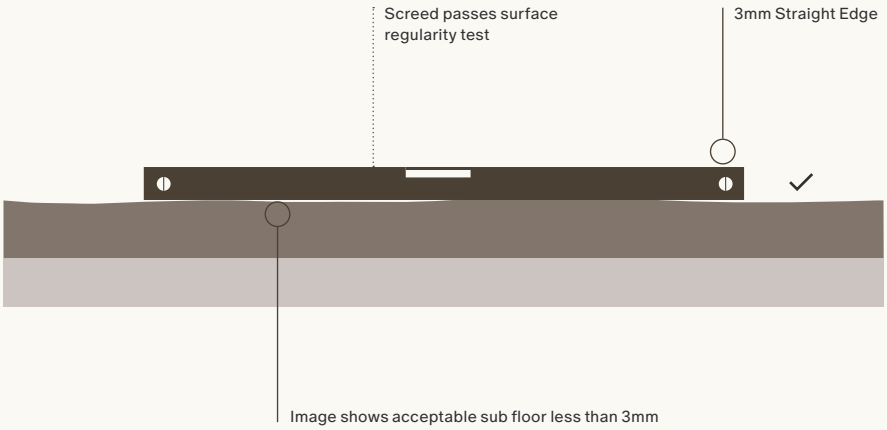

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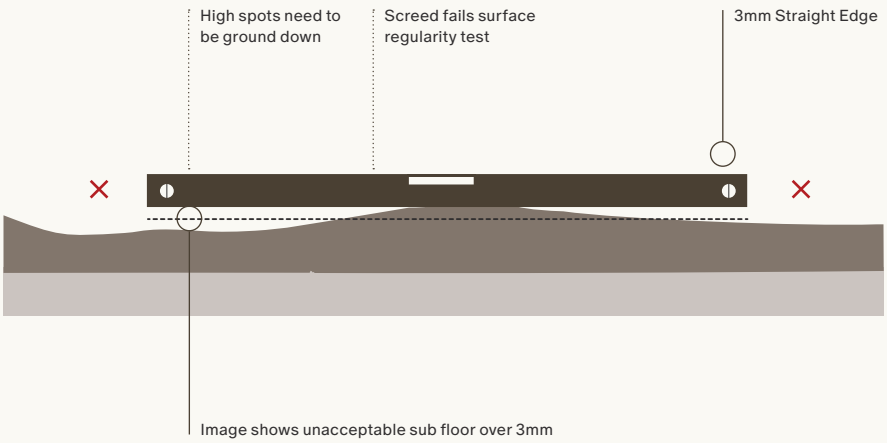


5.2 FLOORING HEIGHTS

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

If there is a major variance of height within the subfloor where the timber flooring is to be installed, ie. a renovation, H3 plywood sheets/squares can be used to level this out to achieve a flush transition prior to installation.

For a minor variance of height within the subfloor where the timber flooring is to be installed, screed or levelling compound can be used to level this out prior to installation.

Note: 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.

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

RAISING SUBFLOOR HEIGHT TO MATCH REQUIRED HEIGHT FOR TRANSITIONS

ACCLIMATISE	Acclimatise the plywood underlayment. Store underlayment in the room it will be installed in for 72 hours before the actual installation. This process acclimatises the underlayment to the climate of the room and prevents any unexpected expansion after installation. All measurements should be taken after the underlayment has had the time to acclimatise as well.
UNDERCUT (IF REQUIRED)	Undercut the plywood vertically and horizontally to create notched surface. This creates flexibility. Place something heavy on each plywood sheet after installation. Place spacers between the plywood sheets.
CLEAN	Ensure the subfloor is thoroughly cleaned of dust and debris. A shop vacuum is recommended for best results; alternatively, a broom and dustpan may be used. If a broom is employed, it is advisable to follow with a damp mop to remove any remaining dust.
GLUE	Use a notched trowel to spread the glue evenly over the subfloor.
INSTALL	Install the plywood sheets, notch side down, one at a time, perpendicular to the placement of the subfloor sheets. The plywood seams should meet over subfloor joints to ensure proper support.
NAIL	Nail the boards in place. Staples should be placed every two inches around the edge of the sheet and every four inches in the interior. If using nails or screws, space them farther apart and ensure they are slightly below the top of the plywood. Note: When placing sheets, they should rest comfortably next to one another. Do not force them to fit. If you need to trim the edges according to the room, do so with a saw.

