

# LVT FLEX

*12x24 LUXURY VINYL TILE*

## **GENERAL**

- LVT Flex is recommended for use over properly prepared concrete, suspended wood, metal and other suitable substrates. Never install LVT Flex over residual asphalt type (Cutback) adhesive as "Bleed Through" may occur.
- LVT Flex is not suitable for external installation or unheated locations.
- LVT Flex flooring, adhesive, jobsite and subfloor must be acclimated to a stable condition before installation (See Job site testing).
- Following installation, LVT Flex foot traffic should be minimized for 24 hours; point loads and rolling traffic for 48 hours and should utilize minimal wet cleaning for 5 days.
- LVT Flex flooring should remain at a temperature between 55°-85° F (13°-29° C) during its service life.
- Adhesive types can have a significantly different moisture tolerance which can influence required subfloor prep as well as install time.

## **MATERIAL RECEIVING, HANDLING & STORAGE**

1. All floor covering products require care during storage and handling. It is important to store flooring products in a dry, temperature-controlled interior area.
2. The temperature range should be between 65° F and 100° F, and the relative humidity should be controlled and maintained between 30% to 70%.
3. Material must be conditioned for at least 48 hours before beginning the installation.
4. Flooring materials that are shipped in cartons must also be stored properly. Cartons must be kept squarely positioned on the pallet to prevent distortion of the contents and to be fully supported. Do not store close to exterior walls, in direct sunlight or near HVAC vents.
5. Stored cartons are to be protected from forklift and other traffic that can damage carton corners. Never double- stack pallets of flooring products.

## **JOBSITE TESTING**

1. Before jobsite testing, the building envelope must be sealed (walls, roofing, windows, doorways etc., installed).
2. The installation area and materials to be installed shall be maintained at a minimum of 65°F (18.3°C) and a maximum of 85°F (29.4°C) for 48 hours before, during and for 48 hours after completion of the installation. Relative humidity level extremes should also be avoided. General

recommended humidity control level is between 35– 55 %. If a system other than the permanent HVAC source is utilized, it must provide proper control of both temperature and humidity to recommended or specific levels for the appropriate time duration.

3. Test sites must be properly prepared and protected for the duration of testing to achieve valid results.

4. Surface Flatness for all Subfloors: The surface shall be flat to 3/16 (3.9mm)“ in 10 ft. (3050 mm) and 1/32” (0.8 mm) in 1 ft (305 mm) To check flatness, place a 10 ft straight edge, string, laser level or use another suitable method on the surface and measure the gap.

5. Concrete Subfloors:

a. Concrete subfloors must be finished and cured, free of all sealers, coatings, finishes, dirt, film forming curing compounds, or other substances that may prevent proper bonding of the flooring materials (ACI 302.1 and ASTM F710).

b. Randomly check concrete subfloor for porosity using the drop water test. Place a 1 inch diameter drop of water directly onto the concrete subfloor. If the water droplet does not dissipate within 60 to 90 seconds the subfloor is considered non-porous.

c. Concrete subfloors must have a minimum compressive strength of 3000 psi. Concrete subfloors shall not consist of lightweight concrete or gypsum.

d. Moisture Testing: Perform either the preferred In-situ Relative Humidity (RH) Test (ASTM F2170) or the acceptable Moisture Vapor Emission Rate (MVER) Test (ASTM F1869). For acceptable moisture limits please refer to the specifications of the adhesive of choice.

e. Alkalinity: Must test surface alkalinity (ASTM F710). A 7.0 to 9.0 pH is acceptable.

6. Wood Subfloors and underlayment panels shall have the moisture content tested using a suitable wood pin meter. Readings between the wood subfloor and underlayment should be within 3% and have a maximum moisture content of 14% or less.

## **MOISTURE SUPPRESSANT SYSTEM**

Concrete subfloors that exceed adhesive specifications will require a Moisture Suppressant System. Due to complexities associated with moisture vapor transmission, emissions and movement of soluble salts (alkalinity) in concrete subfloors, we do not offer, recommend, or warranty a specific solution for excess moisture in concrete slabs. However, there are many companies that offer solutions with warranties for excess moisture in concrete slabs.

