

# Ambient® Rigid Core Bamboo Flooring Installation Instructions & Guidelines

## Important Pre-Installation Notes

All of our rigid core bamboo floors come with an attached acoustical pad (IXPE) on the underside of each plank and are meant to be installed via the floating method. \*IXPE-backed flooring is not recommended for glue down installation and is not warranted if installed via this method; however, floors backed with cork underlayment are warranted for glue down installation.\*

When your flooring is ordered, approximately 7% to 10% should be added to the actual square footage needed as allowance for cutting and waste.

### **Natural/Visible Defects:**

Our flooring products are quality inspected before packaging and shipping. Nevertheless, the installer must use reasonable selectivity (common sense) to hold out, relocate in hidden places, or cut out pieces with glaring defects, whatever the cause. Installation of any material serves as acceptance of that material and the Manufacturer will not accept responsibility for flooring installed when it has visible defects. Should an individual flooring plank be doubtful as to grade, manufacture, milling, or factory finish, the installer should not use that piece. Ensure adequate lighting for proper inspection.

### **Keep Packaging Intact:**

Do not discard carton packaging in the event that you need to return flooring. We only accept returns in original packaging.

### **Using Tape on Bamboo Floors:**

The only tape approved for use on hardwood/bamboo floors and moldings is 3M/Scotchguard #2080 tape. Do not use any other tape (including blue painter's tape), as it may cause finish to peel. Do not leave the tape on any finish surface for more than 6-10 hours or it will damage the finish.

### **Warning About Mineral Spirits/Paint Thinner:**

The use of certain abrasive chemicals, including those in the list below, may irreparably damage your flooring finish:

- paint thinner,
- mineral spirits,
- turpentine,
- acetone and
- Methyl Ethyl Ketone (MEK)

ALWAYS test all cleaning agents on a sacrificial plank prior to use.

### **Construction Paper:**

Do not cover the floors with construction paper or plastic for extended periods of time. Construction paper and other protective floor coverings have the potential to cause discoloration in wood and bamboo floors because they result in uneven light absorption. Plastic membranes may cause a build-up of humidity and can result in cupping or other moisture imbalance problems.

### **The Cut Edges of Your Flooring:**

The cut ends of planks should only be placed at the edges of the installation and should be covered by perimeter moldings like baseboard or quarter round to prevent them being walked on. When a plank is cut on its sides or ends, the exposed/cut edge is not warranted for foot traffic as it is not finished. Only full planks with micro-beveled edges on all 4 sides should be laid in areas experiencing foot traffic.

### **Run Limits:**

If your interior humidity settings will fluctuate more than 40% in a given year, your successive runs of rigid core bamboo (SPC core) flooring should not exceed 40 ft x 50 ft.

### **Inspecting for Damage:**

Before installing or cutting a floor plank, inspect it carefully for damage BEFORE installation. If you see a defect, call Ambient for a possible refund or replacement. Our Claims>Returns department cannot accept any planks that have been already installed and/or cut.

### **Work Out of Multiple Boxes:**

Because there are variations in vinyl plank design, Ambient recommends blending floor planks from several different cartons during installation.

## **Jobsite Requirements**

Our rigid core bamboo flooring can be installed on, above, or below grade. Prior to installation of any flooring, the installer must ensure that the jobsite and subfloor meet the requirements of these instructions. The manufacturer is not responsible for floor failure resulting from unsatisfactory jobsite and/or subfloor conditions or failure to assess the situation properly.

- Room temperature and humidity of installation area should be consistent with normal, year-round living conditions for at least a week before installation.
- A room temperature of 60 degrees to 90 degrees Fahrenheit and humidity range of 40% to 70% are required.

Flooring should be one of the last items installed on any new construction or remodel project. All work involving water or moisture should be completed before floor installation.