5.3 CONCRETE FLOORS
SLAB-ON-GRADE OR SUSPENDEED

Timber over concrete finds 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.

PREPARATION OF CONCRETE FLOOR

GRIND

It is necessary to grind all concrete substrates to remove contaminates 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). Low spots may have to be built up with an approved levelling compound.

PRIMING/ LEVELLING

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 (e.g. Eco Prim T Plus). Ensure all guidelines in the suppliers TDS/Installation sheet are followed.

— If a moisture barrier is required, install a system-compatible barrier product before the primer and levelling compound.

— Apply a levelling compound approved for use with engineered timber flooring with concrete substrates (e.g. Mapei Ultraplan) 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).

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.

MOISTURE BARRIER

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

— **Test:** To measure the relative humidity above the slab, the 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).

— **Seal:** 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.

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

Timber subfloors are supported with Forté flooring installations for providing smooth, lasting performance with every step.

A timber substrate must be sound, level, and firmly fixed before laying Forté flooring. Any loose, squeaking, or uneven boards should be repaired, sanded, or re-secured to create a stable base. Gaps, dips, and height variations need to be filled or corrected so the new flooring sits flat and performs as intended. A well-prepared timber subfloor helps prevent movement, noise, and premature wear, ensuring the finished floor feels solid underfoot and looks good for years to come.

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	A timber substrate should be machine sanded to remove contaminates and prepare the surface for the next stage.
MOISTURE TEST	Use a Resistance (invasive) Moisture Meter to test both timber substrate and engineered timber flooring moisture content (MC) levels. The moisture content difference should be no more than 4% between timber substrate and engineered timber flooring. Do not install if the moisture content difference is greater than this. If the moisture content is too high, you should wait for the timber substrate to dry out to meet the 4% moisture content difference. A dehumidifier can be used to quicken the process.
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 (e.g. Mapei Nivorapid + Latex Plus).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 (e.g. Eco Prim T Plus). 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 (e.g. Mapei Fiberplan) 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).
APPLY MOISTURE BARRIER	It is essential to apply a 2-Component Epoxy Moisture Barrier to the Existing Solid Native Timber subfloor before installation. This will provide additional protection to the structure in the case of major flood/leaking. Conduct a final check to ensure the substrate is completely dry, clean, level, free of any cracks, and structurally sound before proceeding with installation. NOTE: Only applies if subfloor is a existing Solid Native Timber in a wet area – refer 5.1 of Forté Timber Overlay Flooring Design Guide

5.5 CONCRETE FLOOR WITH HYDRONIC UNDERFLOOR HEATING SYSTEM
(SET INTO SLAB 30MM MINIMUM)

Concrete floors with hydronic heating provide a warm, stable base, suitable for timber overlay when properly prepared.

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 should be commissioned and run through its cycle so any latent moisture is released prior to laying the floor. Once stable, the surface must be levelled or smoothed as needed to ensure full adhesive contact. Proper preparation helps the slab deliver consistent warmth while protecting the timber from stress, movement, or moisture-related issues over time

PREPARATION FOR LAYING OVER ELECTRIC UNDERFLOOR HEATING

Important

PRIOR TO INSTALLATION

- Ensure the timber flooring being installed is suitable for installation over Underfloor Heating
- The spacing (width) between heating tubes should not be more than 150mm.
- The surface of the slab from the heating tubes 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.

COMMISSION THE UNDERFLOOR HEATING SYSTEM

It is required to remove as much moisture as possible from the slab before proceeding to installation. 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 and if these conflict with our guidelines, please contact Forté Customer Care for more information.

- Begin commissioning by increasing the system temperature in daily increments of 5°C until the system reaches 27°C (this should take 5–6 days).
- The system should be kept at 27°C for at least 48 hours.
- The system should then be cooled in daily increments of 5°C until it has reached its lowest level and then turned off.
- Keep the system turned off for 48 hours.
- If any cracks have appeared after the heating up cycle, they must be carefully glued together with synthetic resin.

