



GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT HARDWOOD FLOORING

What is the Difference between Unfinished, Prefinished, and Engineered Flooring?

Unfinished – Also referred to as “sand-on-site” refers to raw product that must be job-site installed, sanded, and finished. You may choose to put a stain color on an unfinished floor before you put finish on it.

Prefinished – Factory sanded and finished that only needs to be installed. Factory finished flooring comes with 7 to 10 coats of aluminum oxide finish depending on the manufacturer. Aluminum oxide finishes are 10 times more abrasion-resistant than other finishes. When looking at pre-finished flooring, you will notice a micro-bevel. A micro-bevel is a tiny groove in between each board. No worries, though, with the urethane finishes being applied at a factory, the beveled edges are sealed completely.

Engineered – Laminate wood flooring is produced by bonding layers of veneer and plywood with an adhesive. Mostly used for glue down installation or float-in installation above grade, on grade, or below grade, including basements and humid climates. Most engineered flooring can also be installed over radiant heated flooring systems.

Does Wood Flooring Change Color?

Whether unfinished or prefinished, wood changes color over time due to oxidation and exposure to light. Some species darken in color over time, while others lighten. Move your furniture and rugs occasionally to help standardize color variations.

How does Humidity affect my Hardwood Floor?

Most wood flooring will contract (shrink) during periods of low humidity, sometimes leaving noticeable cracks between boards. Likewise, expand during high periods of humidity. To minimize this effect, be sure to stabilize the environment of the house through temperature and humidity control. Normal home humidity should be between 40% and 60%.

What is Acclimation?

Acclimation is the process required for hardwood flooring to assume the moisture content of the installation area and site. Failure to do so will cause shrinkage or swelling of material and unsatisfactory results after the installation. Before installation, wood flooring should be acclimated to the area in which it is to be used, and then tested with a moisture meter to ensure the proper moisture content, 6 – 9% moisture is what the flooring should measure.

How often should my Flooring be Re-finished?

Rivershores offers two types of services to maintain the look of your flooring. A sand and refinish will bring your floor back to its original state by sanding off the top layers and repairing any scratches and cuts to the flooring. Sometimes certain boards may need to be replaced if they have cracked or been damaged. Prefinished flooring can also be re-sanded. Following the sanding process, some homeowners will select a stain to be applied. Once the stain has cured, a sealer is applied followed by two or three additional coats of polyurethane finish. This process is usually done approximately every six years depending on the daily use of the hardwood flooring.

Some homeowners will opt for a screen and coat after only about two or three years. A buffer is used to rough up the top coat of finish where minor scratches have occurred; then, one or two coats of polyurethane finish are applied. A screen and coat doesn't get out stains or deep scratches. Although, Rivershores does not warranty this application, it is often all that is needed to bring your flooring back to a clean and finished look.



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What Type of Finish Options are Available?

Finishes protect and enhance the beauty of your hardwood floors. Most of the time oil or water-based finish will be used; however, you may opt for an Old World look, whereby, we will apply a Tung Oil finish to your flooring. Oil based polyurethane ambers with age and therefore, makes the wood look richer in color. Oil based finishes take about 8 hours to dry, therefore, making the finishing process take place over a few days. This type of finish emits fumes as it dries so you will need proper ventilation. Oil is available in Satin, Semi-Gloss, and Gloss.

Water-based polyurethane dries clear and keeps the natural look to your wood. Water-based finish usually dries within 4 hours. Water is also available in Satin, Semi-Gloss, and Gloss.

Rivershores applies three coats of finish to your flooring. The first coat is a sealer, followed by two or three coats of finish. You will need to wait at least three days to put your furniture back, for your dogs to walk on the floor, and to wear shoes across the floor. Wait two weeks before you put rugs down. A rug will stick to a floor that has not fully cured. Finish coats are intended to protect wood and stain from wear, dirt, oxidation, and rapid moisture exchange. It is expected that eventually, usually within 1 – 5 years, the top coat will wear off and will need an additional coat of finish.

What Should I Expect after I've ordered Hardwood Flooring?

Your hardwood flooring will be delivered approximately 4 – 7 days prior to installation so that it can properly acclimate to your home. You should have humidifiers and air conditioners operating; keeping your home atmosphere between approximately a 40% to 60% humidity level. Be sure to have a location inside of the home for the acclimation process (preferably in a different location from the area to be installed). If your home is new construction, the painting should be completed and have been allowed to completely dry without emitting humidity level changes. The base moulding should be installed, but no shoe moulding should be put on until the flooring is completely finished. If this is a remodel, the shoe will need to be removed prior to the installation. Rivershores will be happy to reinstall the shoe after the flooring installation, although, we do not repaint – that will need to be handled by your painter.

Furniture should also be completely removed from the room that is receiving new flooring. Stoves, refrigerators, and toilets will need to be removed. Let your salesperson know if you need assistance with any of this and he will be happy to quote the cost of moving any of these items. Although, we can assist with moving these items, we are not licensed plumbers or electricians and are not permitted to re-connect any of these appliances. You will need to contact a licensed plumber or electrician for these services.

Your flooring installer will measure the moisture content of the flooring and sub-floor to assure that the flooring can be installed at this time. After installation, a Rivershores sander will arrive to prep the site for the next step. Cabinets should be sealed with blue tape to avoid dust. We will seal off adjoining rooms with plastic walls to prevent dust in those areas. Although, our sanding equipment is 98% dust-free, there is always some dust that occurs with this process. When the sanding is completed, the sander will apply a seal coat to the flooring and then, leave for the day giving this coat time to dry. Depending on the type of finish you've selected, a Rivershores finisher will be back the next day to apply the first coat of finish and then, either later the same day or the next day, you will receive the final coat of finish. If your salesman has quoted the shoe to be re-attached, that will be done at this time. Appliances will then, be moved back, but again, not re-connected.

Your flooring project is now complete! Please refer to above sections for information on putting furniture back, rugs, etc. We hope that this was a great experience for you and you will enjoy your flooring for a lifetime! Please follow our care and maintenance instructions for years of satisfaction.