### **Important Note About Crawlspaces:**

If you have a crawl space under your home or new flooring, we recommend sealing the space (prior to installing the new floors) using the following guidelines:

- There must be a ground layer cover of 6 to 20 mil BLACK polyethylene film with joints overlapping at least 6 inches, and sealed with moisture-resistant tape, or any recommended puncture-resistant membrane, such as Class C, meeting ASTM D-1745.
- There must be a minimum of 18" from the ground to underside of joists and it should have perimeter venting equal to at least 1.5% of the crawl space total square footage. The vents should be properly placed for cross ventilation.

## **Acceptable Subfloor Types & Conditions**

It is acceptable to install rigid core bamboo floors over **most types of hard-surface flooring**; as long as the existing floor has a clean, dry, flat, surface that is in good structural shape. Use T-moldings at doorways and for any span greater than 40' in any direction. If installing this flooring over a sheet vinyl floor surface, the existing

floor should have little cushion from soft underlay or substrates. Too much cushion can compromise the strength of our product. **NEVER** install our rigid core bamboo flooring over ANY type of carpet.

## Subfloor Preparation

To ensure a successful installation of your rigid core bamboo flooring, properly prepare your subfloor by ensuring it is clean, dry, flat, and in good structural shape. The required flatness of the subfloor is 3/16" per 10' radius. Thoroughly sweep subfloor free of all debris, wax, oil, paint, curing agents and other contaminants that would interfere with adhesive bond.

- Ensure subfloor is level - flat to 3/16" per 10-foot radius or 1/8" per 6-foot radius and firm. If subfloor is not level, sand down high spots and fill low spots with Portland-based compound and allow it to completely dry and cure before installation
- Ensure subfloor is dry and that it remains dry year-round. The moisture content of a wood subfloor must not exceed 12%.
- Ensure subfloor is structurally sound and well-secured.

For all types of installation, joints should be staggered 10" to 20". Laying the flooring across the floor joists is recommended.

### Concrete Slabs:

If installing on concrete, ensure the concrete slab never exceeds 20 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. of moisture. When mold is present in your home, it can become a health hazard, especially for someone with allergies, asthma, or breathing problems. It can also lead to irritation of the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs. Ambient cannot be held for these moisture-related issues. General guidelines suggest installing a 6 mil polyfilm over concrete subfloors to prevent moisture from contacting the floors.

Asphaltic "cut-back" adhesive residues should be completely removed prior to the installation. It is the installer's responsibility to test concrete and subfloors for excessive wetness and plan their materials and installation accordingly.

## Acclimation

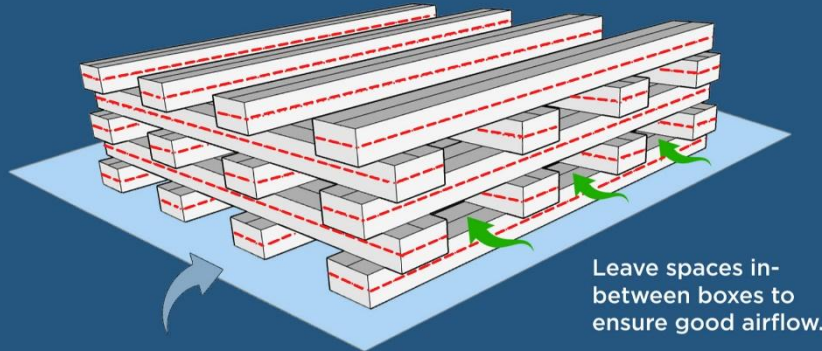
Our rigid core bamboo flooring (SPC core) floors only require an acclimation period of 24 hours prior to installation. If you are installing these floors in an *excessively dry* or *excessively humid* climate, we recommend acclimating for 3 full days (72 hours). Acclimation should be completed following the guidelines below:

# How to Acclimate Hardwood, Bamboo & Eucalyptus Floors

## OPTION #1

Cut boxes on red dotted lines shown below, including interior plastic. Only one long side needs to be cut open, and both end flaps.

Cross-stack boxes up to 5 high.



Leave spaces in-between boxes to ensure good airflow.

