

Pre-Installation Checklists Ensure a Trouble-Free Floor Installation

“Be prepared” is not just a Boy Scout motto. Being prepared for a floor installation project is the best way to ensure your project will flow smoothly and with the least amount of disruption to the overall construction schedule. It seems simple enough, but it’s easy to overlook a critical task if you’re not aware of what it is, why it’s important, when to do it and who is responsible for getting it done. This Starlog provides an overview of some important pre-installation checklist items you can use to “be prepared” for your next flooring project.

Concrete Moisture Testing

Concrete slabs must be tested for moisture content and vapor emission before any type of floor covering is installed. The tests should be conducted by professionals contracted by the general contractor or building owner, **NOT** the flooring contractor.

Checklist: ✓ Schedule for when the construction space is fully enclosed.

- ✓ Keep the space at “like condition” occupancy temperature for no less than 72 hours prior to, during and after testing.
- ✓ Document the test results for the building owner, GC and architect.

Floor Material Acclimation

The building interior’s temperature is critical for ensuring a successful floor covering installation because the building, the floor covering materials and installation accessories such as adhesives need to acclimate to the environment prior to installation.

Checklist: ✓ Raise or lower the temperature to “like condition” occupancy temperature for no less than 72 hours prior to, during and after installation.

- ✓ Do not let the temperature drop to less than 65 degrees F.
- ✓ Do not use propane or other “zone” space heaters; the space needs uniform heat.

Floor Prep and Substrates

Improper subfloor preparation continues to be a major reason for construction delays. Starnet members recommend the GC, construction manager and flooring subcontractor meet to determine what prep will be handled by each party according to the contract.

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- ✓ Document the test results for the buildingowner, GC and architect.

Jobsite Considerations

Jobsite conditions not even related to the floor can still have major repercussions on the floor installation. These are just a few commonly overlooked items. If in doubt, schedule a pre-installation meeting between the construction manager and the flooring subcontractor.

Checklist:

- ✓ Complete all overhead ceiling and fire suppression work first, to avoid damaging floors.
- ✓ Check floor drains to make sure they are set at the correct height. Complete pour-backs a minimum of 20 days prior to the flooring installation to allow for proper drying time.
- ✓ Remove all cabinets and fixtures if the floor will be installed under them.
- ✓ Remove doors and protect door frames.
- ✓ Instruct the drywall contractor to leave a gap no greater than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the subfloor when resilient base will be installed.
- ✓ Is there a functional service elevator in the building?
- ✓ Is the area where floors are acclimating to “like conditions” secure from vandalism or theft?
- ✓ Power and lighting: does the area have it? If not, discuss who will provide these services and pay for them prior to scheduling the flooring installation.



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One Size Does Not Fit All

It's worth paying due diligence to any and all pre-installation issues that affect the outcome of your flooring project. The number and nature of items on your pre installation checklist will vary because every floor project is a unique, custom installation. New construction has different issues than renovation projects. And, most floorcovering manufacturers have their own requirements for jobsite conditions and pre-installation do's and don'ts. So, how can you really “be prepared?” First, please check out our more comprehensive “Pre-Installation Checklist” document by visiting www.starnetflooring.com. Your best bet: ask your local Starnet member flooring contractor to address any item or concern in more detail.

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