WATERWISE

PLASTIC AND PVC FREE LAMINATE FLOORING

Installation Instructions

Read these instructions completely before you begin. Installation that does not follow these instructions may void the Waterwise warranty.

Water protection: Waterwise flooring is waterproof topically only. It resists damage from surface water from everyday household spills and cleaning. Wipe up spills immediately. It is not protected against flooding, standing water, appliance leaks, broken pipes, or moisture coming from underneath the floor.

This installation profile is for

Product group	Plank format	Thickness	Attached pad	Installation profile
Waterwise Select	7.5" x 54.5"	9 mm (7 mm + 2 mm pad)	2 mm	Angle / Tap (Unilin locking system)
Waterwise Premium	7.5" x 54.5"	10 mm	2 mm	Angle / Tap (Unilin locking system)
Waterwise Premium	7.5" x 60"	10 mm	2 mm	Angle / Tap (Unilin locking system)

1. Storage and acclimation

Protect cartons and pallets from the weather during transport. Store Waterwise flooring in a dry, moisture-free room.

Before installation, store the unopened cartons in the middle of the room(s) where the flooring will be installed for at least 48 hours, at a room temperature of at least 64°F (18°C) and a relative humidity of 70% or less.

After installation, maintain an indoor temperature between 65°F and 85°F (see the Waterwise Flooring Maintenance Guide).

2. Tools and materials

- Vapor barrier (polyethylene film, see Section 6): floor area + 10%
- Additional padding (optional, see Section 6): up to 1 mm; the total with the attached 2 mm underlayment must not exceed 3 mm
- Saw
- Oscillating tool
- Rubber mallet
- Tapping block
- Pull bar
- Spacers (3/8" / 10 mm)
- Tape measure
- Pencil
- For wet areas such as bathrooms (Section 21): compressible PE foam backer rod and 100% silicone color-matched sealant

3. Floating installation only

Do not fix any part of the flooring to the subfloor or to any other object. Waterwise planks lock together mechanically and are installed without adhesive, nails or screws (the only exception is the joint glue described in Section 18). Do not install cabinets, kitchen islands or other fixed objects on top of the flooring, and do not place heavy objects on the floor that would stop it from floating and expanding and contracting naturally. Install the flooring around such objects and leave the expansion space described in Section 4.

4. Expansion space and maximum run

Waterwise flooring has an HDF core, which is a wood-based material. Wood adapts to the surrounding humidity, which changes its dimensions; movement can reach about 1/16" per 3 ft. Allow for this movement as follows:

- Leave a perimeter expansion space of 3/8" (10 mm) around the flooring and all fixed vertical objects.
- Exception: leave a 1/8 inch (3 mm) gap between a Waterwise flush stair nose and the floor, and fill that gap with 100% silicone color-matched sealant.
- Maximum continuous run: 50 ft (15 m) in length or width. Where a run would be longer, break it with a T-molding over a 3/8" (10 mm) expansion space.
- End caps: an end cap is required at every transition from Waterwise flooring to carpet, and between exterior doors (thresholds) and the flooring. Apply end caps with 100% silicone only.
- We do not recommend installing Waterwise flooring in a single continuous area larger than 2,500 sq ft.
- Leave at least 3/8" (10 mm) around fixed installations such as radiators, pipes and door frames.

5. Subfloor requirements

The subfloor must be dry, level, firm and clean.

Flatness: the subfloor must be flat to within 3/16 inch over 8 feet. Small differences can be bridged by the attached underlayment. Sand down high spots or fill low spots greater than 3/16 inch over 8 feet with a leveling compound.

Existing floor coverings: remove carpet. Waterwise can be installed over sheet vinyl or linoleum only if it is fully glued down, has no loose areas and there is no underfloor heating.

Cleanliness: the subfloor must be completely clean and free of debris before installation.

Concrete subfloors: concrete must meet ASTM F710, be fully cured, and be tested for moisture before installation, whatever its age or grade level. Test by in-situ relative humidity probes (ASTM F2170) or calcium chloride (ASTM F1869). Run three tests for the first 1,000 sq ft and one more for each additional 1,000 sq ft, including locations near exterior walls. Hold the space at normal living conditions for at least 48 hours before testing. Readings must not exceed 80% RH (ASTM F2170) or 5 lbs/1,000 sq ft/24 hrs (ASTM F1869). Record and keep the results. If readings are higher, do not install until the slab has dried or the moisture has been corrected.

Wood subfloors: moisture content must be 12% or less across the whole installation area. Wood floor structures must be well ventilated (at least 0.06 sq in of ventilation opening per sq ft of floor) and must not be covered with airtight materials, because trapped moisture allows mold to grow and will damage the floor. Keep ventilation gaps at the wall edges open after installation. Where the space below a wood subfloor is permanently dry and ventilated, no polyethylene film is needed.

6. Vapor barrier and underlayment

Vapor barrier: over every concrete subfloor, including tile or resilient flooring laid on concrete, first lay a 6 mil polyethylene vapor barrier. Overlap the seams at least 8", tape them, and turn the film 1-1/2" to 2" up the walls

(trim it after installation). Acceptable moisture readings do not remove the need for the vapor barrier. Over crawl spaces, use the same 6 mil film with 8" taped overlaps.

Underlayment: All Waterwise flooring comes with a 2 mm underlayment already attached. You may add up to 1 mm of additional padding, for a total that must not exceed 3 mm. Anything above 3 mm total is not permitted.

7. Laying direction

Install the planks lengthwise, in the direction of the main light source. Joints are more visible across the light than along it, and the plank format produces fewer joints along the length. Other conditions in the room may also influence the best direction.