## **SUBFLOOR PREPARATION**

### **Concrete**

Careful subfloor preparation is vital for an excellent floor appearance and good tile/plank adhesion. The subfloor must be smooth, firm, flat, clean, dry, free from defects, and fit for purpose. A suitable smoothing compound should be used to ensure that no irregularities show through to the surface of the finished floor. In all cases, the subfloor must meet the moisture and pH requirements before installation.

Below and On-grade concrete subfloors must have a suitable vapor retarder properly installed directly beneath the slab.

Always follow manufacturers’ written recommendations for the use and installation of their

appropriate surface preparation materials.

1. Record and file site conditions, test results and any corrective action(s) taken. It is important to maintain this documentation throughout the warranty period.
2. Subfloor must be clean (free of dirt, sealers, curing, hardening or parting compounds or any substance that may stain or prevent adhesion), smooth, flat, sound, fit for purpose, free of movement, excessive moisture and high alkalinity.
2. Slick surfaces such as power troweled concrete shall be abraded or profiled to allow for a mechanical bond between the adhesive and subfloor.
3. Remove existing resilient floor covering; remove all residual adhesive, paint or other contaminants following RFCI recommended work practice. The use of adhesive removers or solvents in the abatement or removal of existing or old adhesives is prohibited and may void any warranty.

**WARNING:** ASBESTOS & SILICA - Refer to the current Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI) document

"Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Existing Resilient Floor Coverings" for guidance ([www.RFCI.com](http://www.RFCI.com)).

4. Perform corrective actions necessary for elevated moisture or high alkalinity conditions.
5. Surface Flatness for all Subfloors: The surface shall be flat to 3/16" (3.9mm) in 10 ft. (3050mm) and 1/32" (0.8mm) in 1 ft (305mm) Bring high spots level by sanding, grinding etc. and fill low spots. Smooth surface to prevent any irregularities or roughness from telegraphing through the new flooring.
6. Leveling and Patching:
  - a. For concrete subfloors, use only high quality Portland cement based materials (minimum 3000 psi compressive strength according to ASTM C109). Mix with water only, do not use latex. Caution: Do not lightly skim coat highly polished or slick power troweled concrete surfaces. A thin film of floor patch will not bond to a slick subfloor and may become a bond breaker causing flooring to release at the interface of the subfloor and patching material. If in doubt, perform a bond test prior to commencing with the installation.
7. Wood
  - b. Wood subfloors require an underlayment (double layer construction) with a minimum total thickness of 1" (25 mm). Use minimum 1/4" (6 mm) thick APA rated "underlayment grade" plywood with a fully sanded face or other underlayment panel that is appropriate for the intended usage. Install and prepare panels and seams according to the manufacturers' instructions. Also refer to ASTM F 1482 Standard Practice for Installation and Preparation of Panel Underlayments to receive Resilient Flooring.
  - c. Many times wood panel subfloors are damaged during the construction process or are not underlayment grade. These panels must be covered with an appropriate underlayment. Underlayment panels are intended to be used to provide a smooth surface on which to adhere the finished floor covering. It should be understood that underlayment panels cannot correct structural deficiencies.
  - d. Panels intended to be used as underlayment should be specifically designed for this purpose. These panels should have a minimum thickness of 1/4" (6mm) any panels selected as an underlayment must meet the following criteria:

- Be dimensionally stable
- Have a smooth, fully sanded face so graining or texture will not telegraph through
- Be resistant to both static and impact indentation

- Be free of any surface components that may cause staining such as plastic fillers, marking inks sealers, etc.
- Be of uniform density, porosity and thickness
- Have a written warranty for suitability and performance from the panel manufacturer or have a history of proven performance

e. Any unevenness at the joints between panels must be sanded to a level surface. Gaps between panels, hammer indentations, and all other surface irregularities must be filled and sanded.

8. Particleboard, chipboard, construction grade plywood, any hardboard and flake-board, are not recommended as underlayments for fully adhered installations. All have inadequate uniformity, poor dimensional stability, and variable surface porosity. We will not accept responsibility for adhered installation over these subfloors. LVT Flex can be installed over all wood and wood composition panels provided that they are smooth, flat, structurally sound and free of deflection. This includes plywood, particleboard, oriented strand board (OSB), flake-board and wafer board. If the surface of the subfloor is not smooth, a ¼" underlayment should be installed over the subfloor. In all cases, the underlayment manufacturer or underlayment installer is responsible for any / all underlayment warranties.