PREPARE SUBSTRATE

Prepare substrate as per 5.3 Concrete Floors (slab-on-grade or suspended)

PREPARING FOR/ DURING INSTALLATION

- Once the slab has been commissioned and is ready for installation, 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 and kept at this temperature until at least 48 hours after installation has been completed. Allowing changes in temperature (particularly overnight) can cause the wood to lift off the adhesive and thus affecting the adhesive bond.

NOTE:

Once the timber flooring has been installed and underfloor heating is running, it is recommended to not cover the timber flooring when the underfloor heating is running as this could result in delamination of the lacquer due to excess moisture not being able to escape and being trapped under the cover.

5.6 ELECTRIC UNDERFLOOR HEATING SYSTEM (SET INTO SCREED 8MM MINIMUM)

Timber floors sit confidently over in-screed electric heating with Forté's approved method.

Prior to Installation

- **Important:** Prior to installation of the underfloor heating system, the subfloor should be prepared in accordance with the 'Substrate Preparation Guidelines' depending on the type (e.g., for a concrete floor, the sub-floor should be prepared as per guidelines under 2.1 Concrete floors). 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 installation over underfloor heating.
- 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 the **Forté Timber Overlay Flooring System Design Guide** for more information.

PREPARATION FOR LAYING OVER ELECTRIC UNDERFLOOR HEATING

COMMISSION THE UNDERFLOOR HEATING SYSTEM

It is required to remove as much moisture as possible from the screed before proceeding to installation. 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 and if these conflict with our guidelines, please contact Forté Customer Care for more information.

- Begin commissioning by increasing the system temperature in daily increments of 5°C until the system reaches 27°C (this should take 5–6 days).
- The system should be kept at 27°C for at least 48 hours.
- The system should then be cooled in daily increments of 5°C until it has reached its lowest level and then turned off.
- Keep the system turned off for 48 hours.
- If any cracks have appeared after the heating up cycle, they must be carefully glued together with synthetic resin.

PREPARE SUBSTRATE

When installing over underfloor heating systems, please ensure the below points are adhered to before proceeding with installation.

- **Moisture Test:** The substrate must be tested and display a reading of 70% RH or less before installation can begin.
- **Level Substrate:** The substrate must be checked for any unevenness and must not exceed 3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge.
- **Adhesion to Substrate:** Ensure the substrate is compatible with the adhesive being used. If there are any additional adhesion requirements (e.g., keying the membrane), check if this is possible with the membrane system supplier first.

Where any of the above points cannot be achieved, do not install the flooring, and contact Forté Customer Care to discuss a solution.

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

PREPARING FOR/ DURING INSTALLATION

- Once the slab has been commissioned and is ready for installation, 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 and kept at this temperature until at least 48 hours after installation has been completed. Allowing changes in temperature (particularly overnight) can cause the wood to lift off the adhesive thus affecting the adhesive bond.

5.7 WET-AREA MEMBRANE SYSTEMS (WHEN APPROVED BY THE MEMBRANE SYSTEM SUPPLIER)

Approved membrane systems provide a secure base for timber in wet zones.

Approved wet-area membrane systems provide a sealed, reliable base for timber flooring in kitchens, laundries, and other moisture-prone areas. Selecting a membrane system that is fully compatible with your chosen adhesive and preparation products ensures the installation works as intended and remains compliant with both Forté timber overlay requirements and the membrane supplier's specifications. Careful attention to detailing at edges, upstands, and penetrations is essential to prevent water ingress and protect the structure. When installed correctly, an approved membrane system delivers a stable, long-lasting timber floor while maintaining effective moisture control and preserving warranty coverage for both the flooring and membrane.

BEST PRACTICE

Important

PRIOR TO INSTALLATION

- Prior to installation of the Wet-area membrane system, the subfloor should be prepared in accordance with the 'Substrate Preparation Guidelines' depending on the substrate type (e.g. for a concrete floor, the sub-floor should be prepared.
- 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.
- The membrane should be installed in accordance with E3/AS2 requirements

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

INSTALLING

When installing over wet-area membrane systems, please ensure the below points are adhered to before proceeding with installation.

