



# INSTALLATION GUIDELINES

## SOLID HARDWOOD FLOORING

Maintenance Instructions and Limited Warranty Included

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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Buyers and owners are responsible for thoroughly reading all materials provided by the retailer at time of purchase prior to the installation of flooring, including the installation guidelines, maintenance instructions, and the product warranty information. The following instructions apply only to Golden Elite's solid hardwood flooring, included within the New York Collection and Kashmir Collection. This product is installed through a nail down installation method. These instructions do not apply to Bamboo Premium solid hardwood flooring.

Golden Elite is not responsible for the installer's application of the product and requires the product to be inspected prior to installation. The installer should contact the supplier immediately for replacement if the product (whether an individual plank or more) appears doubtful in appearance, such as grade, color, finish, or quality. The supplier is responsible for replacing flooring materials in a timely fashion if the product is determined to be defective. However, Golden Elite is *not* responsible for flooring that has been previously installed or damaged on the surface (or tongue) of the plank by the installer. For flooring that is determined to be defective post-installation, Golden Elite will be responsible to reimburse the buyer for the materials only, labor costs or any other related expenses will not be reimbursed.

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## BEFORE INSTALLATION

### Tips:

- Laying the floor should be the last step of your project.
- Heat your home for at least one week before installation.
- Keep subfloor dry and make sure basement is well ventilated.
- Maintain relative humidity at  $\pm 40\%$  [between 35% and 45%].
- Use a hygrometer [relative humidity indicator] to check moisture content in the air to ensure that relative humidity is within the recommended range.
- The heating system must be functional and the building must be heated up to 21° C (70° F) for a minimum of 7 days.
- Allow concrete subfloors to dry for at least 30 days [preferably 45 to 90 days]. Wooden subfloor thickness must be a minimum of 15 mm (5/8").
- **Golden Elite does not recommend installation of solid hardwood flooring below grade OR over radiant heat systems. Installation of Golden Elite flooring below grade or over radiant heat floor systems voids the Finish Warranty.**
- Golden Elite recommends a nail down installation for exotic and solid hardwoods (any product included in the Kashmir Collection) and staple down installation for domestic hardwoods (any product included in the New York Collection). Use L-shaped nails for exotics and 16-gauge staple gun for domestics.
- *Document Each Test:* To ensure that the flooring product is being installed according to the outlined guidelines, Golden Elite requires for the buyer or installer to document each step of the preparation process prior to installing the flooring. This involves taking a photograph of the test reader that displays the humidity level, the temperature of the jobsite, the subfloor, etc., along with the date and time that the photograph was taken. This can be completed quickly using a basic camera on your cell phone and helps protect the buyer or installer in the case that a claim needs to be filed.

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## Step 1 ♦ CHECK THE CONDITION & PREPARE THE SUBFLOOR

Moisture testing is necessary and a three-fold process. To determine when the installation can begin, to verify that you are placing dry flooring on dry subfloors and that the moisture percentage between the new floor boards and that of the existing subfloor is no more than 4%, or no more than 2% for wider boards over 3". This can easily be accomplished by using an adjustable species specific moisture meter that will provide accurate moisture readings specified for the species of wood you plan to install. Test the subfloor by testing at least 30 locations per 1000 sqft around exterior doors, near foundation walls and in the center of the room. On average the subfloor moisture range must not exceed 12%. Next, test the new flooring (by testing approximately 3% of the new flooring) to obtain a moisture range between 5% minimum and 11% maximum. If high moisture readings are found in either the new floor or subfloor, postpone the installation, increase ventilation, identify the moisture source and postpone on the installation until the proper conditions have been met.

The new floor or subfloor must be free of any debris, old adhesives, or other dried substances. Undercut door trim before installation.

**Wooden subfloor:** Wooden subfloor moisture reading must not exceed 12% and differential between boards and subfloor must be less than 4%. If moisture reading is too high, postpone installation, find moisture source and correct it if needed, raise heat and increase ventilation until proper conditions are met.

**Concrete subfloor:** Prior to installation, concrete subfloor should preferably be 45 to 90 days old, 30 days being the absolute minimum and must be free of surface sealers or contaminants. Concrete moisture meter must be used to check subfloor moisture level; in case of positive reading, calcium chloride test must be performed. The concrete subfloor moisture content must not exceed 3 lbs. / 1,000 sq. ft. / 24 hours. If the reading exceeds 3 lbs., use a complete moisture-proofing system [sealer and adhesive] sold by your local Golden Elite distributor.

Owner and installer are solely and jointly responsible for pre-installation subfloor moisture level check and must ensure that all conditions and/or specifications listed in this guide have been thoroughly met prior to installation of hardwood floor.