## INSTALLATION PROCEDURES

Before starting the LVT Flex installation, ensure the following are satisfactorily completed.

- **Acclimation:** The installation area and materials to be installed shall be maintained at a minimum of 65°F (18.3°C) and a maximum of 85°F (29.4°C) for 48 hours before, during and for 48 hours after completion of the installation. Relative humidity level extremes should also be avoided. General recommended humidity control level is between 35 – 55 %. If a system other than the permanent HVAC source is utilized, it must provide proper control of both temperature and humidity to recommended or specific levels for the appropriate time duration.
- **Flooring Materials:** Check quantity of LVT Flex and adhesive are sufficient for area to be installed. Check for visual defects before installation. Installation of flooring acknowledges acceptance of materials. **\*\*\*Installers are responsible for FINAL quality inspection of material before final installation.\*\*\***
- Expansion joints, isolation joints, or other moving joints are incorporated into concrete floor slabs in order to permit movement without causing random cracks in the concrete. These joints must be honored and not be filled with underlayment products or other materials, and floor coverings must not be laid over them. Expansion joint covering systems should be detailed by the architect or engineer based upon intended usage and aesthetic considerations.
- Surface cracks, grooves, depressions, control joints or other non-moving joints, and other irregularities shall be filled or smoothed with high quality Portland cement based patching or underlayment compound for filling or smoothing, or both. Patching or underlayment compound shall be moisture, mildew, and alkali-resistant, and shall provide a minimum of 3000 psi compressive strength after 28 days, when tested in accordance with ASTM C109 or ASTM C472, whichever is appropriate.
- **Subfloor Preparation:** Make sure all surfaces to be covered are completely clean, dry and smooth and that all necessary subfloor preparation has been properly completed and documented.
- **Inspect Substrate:** Perform final acceptance inspection of substrate.

- **Adjacent Surfaces Protection:** Protect adjacent work areas and finish surfaces from damage during product installation.

- **Flooring Protection:** LVT Flex should be the last material installed to prevent other trades from disrupting the installation and adhesive set-up or damaging the floor. Start of flooring installation indicates acceptance of current subfloor conditions and full responsibility for completed work. LVT Flex can be laid out to run either parallel or diagonal to the room or primary wall.

- **Plank flooring should have end joints offset by at least 6" and staggered to create a random appearance that avoids alignment of end joints.**

The following conditions must be given consideration when determining how LVT Flex will be installed:

1. **Layout:** Layout shall be specified by end user, architect or designer.
  - a. Establish center marks and determine start point to balance installation in room and have equal tile widths on opposite sides of room. This can be facilitated by dry laying tiles and marking base lines.
  - b. The room layout must be set-up so that all flooring can be installed while staying off freshly installed planks. This will minimize shifting, adhesive displacement and wet adhesive from oozing up and getting onto the face of the material. This can be accomplished by creating work zones outlined with chalk lines to spread adhesive aligned with established base lines. Create work zones that are no wider than the installers comfortable arm reach and in multiples of the tile width.
  - c. **All Installations:** Spread only the amount of adhesive that can be covered within the working time specific to the adhesive being used. Underlayment should not be used in heavy rolling lead areas.

**Adhesives:** Any pressure sensitive adhesive rated for vinyl plank installation is recommended. See adhesive label for details. Make sure to follow manufacturers recommended installation and application instructions for guidance on recommended trowel size.

Note: It is not recommended to install LVT Flex over concrete slabs with a history of excessive moisture or hydrostatic conditions. Concrete subfloors that exceed 8 lbs MVER as determined by the Calcium Chloride MVER test (ASTM F-1869) or 95% RH as determined by the In-Situ Relative Humidity test (ASTM F-2170) should be considered excessive with regards to moisture emissions and may require the installation of a moisture suppressant membrane.

LVT Flex will not assume responsibility for floor covering failure due to hydrostatic pressure or moisture vapor emission. The final responsibility for determining if the concrete is dry enough for installation of the flooring lies with the floor covering installer.

CAUTION: Temperature directly affects adhesive working and setting times. Warmer temperatures shorten working times and colder temperatures lengthen working times of adhesive. Follow instructions on container for proper application.