- Moisture test: The substrate must be tested and display a reading of below 70% RH or less before installation can begin.
- Level substrate: The substrate must be checked for any unevenness and must not exceed 3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge.
- Adhesion to substrate: Ensure the substrate is compatible with the adhesive being used. If there are any additional adhesion requirements (e.g., keying the membrane), check if this is possible with the membrane system supplier first.

Where any of the above points cannot be achieved, do not install the flooring, and contact **Forté Customer Care** to discuss a solution.

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

SYSTEMS APPROVED FOR USE WITH FORTÉ 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)
- Selleys Timberflex system (refer to recommended system)

5.8 ACOUSTIC UNDERLAY GLUED TO AN APPROVED SUBSTRATE

Timber floors sit confidently over acoustic underlay on approved substrates for quiet, stable performance

Timber flooring performs quietly and reliably when installed over an acoustic underlay on an approved substrate. The underlay must be fully compatible with both the substrate and the adhesive system to maintain impact insulation ratings and long-term stability. Proper installation ensures the floor sits flat, reduces sound transmission, and protects the timber from uneven stress. Following these best practices gives a consistent, durable finish that meets both acoustic and structural expectations.

BEST PRACTICE

Important

PRIOR TO INSTALLATION

— Prior to installation of the acoustic underlay, the subfloor should be prepared.

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

INSTALLING

When installing over acoustic underlay, please ensure the below points are adhered to before proceeding with installation.

— Moisture Test: The substrate must be tested and display a reading of below 70% RH or less before installation can begin.

— Level Substrate: The substrate must be checked for any unevenness and must not exceed 3mm variation over a 3m long straight edge.

Where any of the above points cannot be achieved, do not install the flooring, and contact **Forté Customer Care** to discuss a solution.

Conduct a final check to ensure the substrate is completely dry, clean, level, and structurally sound before proceeding with installation.

SUITABLE ACOUSTIC UNDERLAYS

It is important to ensure the underlay is suitable for timber floor installation and you should always consult with the acoustic underlay supplier to ensure compatibility with the Forté Timber Overlay Flooring System, and the supplier installation guides must be always adhered to.

The 3 acoustic underlays we commonly recommend are;

— Forté Acoustick-Mat Heavy-Duty Rubber/Cork 5mm Acoustic Underlay

— Regupol 4515 Acoustic Underlay

— Mapei Mapesonic CR Underlay

5.9 ANY OTHER SUBSTRATES (JOISTS/OTHER FLOORING TYPES)

Different substrates may be suitable for Forté timber when properly assessed and prepared.

Please contact **Forté Customer Care** on 0508 366 77 for advice on substrate suitability. If installed without approval the warranty will be voided.

TRANSITION BARS

Transition bars help timber flow smoothly into other surfaces keeping edges neat and safe. They manage height changes, protect the boards and gives the floor a refined finish. Using the right bar in the right way makes installation quicker and improves long term performance. With simple planning, transition bars keep every junction well presented.

