

Installation Expertise with Tim McAdoo

What to Know Before Installation Begins

With today's fast-track construction, it's only natural to want to get the project rolling as quickly as possible. However, this fast pace leads to problems down the road that could have easily been avoided had the contractor just run through a quick checklist of things to do before installation begins.

Subfloor Testing

The substrate should always be tested prior to installation, regardless if this is a new construction installation or a remodel installation. No matter what the substrate is or how old it is, or if someone tells you "it's not a concern," it needs to be tested. Testing a subfloor is cheap insurance as a flooring contractor. Now you have a base line to compare to if a problem arises.

Flooring failures occur every day over substrates that did not exhibit a problem with materials previously installed. Remember, starting the installation constitutes acceptance and assumes of liability.

Most flooring contractors and installers are not substrate experts, and testing should not be part of their requirements. Knowing how many tests to run and what conditions the tests need to be run in are huge factors. Having A third party who is trained and certified can be brought in and this limits your liability. If not, you risk the chance of the tests being done incorrectly, which can yield false readings.

Substrate and jobsite conditions should comply with the manufacturer's guidelines and industry standards. One of the biggest causes of floor covering installation failures is substrate issues that will compromise the installation.

All substrate issues should be addressed and corrected prior to the installation of any flooring material, but they must be recognized and not put off.

Subfloor Conditions

Any conditions that would prevent a successful installation of the flooring material must be corrected and prior to the installation of the flooring.

Substrates must be clean, dry, smooth and free of any and all compromising conditions such as oils, grease, paint, drywall compound, dust, sealing or curing compounds etc., according to manufacturers and industry guidelines. Subfloor flatness should comply with ACI Standard of 1/8 inch in 6 feet or 3/16 inch in 10 feet with no obstructions.

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Today, there are a lot of curing and sealing materials and moisture mitigating products being specified that may trap internal subfloor moisture in the concrete but prevent the successful installation of flooring materials. All resilient flooring manufacturers warn against using curing compounds and sealers.

In remodel work, it is extremely important to find out if existing flooring was removed and how it was removed. The use of adhesive removers is not an accepted practice by resilient flooring manufacturers and can void any installation warranty by the flooring manufacturers. Do your homework up front and ask all the right questions.

Jobsite Conditions

The area to receive flooring material should be clean, dry and conditioned, prior to and after installation and free of encumbering conditions prior to installation. The flooring installation work space should be free of other trades during the installation and kept so after the installation as necessary, but for at least 24 hours.

The temperature of the installation site, flooring materials, and associated products should be maintained between a minimum temperature of 65°F and a maximum temperature of 95°F for 48 hours before, during and after installation. The installation should not be started if the room or subfloor temperature is below 65°F. The HVAC system should be up and running. Unfortunately, in today's world it is rare that we see correct temperatures and the HVAC system in operation. Having the HVAC up and running beforehand starts the drying out process of the jobsite and allows the subfloor to dry out and move prior to installing the flooring. Remember, this is flooring. Most products will grow when warm and shrink when cold.

Adhesives and patching compounds will not function properly when applied over an extremely cold surface. The cold temperatures retard the drying and curing process of these products. Relative humidity should not exceed 85%. Maintain these conditions after installation. If the space is comfortable for people it should be comfortable for the flooring. On large commercial projects, by the time the project gets to the flooring installation it's often behind and the flooring guys are charged with making up the difference and working under extreme conditions.

Expecting the flooring material to be installed without damage while other trades are working in the same space is ridiculous. On any flooring project, residential or commercial, the same rules should apply. If in doubt write this information into your quote or make copies of the flooring manufacturer's guidelines, the adhesive and underlayment manufacturer's instructions and the

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industry standards for the products you're using and provide them to the customer. Take pictures and document what is going on if other trades are working in the same space.

Delivery, Storage and Handling

The flooring contractor or installer must ensure the flooring material is stored in a safe manner, that it's handled according to manufacturer's recommendations and stored in a climate controlled space for the duration of the project or installation. The flooring products and materials should be delivered to the jobsite in unopened, mill-labeled packages with mill register numbers and tags attached, unless cut for fitting in coordinated spaces at the flooring contractors staging location.

If there is an issue, do not install it.

About Tim McAdoo:

Tim is a certified instructor for Armstrong, Avoire, Konecto and Starloc products and has been a member of the Armstrong Installation Training Team since 1984. Tim has highly developed installation skills and qualifications that have been combined over his 32 years in the floor covering industry. Tim is privy to all the latest innovations and techniques used in the installation of their products.

We are sure you will find your skills improved after attending one of his installation courses.



To view a complete list and register for one of Tim's installation trainings, click here on the QR or visit: <http://www.jjhaines.com/customers/installation-training/>

CONTACT TIM

 tmcadoo@jjhaines.com

 410-903-2930