If acclimating over concrete or a crawl space, first lay down a 6mm plastic or other waterproof membrane below the boxes. The edge of the membrane should extend out at least 18 inches from the edges of the boxes.

Maintain appropriate humidity and temperature settings during the acclimation process.



## OPTION #2

To be used if there isn't enough space in the room for cross-stacking acclimation



\*\*\*Note: Our Rigid Core flooring (boxes) **CAN** be acclimated over concrete without the need for/use of a 6mm plastic membrane as long as the concrete doesn't emit more than 15lbs moisture.

## Installing Your Rigid Core Bamboo Floors

**The FLOATING method** is used when installing rigid core bamboo (SPC core) flooring. Cabinets or fixed objects should not be installed on top of these floors. These bamboo floors require proper expansion space, undercutting of all door jams, and prohibits fastening wall moldings and transition strips to SPC core flooring.

### **Required Tools and Materials:**

Before you begin installation of your flooring, be sure you have access to the following list of tools:

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| ✓ Safety Glasses  | ✓ Utility Knife   |
| ✓ Tape Measure    | ✓ Tapping Block   |
| ✓ Jigsaw          | ✓ T-Square        |
| ✓ Miter/Table Saw | ✓ Pull Bar        |
| ✓ Rubber Mallet   | ✓ ¼" Spacers      |
| ✓ Dust Mask       | ✓ Vacuum or Broom |

### **Quick Tips for Successful Installation:**

To avoid scratching your floor, be sure to use felt pads when moving furniture. Place large or heavy furniture and appliances on non-staining floor protectors. Ball-type castors can damage your floor and are NOT recommended.

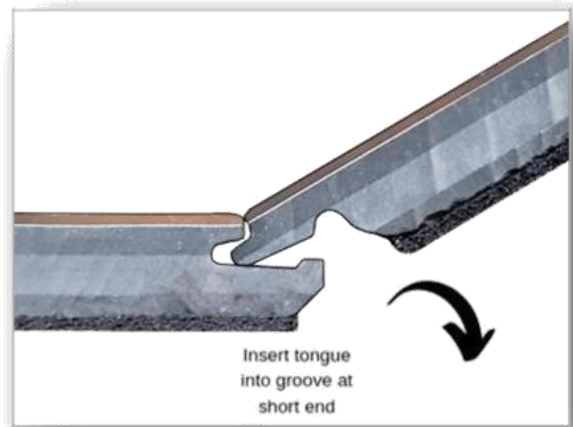
If your furniture has wheels or castors on them, make sure the wheels or castors are:

- Clean and free of debris
- Able to roll and swivel easily
- Large surface wheels or castors
- Suitable for resilient-type flooring
- Non-staining

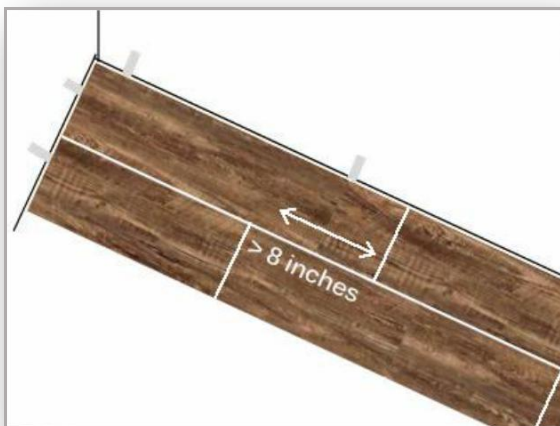
## Step-By-Step Installation



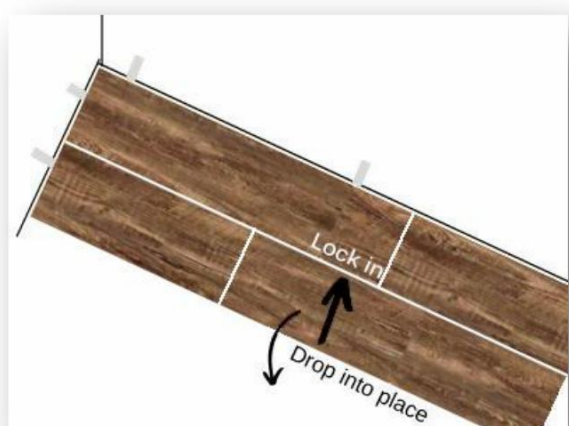
**Step 1:** Begin installation of flooring from a corner of the room and working from left to right. Install spacers between the plank and the wall at the end and edges where the plank and wall come together.