6.1 TRANSITION BARS

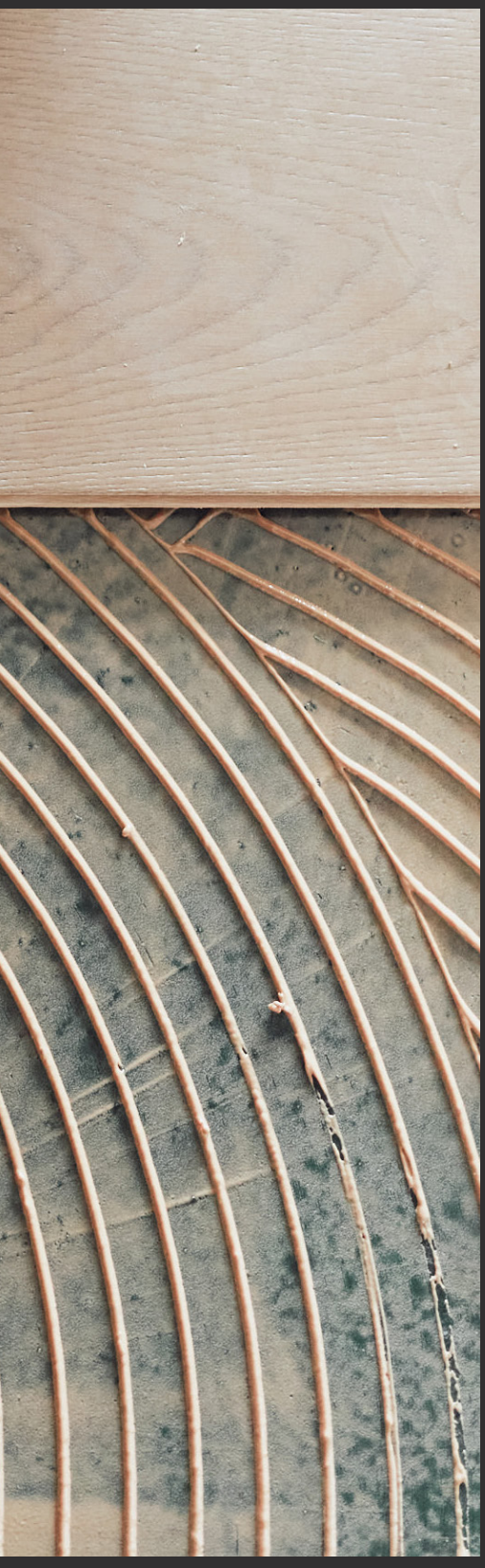
Installed correctly, transition bars create neat, safe joins and manage height differences between flooring surfaces.

Transitions play a vital role in uniting different floor finishes with clarity and intention. They allow timber to move naturally while protecting adjoining materials and maintaining accessibility. Thoughtful selection ensures thresholds feel deliberate – whether understated or a designed feature. By balancing performance and aesthetics, transitions contribute to a cohesive, long-lasting flooring experience.

PREPARE THE SURFACE	Remove any existing adhesive, dust, or debris from both the timber flooring and the flat bar. Ensure all surfaces are clean and dry before proceeding. For heavier bars (e.g. brass or organic bars), we recommend lightly abrading the side of the bar which will be fixed to the timber using a Scotch-Brite pad or fine sandpaper. This will improve adhesion. Important: Always carry out the abrading process away from the flooring surface, as metal dust or residue can stain the timber and cause permanent black marks.
PRE-DRILL NAIL HOLES	Drill 1.5 mm pilot holes into the flat bar, using 400 mm spacing. These drill bits are readily available at most hardware stores, including Mitre 10.
POSITION THE TRIM	Place the flat bar flush with the surface of the timber flooring. Depending on the height of the flooring and the profile of the bar, you may need to use packers underneath to ensure the trim is level and properly supported.
APPLY ADHESIVE	Lay the trim down and apply a continuous bead of Forté recommended adhesive (or similar fast-curing silicon adhesive) along the bottom half of the flat bar. This application method helps prevent excessive adhesive from squeezing out over the timber surface.
SECURE THE TRIM	Flip the bar into place along the timber edge and press firmly to set. Fix the trim using wire nails (1 mm x 12.7 mm) through the pre-drilled holes. Once fixed, use low-tack tape (e.g. Frog Tape) spaced evenly to hold the trim securely while the adhesive sets. Note: Remove tape after a maximum of 2 hours to avoid damaging the floor's surface coating.
CLEAN EXCESS ADHESIVE	We recommend having tradie wipes or a similar product on hand to promptly clean up any excess adhesive. Cleaning immediately will ensure a neat, professional finish.

ENGINEERED TIMBER FLOORING
OVERLAY SYSTEM INSTALLATION GUIDE

INSTALLATION GUIDELINES



Ensuring a successful timber overlay starts with the installer. Understanding site conditions, preparing surfaces correctly, and following Forté's recommended methods set the stage for a surface that performs and lasts. Careful attention to detail, from moisture levels to temperature and substrate preparation, protects both the timber and the installation. Every step taken with awareness and precision makes the difference between a surface that simply sits and one that performs beautifully for years.

7.1 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.