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## Step 2 ❖ ACCLIMATE THE WOOD

**IMPORTANT:** Do not open boxes until ready to begin installation.

Prior to installation, remember to acclimate the wood within unopened boxes in the area where it will be installed for a minimum of **two days**. Ensure your wood flooring is within acceptable range of moisture content with the wood subfloor. For solid strip flooring (less than 3" wide), there should be no more than 4 percent moisture content difference between properly acclimated wood flooring and subflooring materials. For wide-width solid flooring (3" or wider), there should be no more than 2 percent difference in moisture content between properly acclimated wood flooring and subflooring materials.

Don't have it delivered on a wet day and make sure all humidity-producing aspects of building and remodeling have dried before bringing the wood home. Plan to provide 4" (10.16 cm) of air space between the hardwood flooring and the concrete.

The goal is to reach an indoor equilibrium or balance between the core of the new flooring with its surroundings before assembly, fastening or installation. The balance could be achieved in as little as 1 to 5 days for most species or longer for some exotic species.

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### Step 3 ❖ PURCHASE THE RIGHT TOOLS

Tools and accessories required:

- Measuring tape
- Square
- Chalk line
- Hammer
- Crowbar
- Drill and drill bits
- Hardwood hammer
- Rubber hammer/mallet
- Mitre saw
- Saw horse
- Handsaw
- Vacuum cleaner
- Safety goggles
- Level
- L shaped nails for exotic hardwoods and 16 gauge staples for domestic hardwoods.
- Manual or pneumatic nailer (using a 80-90 level pressure setting)

Other tools and accessories may be necessary depending on the site configuration.

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### Step 4 ❖ RACK THE FLOORING

Spread the boards from several bundles across the room. Mix bundles, and mix shades, colors, and lengths, using the natural variety in the wood to create a random pattern. Lay out the boards in the order you'll install them. Pros call this "racking the boards." Flooring bundles tend to be uniform in color, and if you don't rack them, you'll create noticeable light and dark areas in the floor. Make sure you finish the process by arranging the joints so they are sufficiently offset across the floor.

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### Step 5 ❖ LAY OUT THE FIRST ROW

Determine the starting wall by marking the walls to show the location of the floor joists. For strength, the floor should be installed perpendicular to the floor joists. Cover the floor with 15-pound Asphalt paper or wax paper. Start your layout at the longest uninterrupted wall that's perpendicular to the joists. At each end of the wall, measure out the width of a floorboard, plus 3/4" (18.5 mm) for expansion space, and make a mark. Drive nails into the marks and stretch mason's line between them to lay out the first row or lay out a chalk line connecting the two points.

Begin by laying the first plank with grooved edge toward the wall inside of the chalk line. Continue installing the entire first row in this same manner, always using spacers to maintain expansion space of at least a 1/2" between the flooring and all of the walls / vertical objects. Face nail the first row by filling nail holes with wood putty that matches the floor since it is difficult to get the nail gun in place next to the wall.

If you are concerned about leaving unsightly nail holes on the floor that will need to be filled with putty, you may want to consider setting these rows in mastic and glue them down rather than face

nailing them. Once the starting row has been glued down, set the weight on top of the rows to allow them to set before commencing nailing the additional rows so that the adjacent rows don't subsequently move. Review the starting rows once completed to make sure they are straight and stable.

*Pre-Drill Holes for Nails:* The first and last rows of flooring have to be nailed through the face of the boards. All the other boards are nailed through the tongue only. To prevent splitting face-nailed boards, drill holes for the nails, from the grooved edge. Space the holes so the nails hit a joist, or as directed by the manufacturer.

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#### **Step 6 ❖ INSTALL THE NEXT ROW**

Put the first board of the new row in place. Always start a row by selecting or cutting a board at least 6" (15.24 cm) longer or shorter than the one used in the first row. Put the end against a 1/2" (12.7 mm) spacer and seat the edge snugly against its neighbor. Gently tap the boards together using a floor mallet. Drill pilot holes in the tongues, then nail and countersink them through the tongues (but not the faces) to hold the boards in place. Work your way down the rows, one row at a time.

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#### **Step 7 ❖ FRAME FLOORING OBSTRUCTIONS**

Often a floor will meet an obstruction such as a fireplace or counter. If so, miter boards to create a border that frames the obstruction. Position the boards so the tongue or groove mates with the rest of the floorboards. Cut off the tongue if it's on the edge that meets the obstruction. Apply the rest of the floor as you normally would, fitting the pieces into the frame as you go.

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#### **Step 8 ❖ CUT CORNERS**

Where the flooring meets a jog in the wall or a similar obstacle, cut corners to fit. Snug the piece of flooring against the obstacle and lay out the cut by marking where the edge of the obstacle meets the board. Allow for a 1/2" (12.7 mm) expansion gap at the end of the board and a 3/4" (18.5 mm) gap along the edges; make the cut with a jigsaw.

