HSP101 Flooring Plywood®

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL USE OF PLYWOOD IN BUILT-UP SUBFLOORS

The presence of moisture is regarded as the biggest single contributing factor that can affect a subfloor construction. It is therefore essential that diligent moisture checks are carried out in the building prior to installation.

Manufacturer recommendations and application guidelines should be followed with a good understanding of all materials being used in the construction of the subfloor.

It is important to appreciate that all buildings are subject to movement in their architecture, framework and floor decks which all naturally move and flex when put under loading pressures.

Buildings can also be affected by localised climatic conditions and the materials used in construction will adjust according to these conditions. For instance, timber products are hydroscopic and will take up, or release moisture according to the relative humidity. Expansion/ contraction is therefore a natural occurrence in building structures. The use of underfloor heating will have a tendency to exaggerate movement in floors due to the heating and cooling processes.

Correctly constructed subfloors for resilient floorcoverings such as LVT are vital to the finished floor appearance and it is now widely recognised that Installers should be fully trained to the latest industry standards, along with a comprehensive and practical knowledge of BS 8203: 2017 Annex A Installation of resilient floor coverings - code of practice.

Plywood joint lines and surface imperfections

This is not an uncommon occurrence as joints or imperfections can often mirror through the completed Luxury Vinyl Tiles (LVT) and other resilient floor coverings, particularly when the floor is shown in critical lighting conditions.

By using flooring grade plywood which is compliant with BS 8203: 2017 Annex A, the built-up subfloor will have the best chance of coping with factors which may influence any potential shadow through to the finished vinyl floor.

Compliant plywood is manufactured to standards which consider every aspect of how plywood will be required to perform in its application.

Plywood, along with other materials being used, must be suitably acclimatised/conditioned prior to proceeding with installation.

Attention to detail regarding methods of fixing plywood, filling of joints and application of suitable smoothing compound is something that installers now recognise to be of great importance. If this is not done correctly the floor will not perform to a satisfactory standard, which can often lead to expensive remedial works.

Plywood will readily absorb water, especially on the edges of panels where the timber end grain is exposed. This process must be considered when using any materials that carry a high level of water, such as levelling screeds. It is understood that this can be one of the main causes of joint lines when edges expand due to the uptake of moisture. The practice of skimming or feathering joints, followed by sanding after a period of 24 hours, is often favoured by fitters as they look to avoid the issues caused by the introduction of high levels of moisture.

Should a fully compliant installation be carried out to a satisfactory finish which then after a period of time begins to show joint lines or other imperfections, it must therefore be assumed that the installation is most likely being affected by the localised atmospheric/structural conditions it is being subjected to.

A detailed survey of the building, materials used, and methods of installation may be required to ascertain what factors may be influencing any issues which arise.

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