

Technical Service Bulletin #6

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RE: Considerations for Waste Factor in Hardwood Flooring Installations. The goal of this technical bulletin is to serve as a resource for both professional contractors and homeowners planning hardwood flooring installations, ensuring that adequate material is ordered from the beginning to accommodate typical installation waste factors.

When undertaking hardwood flooring installations, it is essential to incorporate a "waste factor" to ensure that enough material is available to complete the project. This is particularly vital when adjusting boards to fit unconventional spaces or specific installation designs. The waste factor can vary based on board widths and other factors, including room layout and the quality of materials used.

Recommended Waste Factors:

- **Standard Widths (up to 4 1/4"):** We typically recommend adding 5% to the total calculated flooring area to account for waste. This additional percentage addresses minor cuts, errors, or slight imperfections in the wood.
- **Wider Boards (Over 4 1/4"):** For wider boards, which are more likely to have defects and waste during installation, it is advisable to increase the waste factor to 8%. This is particularly relevant if the design includes diagonal layouts or multiple parallel walls.

Factors Influencing Waste Percentage:

- **Room Configuration:** Unconventional room shapes, diagonal installation patterns, or multiple adjoining spaces may require a higher waste factor to accommodate extra cuts.
- **Flooring Quality:** The type of wood can greatly affect waste levels. Higher-quality wood tends to have less variation and fewer defects, leading to lower waste, while lower-quality or reclaimed woods may need an additional 15% due to inherent flaws.
- **Plank Width:** Wider boards typically necessitate a greater waste factor (8%) compared to narrower ones (5%) because they require more precision during cutting, especially in tight spaces or for unique patterns.

Additional Considerations:

- **Heritage Grade Flooring:** When using heritage grade flooring or a grade with more character, which features knots and natural variations, it is advisable to increase the waste factor by an extra 1-2% to accommodate personal preferences and the removal of less desirable pieces.
- **Future Repairs:** We recommend ordering an additional 1-2 boxes beyond the calculated waste factor to cover potential future repairs. This ensures that matching materials are available, particularly for discontinued product lines.

Incorporating additional material for potential future repairs is always a wise strategy to ensure consistency in flooring repairs over time.

For customers with specific aesthetic preferences, we recommend ordering up to an additional 10% beyond the calculated flooring needs. This extra material allows for the sorting of less desirable pieces, ensuring a selection that aligns closely with personal vision. While our grading standards ensure a high-quality product, it is important to acknowledge that wood, as a natural material, possesses unique character and may include some pieces that do not meet individual subjective standards. Such variations, along with any pieces not installed, are not classified as defects but rather as part of the inherent beauty of natural wood. By considering this additional allowance, customers can achieve the desired visual impact while embracing the distinctive charm that wood flooring offers.

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