**Step 2:** Lock short end of plank by inserting tongue into groove at an angle. Then drop into place. Continue this step to the end of the row.



**Step 3:** Cut the last plank to fit the space. Use the leftover plank from first row as starter for second row, and so on for each row. There must be at least 8" between plank end joints on adjacent rows.\*



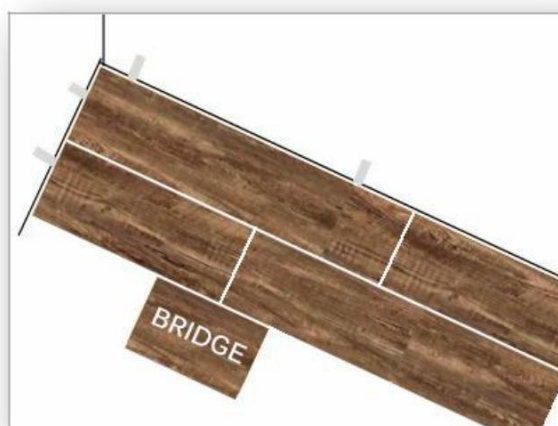
**Step 4:** Lock the long edge of plank by inserting tongue into groove at an angle and drop in place. Next, slide the plank toward the end of previously installed plank until the tongue just touches the groove.

\*For tile planks, the distance between end joints should be at least 12 inches.





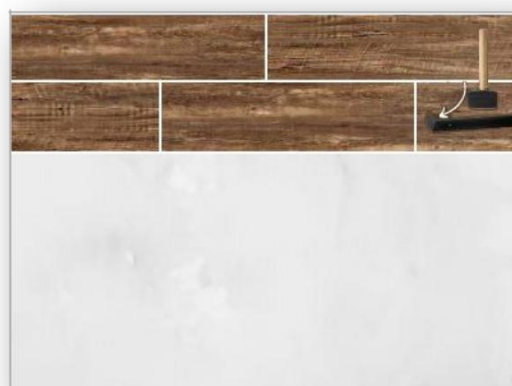
**Step 5:** THIS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP! Use a rubber mallet or hammer and a wood block. Tap the block to tap long edge of the plank to ensure a tight fit. MAKE SURE THERE IS NO GAPPING AS IT CAN COMPROMISE THE LOCKING SYSTEM!



**Step 6:** Using the tongue and groove, attach a scrap piece of floor plank to bridge gap between ends of planks and hold them steady.



**Step 7:** Place wood block at end of plank and tap with hammer to lock ends of planks together. Remove bridge and continue toward the wall until installing the final plank in the row. BE SURE TO TAP ON EDGE SO AS NOT TO DAMAGE LOCKING MECHANISM OF PLANKS.



**Step 8:** Use a hammer and pull bar to lock the final piece in the row. Insert a spacer at end of the row. Continue installation on next row until final row.



**Step 9:** Use a hammer and pull bar to lock long edges of planks on the final row.



**Step 10:** To install under door jambs, use a jamb saw to undercut space under door jamb to allow the plank to slide freely. Tap the long edge with hammer and tapping block to lock in place. Use the hammer and pull bar to lock short end of plank.



Remove expansion spacers and install base and/or quarter round moldings to cover the expansion space. Vacuum your floor to remove any dirt or debris.