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### Step 9 ❖ INSTALL THE LAST ROWS

The remaining flooring should be laid by using the nailer or stapler to blind-nail top inside edge of the tongue at a 45-degree angle. Stagger end joints from row to row at least 8" apart and use a tapping block to fit boards together, while nailing each board every 6"-8" and within 2" of each end. There may be areas in the room where the nailer can't fit. These areas, like doorways or tight areas, will require the installer to face-nail or possibly glue down and weight them while the mastic sets. Just like you face-nailed or glued down the starting rows, you will have to repeat this process for the last two rows.

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### Step 10 ❖ CUT THE LAST ROW TO FIT

You will probably have to cut the final row to fit. Measure the space and subtract 3/4" (18.5 mm) for the expansion gap. Cut the boards with a table saw. Put the boards in place. Pry against a piece of scrap on the wall to seat the boards and close any gaps between them. Face-nail to hold the boards in place. If the final row is less than 1" (2.54 cm) in width, it can be glued to the adjacent plank.

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### Step 11 ❖ INSTALL THE TRIM & INSPECT THE FLOOR

Install the baseboard and shoe moulding to cover the expansion gap. Keep the lower edge of the baseboard even with the top of the floor, and nail the baseboard into the wall. Once the baseboard is in, set the quarter-round shoe moulding on a piece of paper to keep it just a hair above the floor. Nail it to the baseboard, not to the floor or subfloor. Nail threshold or transition strips in place where the edge of the floor is exposed.

Inspect the floor and fill in all minor gaps and defects with the appropriate blended filler. Install or re-install any transition pieces, reducer strips, T-mouldings, thresholds and/or bases.

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### AFTER INSTALLATION

- Wait 24 hours before moving furniture back into place or allowing heavy traffic.
  - Set a few boards aside in case of future repairs.
  - When installation is completed, vacuum floor thoroughly to clean. Refer to the maintenance instructions for detailed directions regarding the proper care of your hardwood floor. If you have any additional questions, please contact your local distributor of Golden Elite.
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## ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

1. Use a damp cloth to blot up spills as soon as they happen. Never allow liquids to stand on your floor.
  2. For tough spots, such as oil, paint, markers, lipstick, ink, or tar, apply mineral spirits on a clean white cloth, then wipe the area with a damp cloth to remove any remaining residue.
  3. Sweep, dust, or vacuum the floor regularly with a recommended hard floor attachment (not a beater bar) to prevent accumulation of dirt and grit that can scratch or dull the floor finish.
  4. Periodically clean the floor with cleaning products made specifically for urethane finishes.
  5. Do not use hot wet steamers or wet mop the floor with soap, water, oil-soap detergent, or any other liquid cleaning material. This could cause swelling, warping, delamination, joint-line separation and void the warranty.
  6. Do not use steel wool, abrasive cleaners, or strong ammoniated or chlorinated type cleaners.
  7. Do not use buffing or polishing machines, these can generate heat or hot spots.
  8. For spots such as candle wax or chewing gum, harden the spot with ice and then gently scrape with a plastic scraper, such as a credit card. Be careful not to scratch the flooring surface. Wipe clean with a damp cloth.
  9. A more frequent dust-mopping or vacuuming schedule may be required in very sandy areas such as a beach home.
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## PROTECTION

1. Entry mats will help collect the dirt, sand, grit, and other substances such as oil, asphalt, or driveway sealer that might otherwise be tracked onto your floor.
2. Do not use rubber or foam backed plastic mats as they may discolor the flooring finish. To prevent slippage, use an approved vinyl rug underlayment approved for urethane finishes.
3. Use floor protectors and wide-load bearing leg bases/ rollers to minimize indentations and scratches from heavy objects. As a rule, the heavier the object, the wider the floor protector.
4. Maintain a normal indoor relative humidity level between 35%-45% throughout the year to minimize the natural expansion and contraction of the wood.
5. Avoid excessive exposure to water during periods of inclement weather.
6. Do not walk on your floor with stiletto heels, shoes with sports cleats or exposed metal parts.
7. Do not allow sharp, pointed, or rough textured objects to be exposed to the hardwood flooring.
8. Keep your pet's nails trimmed to prevent them from scratching your floor.
9. UV sunlight will enhance –lighten or darken- the tone of different species of hardwood to varying degrees. Periodically rearranging your area rugs and furniture will allow the floor to antique or age evenly.
10. Use a dolly when moving heavy furniture or appliances; but first, put down a piece of quarter inch plywood or Masonite to protect the floor. Never try to slide or roll heavy objects across the floor.
11. A protective mat should be used for furniture or chairs with castors.