8. Radiant (underfloor) heating

Waterwise flooring may be installed only over water-based (hydronic) radiant heating systems. Electric or electronic floor heating of any kind, including heating mats, cables and heating film, is not approved. The floor surface temperature must never exceed 80°F. Do not heat the floor quickly: raise and lower the temperature gradually, a few degrees at a time.

9. Mixing planks

Open at least 4 cartons and install planks from all of them at the same time, alternating across the whole floor, for the best appearance.

10. Inspect every plank

Inspect each plank in daylight or equivalent good light before installing it. Check color, décor, edges, the locking profile and the surface for damage or visual imperfections. Slightly damaged planks can be used where planks must be cut. No claims can be accepted for planks that have been installed.

11. First row parallel to the wall

The first and last rows must each be at least 2" (50 mm) wide; if the last row would be narrower, trim the first row lengthwise. If the wall is uneven by 3/16" or more, scribe its contour onto the first row with a spacer and cut along the line. Keep at least the required expansion space (Section 4) to the wall, and allow for it when you calculate the last row.

12. Starting the installation

Cut the tongue off the planks of the first row and place them with the cut edge toward the wall.

13. Door frames

Wood door frames: undercut wood door jambs with an oscillating tool. Lay a plank face down next to the jamb as a height guide and cut the jamb to that height. Slide the plank under the jamb face up, keeping an expansion space of at least 3/8".

Metal door frames: leave an expansion space of at least 3/8" between the flooring and the frame.

14. First row

Connect the planks of the first row on the short side: insert the plank into the groove of the previous plank at an angle of about 25° and lower it to lock. Make sure the row is straight.

15. End-joint offset and cutting

To cut the last plank in a row, turn it 180°, place it face up next to the installed row, allow for the expansion space at the wall, mark it and cut. Cut with the decorative face up on a miter saw to avoid chipping.

Start each new row with the offcut from the previous row. End joints in adjacent rows must be offset by at least 16" for stability.

16. Angle / Tap installation

Long side: place the plank at an angle of about 25°, insert it into the previous row and slide it toward the short end of the previous plank. Lower it so the profile locks. Make sure the short ends are aligned. With the plank flat, place the tapping block on the profile and tap gently with the rubber mallet until the joint is tight. Position the tapping block correctly on the tongue to avoid damage.

Short side: for each following plank, angle the long side in at about 25° and lower it, leaving the short end about 1/8" from the end of the previous plank. Align the profiles, then, with the plank flat, tap the short end closed with the tapping block and rubber mallet.

17. First three rows

Lay the first three rows together (trim the first row if needed, see Section 11) so that the rows are connected in straight lines. Then push the assembled rows against the starting wall and fix the expansion space with spacers. Continue row by row.

18. Where planks cannot be angled

Where a plank cannot be angled in (for example under a door frame or a low radiator), cut away the locking lip of the bottom groove with a wood chisel or small block plane. Apply a bead of joint glue to the modified tongue and groove, tap the planks tightly together with a rubber mallet and tapping block or pull bar, and hold with adhesive tape if necessary.

19. Around heating pipes

Keep at least 3/8" (10 mm) around pipes. Position the row so that an end joint falls at the pipe, or cut the plank to length, place it beside its final position, measure and mark the pipe holes, drill them, and cut out the piece behind the pipe. Fit it back in tightly behind the pipe and use a spacer to hold the expansion space.

20. Last row

Lay a loose plank exactly on top of the last installed row. Lay a second, full-width plank on top of it against the wall (with spacers) and draw the cutting line along its edge. Cut, angle the plank in lengthwise and lower it to lock. Keep the expansion space required in Section 4.

21. Wet areas such as bathrooms

In wet areas such as bathrooms, caulk the entire perimeter with 100% silicone color-matched sealant so water can't run under the baseboards or under the floor. Remember the floor is waterproof topically only: this sealing protects against everyday spills and splashes, not flooding or standing water.

How to seal: in any area susceptible to spills, or where liquid could run behind baseboards, seal the entire perimeter of the room: fill all expansion spaces with a compressible polyethylene (PE) foam backer rod and cover it completely with 100% silicone color-matched sealant around the entire perimeter. Use 100% silicone sealant only. Apply a small bead of 100% silicone color-matched sealant where the baseboard meets the floor to stop

liquids getting underneath or behind it; waterproof baseboards achieve the same result. Seal fixed objects, door frames and similar items the same way with 100% silicone color-matched sealant.

22. Care and maintenance

For full details see the Waterwise Flooring Maintenance Guide. In summary:

- Sweep with a bristle broom or vacuum without an abrasive beater bar.
- Spot clean with a damp microfiber cloth. For deeper cleaning use plain clean water and, for harder stains, a pH-neutral floor cleaner. Mop with a damp microfiber cloth.
- Never use a traditional wet mop. Never use a steam mop: it forces heat, water and pressure into the joints.
- Do not use scouring agents, wax or polish. Hardened glue, paint, nail polish or oil stains can be removed with acetone or another alcohol-based solvent on a cloth.
- Wipe up spills immediately.
- Use non-rubber-backed, floor-safe rugs at entries, felt pads under furniture, and a protective mat under rolling chairs. Put plant pots on water-resistant mats.
- Always lift heavy items and furniture; never slide them.

23. Repairing minor damage

Minor damage such as small chips or dents can be repaired with a color-matched laminate repair kit without reducing the quality of the floor. Larger damage should be repaired by a trained professional.

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