**Adhesive Application:** Follow the instructions on the adhesive labels.

- a. Use a trowel with appropriate notch size. Do not use worn trowels.
- b. Spread adhesive evenly with proper trowel held at 60 degree angle avoiding skips or voids and excessive adhesive application.

- c. Only spread sufficient adhesive that can be covered within the adhesive working time.
- d. Planks must be placed into adhesive as specified (follow label directions).
- e. Install rows to chalk line making sure tiles/planks are precisely aligned with chalk line and adjacent tiles.
- f. Randomly check planks for complete coverage of adhesive onto back of tile especially near the end of each adhesive spread. If there is little or no adhesive transfer, or if the adhesive has flashed off or skinned over; adequate bonding may not be possible. Scrape the flashed off adhesive from the floor and spread fresh adhesive.
- g. If planks shift, use releasable masking tape diagonally over seams to keep tiles tight and aligned.
- h. Wet-Set Application: Do not work on top of freshly installed flooring. This will minimize plank shifting, adhesive displacement, and prevent wet adhesive from oozing up and getting onto the surface of the new flooring. If you must work on top of newly installed flooring, use kneeling and or walk boards.
- i. The floor must be rolled in both directions using a 100 lb 3-section roller. Roll floor as soon as conditions permit without the tiles/planks sliding or adhesive bleeding to the surface. Roll floor again 90 degrees to the first within 1 hour. Pressure Sensitive Adhesive will not transfer 100% to the backing of the tile/plank. Be sure not to exceed the 3 hour working time.
- j. Clean excess adhesive as you install before it is allowed to dry. Use a soapy clean soft cloth to remove wet excess adhesive.
- k. Clean up all debris as you work.
- l. Wait 24 hours for normal foot traffic and wait 48 hours for point and rolling loads after installation.
- m. During first five days minimize heavy wet cleaning to allow adhesive to fully set.

### **Special Considerations:**

- a. Radiant Heat: LVT Flex can be installed over Radiant heating (hydroponic) systems. The maximum temperature of the subfloor surface must not exceed 85°. Before installing flooring products over newly constructed radiant-heating systems, operate the system at maximum capacity to force any residual moisture from the cementitious topping of the radiant-heating system. Then set the thermostat to a comfortable room temperature for the installation. For existing systems the system must be switched off for a minimum of 48 hours before, during and 48 hours after flooring installation.
- b. Direct Sunlight: Installations in areas where there is heavy direct sunlight exposure for long periods of time should utilize window treatments in these areas.
- c. Protecting New Installations: New Installations must be protected while the adhesive cures. Early foot traffic, point or rolling loads can cause adhesive displacement or breaking of the bond between the adhesive and the tile or substrate.

## **ROUTINE MAINTENANCE**

To get your new LVT Flex floor looking its best, and to keep it that way, LVT Flex recommends the following initial maintenance procedures. For detailed recommendations, see the LVT Flex Instructions.

- Use non-staining matting system at exterior doors that is appropriate for soil load and weather conditions.
- Use appropriate floor protectors, glides and wheels and do not drag or slide objects across the surface of the floor.
- Do not use abrasive cleaners that can scratch the floor surface or detergent cleaners that leave a residue.

### Day 1

- Stay off the new floor. Minimize traffic.

### Day 2 to 4

- Dust mop, sweep or vacuum the floor to remove loose dirt and grit.
- Lightly damp mop (well wrung out mop) floor with properly diluted Neutral cleaner solution.

### Day 5

- Choose from multiple routine maintenance options to suit individual circumstances and end user preference.

## **MAINTENANCE PRECAUTIONS AND SAFETY INFORMATION**

Effective maintenance includes promptly removing all spills and then thoroughly cleaning with a diluted neutral cleaner or cleaner/maintainer solution. Failure to establish an effective routine maintenance program will not only detract from the appearance of the floor but may shorten its useful life.

**SAFETY FIRST:** Before commencing work, put out signs or safety cones to warn that cleaning is in progress. A slippery floor can cause accidents. This can be caused by poor maintenance, surface contamination, spills or when the floor is wet. All hard floors can be slippery when wet. Ensure the floor is clean and dry before resuming use. Use warning signs in commercial areas when performing maintenance or cleaning spills.