

INSTALLATION

Flooring Prep

The Foundation of Performance

At Mannington Commercial, we know that making high-performing products is only half the job. Installation plays an equally important role, and even the best flooring can fail without proper subfloor preparation. That's why we take pride in supporting installers with information and resources that help ensure every floor performs as intended—not just on install day, but for years to come.



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The Five Key Factors for Subfloor Prep

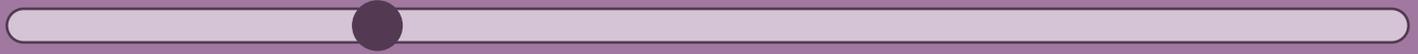
- **Flat:** A flat floor doesn't mean it has to be perfectly level. What it does mean is a surface free from noticeable crowns or depressions that does not alter more than 3/16" over 10'.
- **Clean:** Make sure your subfloor is free from debris, dirt, oily substances, old adhesives, waxes or polishes, paint or marker stains, and other loose materials.
- **Smooth:** The concrete surface profile (CSP) should be close to a "1," which feels like smooth to the touch like a countertop. This ensures the finished floor looks uniform and feels comfortable underfoot.
- **Dry:** Always test for relative humidity (RH%), moisture vapor emission rate (MVER), and pH. Identifying moisture concerns up front prevents adhesive breakdown and costly product failures later.
- **Structurally Sound:** Check for cracks, instability, or excessive deflection that could compromise the floor.

Which Floors Are Most Forgiving?

Floor types play a large role in hiding or camouflaging subfloor irregularities. Soft surface products such as carpet can be much more forgiving compared to a resilient sheet or LVT.



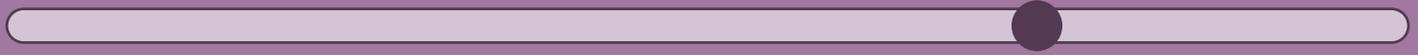
Most Forgiving: Carpet with padding requires floor prep, but results can be slightly less smooth than with resilient finishes.



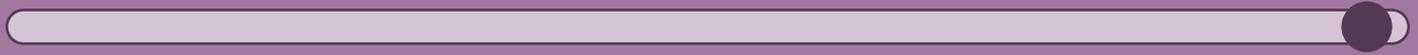
Moderately Forgiving: Glue-down carpet requires thorough cleaning and patching.



Moderate: Floating products requires subfloor to be flat, but less demanding otherwise.



Less Forgiving: LVT demands full adherence to all five factors, though isolated repairs are possible.



Least Forgiving: Sheet vinyl is most sensitive to prep errors, requiring highly skilled installers.



Don't Let These Mistakes Surface Later

Following ASTM and Mannington substrate requirements assures a suitable and trouble free installed product. This leaves a beautiful functioning floor that will last the duration of expected life of the floor.

| ISSUE | SOLUTION |
|---|--|
|  CONSTRUCTION Old Adhesive Layers | Always fully remove existing adhesives down to the concrete. Skim coating over the old adhesive causes weak layers and breakdown. |
| Control Joints | Must be cleaned and filled with premium quality and/or epoxy crack filler to avoid telegraphing. For best results, consult with subfloor preparation professional. |
| Expansion/ Cold Joints | Require specialized hardware such as expansion plate to account for slab movement. |
| Uneven Surfaces | Grinding or leveling is needed to meet flatness standards. |



DURABILITY

Why Moisture Matters

Due to the fast pace of the building industry and the expectation of new construction completion and with older buildings not having an intact vapor retarder, excessive moisture in the substrate has become a common industry problem. Detection by proper testing and treatment before the flooring is installed is a must to eliminate a flooring failure. When proper sub floor testing and preparation is not done, the risk of a flooring failure greatly increases. Breakdown of the adhesive and/or flooring, in most cases, makes flooring replacement inevitable, leading to an unhappy customer who is likely facing business shutdown due to an unstable floor. This also creates a unhappy customer with possible business shutdown due to a unusable flooring.

Common Moisture Testing Methods

- **Relative Humidity (RH%):** Indicates how much relative humidity exists within the body of the slab.
- **Moisture Vapor Emission Rate (MVER):** Measures how much moisture is leaving the surface of the slab over time to determine the rate of emission.
- **pH Levels:** Identifies whether the slab's alkalinity could break down adhesives or finishes.

The Installer's Prep Toolkit

Having the right equipment makes for efficient floor prep.

- **Level and laser equipment:** These tools are required to assure what preparation is needed when determining crowns or dips in the substrate.
- **Stand-up sanding machine (17" / 175 RPM):** Running this across the subfloor removes most surface contaminants and helps achieve the smooth base needed for installation.
- **7" diamond grinder with dustless vacuum system:** This tool is used to handle edges or excessive high spots while keeping dust under control during prep.
- **Buckets and mixing tools:** These are required for preparing patching compounds, ensuring they are properly blended before application.
- **Various trowels:** Installers rely on a range of trowels and leveling rakes to spread patching materials evenly and address different surface conditions.

Who Is Responsible For Subfloor Prep?

- **Owner/General Constructor:** Must provide a structurally sound subfloor.
- **Installer:** Ensures conditions are flat, clean, smooth, and dry before installation.
- **Manufacturer Technical Services:** Offers guidance and support when issues are discovered prior to or during installation.

Learn more about the Installation of Mannington Commercial products at [URL](#).

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