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

7.2 INSTALLATION IN LARGE AREAS/LONG LENGTHS

Floors spanning past 15m need planned expansion gaps to prevent stress movement.

When installing Forté timber flooring over large areas or runs longer than 15m, it's important to plan for expansion and movement. 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, and plan transition points to accommodate height differences 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.

7.3 SUBSTRATE CONDITION

Great flooring starts with a great base, so confirm the substrate is solid and level.

Ensure that the substrate is free of cracks, resins and other coatings that could prevent the adhesive or moisture barrier from bonding or working effectively. The substrate should be levelled, cleaned, and dried to meet Forté Substrate Preparation Guidelines (see Section 4 for more details) for the moisture barrier and adhesive to bond to. Failure to adhere to this process may void the substrate system warranty and the Forté product warranty.

7.4 INSTALLATION SITE CONDITIONS

Timber needs the right indoor climate – check temperature and humidity before laying boards.

Timber flooring is hygroscopic and reacts to the conditions it is placed in.

It is important that conditions within the area **during** installation resemble the final conditions of the completed building post-installation.

Refer to ‘Protecting Against Changes in Climate’ in the **Care and Maintenance Guide - Residential** for guidance on conditions that may affect the product while the building is still under construction.

7.5 ADHESIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The right adhesive systems keeps your floor strong – follow Forté's recommended products.

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.

7.6 PREPARING TO INSTALL

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

Before installation begins, it's important to lock in the direction of the boards and confirm everyone agrees on how the floor will look. Expansion allowances need to be planned so the floor can move naturally without issues later. Checking drawings, details, and expectations with the client or site lead avoids surprises once the job starts. Good planning upfront saves time, helps coordination, and ensures the final result meets the brief.