## Installation Over Radiant Heat Systems

Please note that these are general guidelines. Please contact your radiant heat system manufacturer prior to installation to ensure that your specific system is compatible with rigid core (SPC core) bamboo flooring as well as if they have any specific requirements. We also recommend reading the [NWFA Radiant Heat Protocol](#) before beginning your installation plan.

### **Notes About Installing Over Radiant Heat:**

- New concrete needs to cure for at least 60 days before installing flooring materials.
- If considering Radiant heat, only Hydronic radiant heat can be used.
- The heating components must have a minimum of 3/8" separation from the product.
- System must be operational for a minimum of two weeks prior to installation.
- A transition strip must be used for any installation longer than 40 linear feet and/or wider than 30 linear feet. It is also suggested to use T-Molding in doorways.

### **Pre-Installation:**

If the radiant heat system is embedded in concrete, turn the radiant heat system on with the temperature set on high for 5-6 days. This should help burn off any moisture residing in the concrete prior to installation and this should be done the week leading up to installation. Next, the temperature should be set to 65° F and held at that temperature 5 days prior to acclimating the floors – during acclimation – during installation – and for 72 hours after installation.

### **During Installation:**

- Must leave at least a 1/2" expansion gap at all walls and doorways (the SPC flooring expands slightly when heated)
- Must install break every 25 ft. (max run 25 ft in any direction)
- The temperature of the radiant heat system should always be maintained at a constant 65° F.
- A stove or any other item that can affect the temperature of the ground should not be used at the job site.
- The flooring must be acclimated over the radiant heat with the system turned on and set to 65° F. The same acclimation preparation must be followed as always, including cutting the boxes open and stacking.
- If the radiant heat system is encased in concrete or another substrate that releases moisture, a 6mm polyethylene barrier must be placed between the flooring boxes and the substrate so that the flooring does not absorb moisture during acclimation.

### **Post-Installation/Maintenance:**

- During the first three days after installation, the radiant heat system temperature should be maintained at a temperature of 65° F (18° C). After that, the temperature can be set warmer, by 5° F per hour to a maximum operation temperature of 85° F (29° C).
- The temperature of the sub-floor must never exceed 85° F (29° C).
- When turning off the radiant heat system, it must cool by a temperature of 1.5° Fahrenheit per day. Never turn your radiant system off suddenly.
- The radiant heat system cannot fluctuate in temperature rapidly. Room temperature should vary no more than +/-7 degrees Fahrenheit year around.

## Moldings Installation Notes

Always ensure to use an adhesive that is not water or latex based when gluing moldings and stair pieces down. Using an adhesive that releases moisture will damage the moldings and cause splitting, cracking and possibly warping. We recommend that you use Titebond Premium Wood Glue – or a similar adhesive – to glue down your moldings. Once a transition molding is glued down, place a heavy object on top of the molding for a period of at least 8 hours to ensure a cohesive bond.

The only tape approved for use on moldings is 3M/Scotchguard #2080 tape. Do not use any other tape. Other tapes (including blue painter's tape) may cause finish to peel. Regardless of which tape you use, do not leave the tape on any finish surface for more than 12 hours or it will damage the finish.

Installing strand trim pieces with a nail gun can be more difficult than trim pieces made of other materials and you will need to either a) pre-drill these moldings and then nail them, b) glue them in using Titebond Premium Wood Glue or similar, or c) use a micro-pin nailer (we suggest the Bostitch Porter Cable 23 GA gun with a 1" long micro thin nail - this can be purchased directly from Bostitch or rented from a big box store).

## Maintenance & Cleaning – ACCUSEAL® POLYURETHANE FINISH

The maintenance program for our rigid core bamboo flooring is designed to be user-friendly. The latest advances in finish technology are used in our manufacturing process to help aid product performance and maintenance. The use of products like wax, water or oil soaps should be avoided.