- 12.** Use cleaning products safe for urethane finishes; never use oil soaps, wax, liquid or other household products to clean your floor.
  - 13.** We do not endorse the use of hot steam cleaning machines on hard wood products, use at your own risk.
  - 14.** Toys and tools can scratch the finishes, scratches and dents are jobsite related, not warrantable.
  - 15.** If using the glue-down installation method, do not allow foot traffic or heavy furniture on floor for 24 hours.
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## 25-YEAR LIMITED RESIDENTIAL WARRANTY

### WHO'S COVERED

As the original purchaser of your Golden Elite floor, you are covered by this warranty.

### TRANSFERABILITY

This warranty is not transferable.

### LENGTH OF COVERAGE

This limited residential warranty is valid from the date of purchase of the flooring up to the number of years indicated on your invoice and 5 years for commercial foot traffic.

### WHAT'S COVERED

Your Golden Elite floor is warranted against finish wear from normal household conditions resulting in the exposure of the bare wood.

It is also warranted against grading, finishing and milling defects in excess of the waste factor. Waste factor is an industry term that refers to an allowance for manufacturing and natural defects in flooring and is represented by a percentage. While board selection may vary according to personal preference, waste is determined by NWFA standards. Accordingly, it is warranted that no more than 5% of the total square footage of your purchase of a domestic species and 10% for exotic species will exhibit any manufacturing or natural defects.

### WHAT'S NOT COVERED

**Moisture (or Lack of Moisture):** Damages caused by moisture (such as leaking pipes, spills, wet mopping, pets, relative humidity, subfloor moisture, etc.) are excluded. Moisture (and dryness) can cause issues such as checks, cupping, crowning, warping, buckling, peeling, twisting, or gapping.

**Other Site and Environmental Conditions:** Defects or damages resulting from extreme indoor conditions (such as extreme heat, radiant heat, or exposure to sand); indentations and scratches (caused by pets, furniture, appliances, tools, heels, toys, etc.); improper maintenance and accidents; misuse and abuse; and any wear that conflicts with the care and installation instructions are not covered.

**Gloss reduction:** Fading or loss of gloss is not finish wear and not a product defect.

**Within the waste factor:** Defects in flooring that do not exceed the waste factor are not covered under this warranty. Consequently, it is a good rule of thumb to add the applicable percentage above to your total square footage when ordering your floor.

**Other finishes:** This warranty covers the factory applied finish. Applying another finish and/or sanding in preparation for another finish may damage the factory applied finish and voids the warranty against finish wear.

**Poor Installation:** For example, damage caused by sub-surface, sub-flooring and jobsite environmental deficiencies; improper transportation, acclimation and storage; damage, and bumps or surface dimples created by nailing machines or staples are not covered. Additionally, damages caused by any advice or instructions that conflict with Virginia Mill Work's installation instructions and the National Wood Flooring Association's guidelines (regardless of the source) are excluded from this warranty.

**Non-Traditional Installations:** For example, intricate patterns, installations on walls or ceilings and usages for purposes other than flooring (like furniture or countertops) void this warranty.

**Boards Installed with Visible / Invisible Defects:** If you see any board with defects DO NOT install it. This includes visible manufacturing, natural or other defects. For flooring that is determined to be defective post-installation, Golden Elite will be responsible for reimbursing the buyer for the materials *only*.

**Natural Wood Characteristics:** Wood flooring is a natural product. It may change as a result of the conditions to which it is exposed including seasonal and environmental factors. Seasonal gapping due to the wood's expansion and contraction in heating and non-heating seasons may occur. Color changes due to aging or exposure to UV/sunlight may also occur. In addition, natural wood variations from board to board, like differences in grain, color, tone and knots, may exist. Issues relating to these natural wood characteristics are not covered under this warranty.

**Color and Shade Variations:** New or replacement flooring may not always match samples, printed color photography (including websites and catalogs), existing flooring or other wood products (such as cabinets, stair railings, trim and moldings) due to natural variations that occur by species, age, growing conditions, exposure to UV/sunlight and other factors. Consequently, these variations should be expected.

**Odd Lots & Third-Party Purchases:** An odd lot is flooring that is discounted because it did not pass our rigorous inspection process and is not covered under this warranty. Additionally, only purchases made directly from Golden Elite in store, online or by phone are covered by this Golden Elite Warranty.

**Special, Indirect or Consequential Damages:** Losses, damages or expenses relating to anything other than the floor itself are not covered. For example, personal damages/costs that may arise while pursuing a quality issue, such as missed time from work, hotel stays, storage fees, kennel costs for pets, etc., are not covered. Further, costs relating to the removal of defective flooring or installation of replacement flooring are not covered under the warranty. Countertops, cabinets, built-in appliances or other fixtures should not be installed on top of your floor and the cost of the removal or replacement of these items is not covered.

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