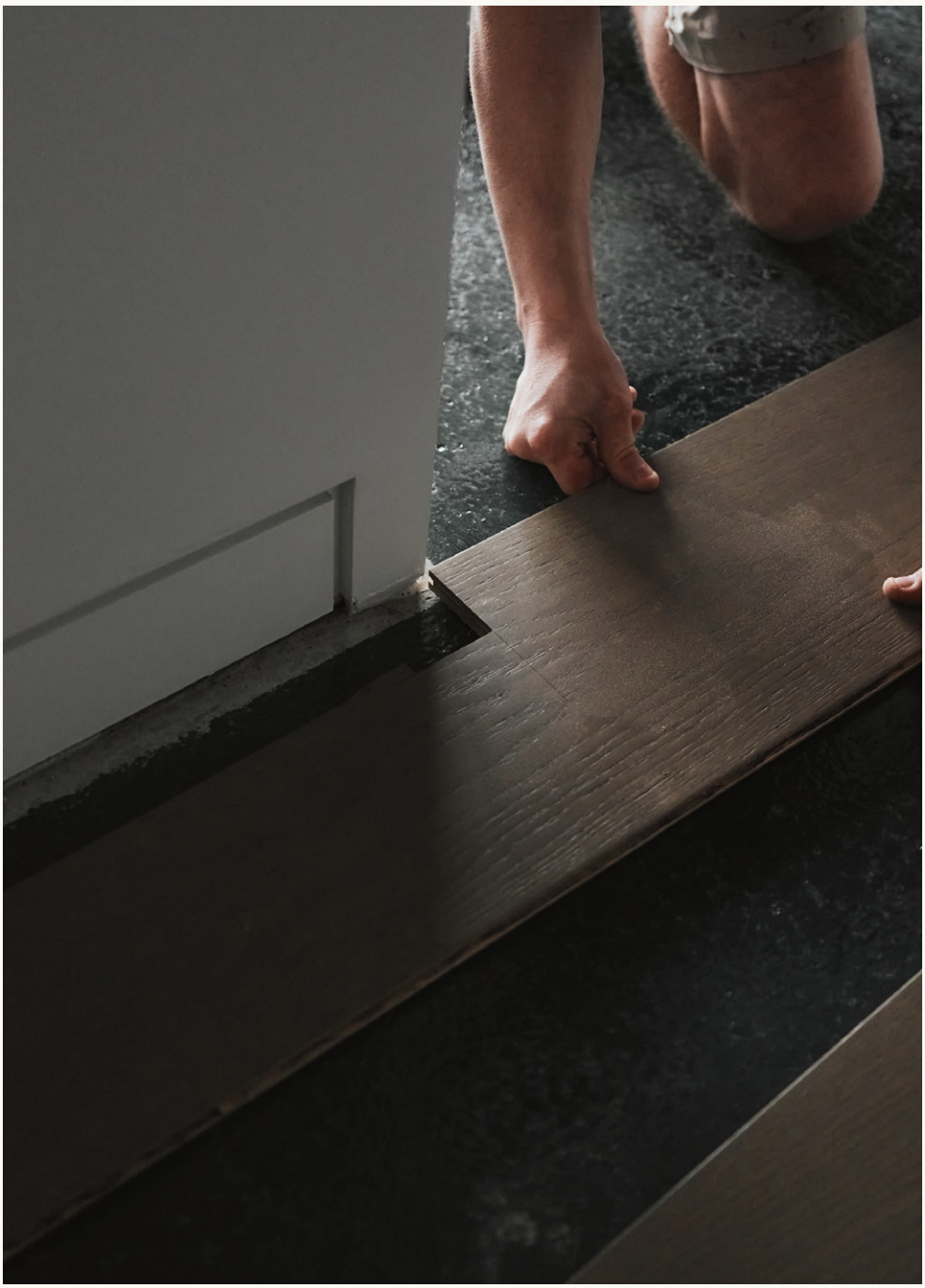
BEST PRACTICE

DECIDE DIRECTION	Confirm direction of flooring install with the client or site lead. Wood flooring generally looks best when running in the same direction as the longest dimension of the room, or in the direction you will be most commonly walking in the space.
ALLOW FOR EXPANSION	An allowance of 5–10mm should be provided around the perimeter as well as any fixed items in the area where the flooring is to be laid to allow for expansion (including doorways, heating outlets, connections with tiles, etc). Skirting boards should be removed from the walls where the flooring is being installed. If this is not possible, the skirtings will need to be undercut before installation begins to allow for expansion. Spacing wedges/shims should be used to assist in maintaining the expansion gaps during installation.
CLIENT APPROVAL	Where possible, open a pack of the flooring and show the client to confirm they are satisfied, and it meets their expectations.

7.7 INSTALLATION METHOD

Start in the right place, mix the boards well, and the whole floor falls into harmony.

Aim to maintain at least half a board's width along each side of the room. Very narrow 'sliver' cuts are difficult to install, highlight any uneven or out-of-square walls, and generally result in a less refined finished appearance.



7.7.1 SETUP/LAYOUT

Carefully measure and assess the room to ensure a seamless installation from start to finish.

— Choose the most suitable wall to begin installation starting at the corner furthest from the entrance will enable proper workspace practice by not walking unnecessarily on the newly laid floor.

— Start by running a laser, string line or chalk line along the length of the room and using this as a guide to ensure the first row is straight. Always assume the walls are not straight and room is not square.

— We recommend dry laying the first 2 or 3 rows, adjusting the first row to the wall contours, and adjusting for the plan..

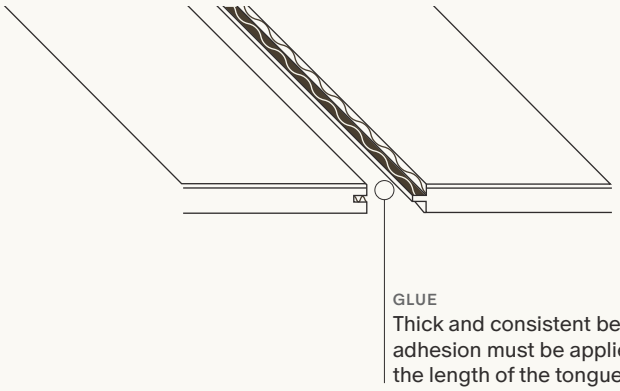
Sealing Plank Joints In Kitchens, Laundries, Bathrooms and WCs

A water-resistant PVA joint sealer adhesive (rated to a minimum of D3) must be used in all joints (both along the length of the plank, and at the ends of planks) during installation.

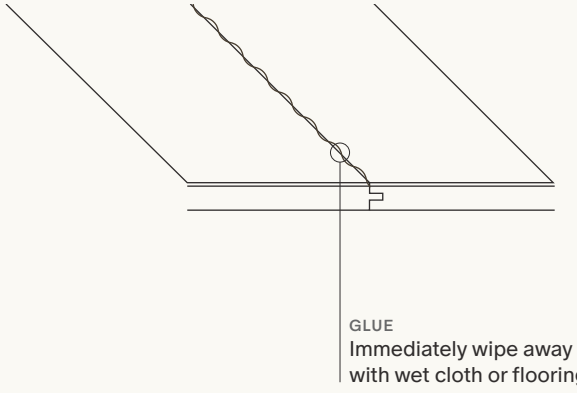
A thick and consistent bead of the adhesive should be applied first to the groove edge and secondly to the top of the tongue, the planks should be brought together and fitted tightly. Wipe away the excess adhesive immediately with a wet rag/wipe.

Ensure all guidelines in the suppliers TDS/Installation sheet are followed.

This is to be done to achieve an impervious surface, which is required by Clause E3 of the New Zealand. It is recommended to document this procedure with photographs as a record for council verification.



GLUE
Thick and consistent bead of the adhesion must be applied down the length of the tongue & groove



GLUE
Immediately wipe away excess glue with wet cloth or flooring wipes

7.7.2 GLUING TO SUBSTRATE

When installing ensure the flooring is weighted down while the adhesive is curing. This will help prevent hollow spots where the glue is not fully bonded with the substrate.

Immediately clean up any adhesive spilt on the surface of the flooring during installation. Follow adhesive manufacturer's recommendations.

If the installation is over more than one day, strap or wedge the last row to prevent movement overnight. Weigh down the last few rows to prevent them from lifting off the adhesive. Use packs yet to be installed for this.

Install the first row following the chalk line made during setup, with the groove side facing the wall.

Following 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.

Once the installation is finished, ensure spacers are positioned around the perimeter of the room to keep the expansion gap whilst the adhesive is curing.

7.8 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 products include Bona Gap Master, Berger-Seidle AquaSeal FlexFil, HB Fuller Caulk in Colours and Selleys No More Gaps Timber Floors in the colour closest to your flooring/joinery colour.

POST-INSTALLATION SURFACE PROTECTION

Protecting the floor and other surfaces after installation preserves its appearance and performance while the site remains active, ensuring the timber remains stable and resilient.

8.1 SURFACE PROTECTION FIXING METHODS

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

Covering the floor shields it from dust, debris, and accidental damage during ongoing work. We recommend covering the walls too, particularly in high traffic areas to shield it from dust, debris and damage.

Protection should allow the timber to breathe, avoiding trapped moisture that can affect performance. Careful consideration of temperature, humidity, and environmental conditions helps prevent movement, cupping, discolouration or coating damage. Proper surface protection safeguards the investment and keeps the timber looking its best until the space is ready for handover.

Recommendations

— Avoid using tape on the floor (if required, use delicate masking tape and do not leave on the surface for longer than 2 days). Do not use tape in any areas that receive direct sunlight.

— In high-traffic areas, it is important that the flooring is protected with a breathable floor protection product. Forté recommend and stock a breathable product called Protecta Board. Contact Forté for more information if this is required.

— Keep foot traffic to a minimum for first 24 hours to allow the adhesive to fully cure under the flooring. Wait 24 hours before placing furniture or heavy objects into the room.

— To minimise the possibility of fine dust (usually from plasterboard/drywall products) getting into the grain of the flooring, ensure all cutting machines have dust collection bags. If fine dust has been generated in the surrounding area during installation, ensure the floor is vacuumed after installation and immediately covered with a breathable floor protection product after vacuuming.

— Underfloor heating should remain off while protective coverings are in place to prevent heat from building under the covering, which can damage the timber or finish.

— Keep the space at a stable, moderate temperature — 16–27 °C to allow the timber to acclimatise and avoid movement or moisture-related issues while covered.

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