### **Important Notes:**

- *Avoid Harsh Cleaning Agents:* Never use mineral spirits, paint thinner, turpentine or other harsh chemicals to clean your rigid core bamboo flooring, as they may damage your finish. Using Orange Glo® or other oil-based products on your bamboo flooring can also potentially damage the finish.
- *Don't Wet Mop Your Bamboo Floor:* Be sure not to use a wet mop or leave any excess water on your floor.
- *Don't Steam Mop Your Bamboo Floor:* Please note that using a steam mop on your floors will void your warranty and may cause irreparable damage. For further reading please visit this page:  
<http://flooring.about.com/od/floor-cleaning/a/How-To-Steam-Clean-Hardwood-Flooring.htm>
- *Always Test Cleaners On A Sacrificial Plank:* To be sure you will not damage your floor, always test any chemicals or cleaners on an extra/leftover flooring plank to see what the final effect will be.
- *Use A Chair Mat Under Rolling Office Chairs:* Always use a chair mat under a rolling office chair or your finish will wear away (this is true of all wood floors). Only use chair mats that are approved for use over wood flooring as some chair mats trap moisture or cause other problems that may compromise the finish.

### **Protect Your Floors:**

After your floor has been installed, floor protectors should be placed under the legs of chairs and tables. Doors leading outside should have floor mats placed both inside and out. Your floor should be cleaned weekly with the use of a suction vacuum, not abrasive rotary brush vacuums, to remove grit and debris from the surface of the flooring. Higher traffic areas may require more frequent cleaning to keep the floor free of grit and abrasive debris that can damage the floor and finish.

### **Keep a Few Planks:**

After installing your bamboo & eucalyptus floors, keep at least a few extra planks to use as possible replacement boards or to test with new cleaning solutions. (If damage occurs or the finish is dulled from using a cleaner, it is better to find out on an extra plank than on your new floor.)

### **UV / Sunlight Exposure:**

Do not cover the floors with construction paper or plastic for extended periods of time. Construction paper and other protective floor coverings have the potential to cause discoloration in all hardwood flooring because they result in uneven light absorption. Plastic membranes may cause a build-up of humidity and can result in cupping or other moisture imbalance problems.

There are few flooring types on earth that will not fade and change color over time from constant exposure to direct sunlight (and even overhead artificial lighting) for extended periods of time. We recommend installing UV protection film on all windows to help protect against fading, and frequently rotating rugs and furniture to avoid sun spots.

### **Regular Cleaning:**

For routine cleaning of your bamboo floor, any approved hardwood floor cleaning system such as Swiffer Wet Jet (with hardwood insert) or Bona Hardwood Cleaning System will work. For small stains and grit marks, you can use a damp cloth to rub them off followed by a dry cloth. For removing tough stains such as paint, adhesive residue, and gum, you can use more heavy-duty products. **We strongly suggest testing your desired cleaning product on a leftover flooring plank prior to cleaning your actual floor, to ensure that product does not damage the factory finish.**

Otherwise, you can also use a soap-based concentrate solution that is approved for pre-finished wood floors. First, use a good broom or microfiber dry mop to remove excess dirt and debris from your floor. Second, pour 1/5th of an approved hardwood floor cleaner concentrate in. Third, dip your mop into the bucket but then ensure to completely wring out all water from it leaving it only lightly damp – then use this lightly damp mop to clean the floor.

### **Surface/Finish Scratches:**

Minor scratches can occur on the surface of the floor's finish, which is designed to protect your bamboo flooring from damage. If scratches occur, first try to buff them out using a soft rag along with an acceptable hardwood floor cleaner. We have found that after a few cleanings and normal foot traffic, light scratches tend to wear away. If a scratch remains, or you have a deep scratch that looks white in color, a tested remedy is to use mineral oil or almond oil on a soft rag to rub it out.

### **Deeper Grooves & Gashes:**

Large grooves or gashes can be avoided via the use of furniture pads under the legs of all heavy furniture including tables, chairs or couches. Take all the precautions you can when moving any type of furniture on your floor to avoid damage.

Flooring professionals can repair certain gashes and gouges. They will use floor putty to fill the existing gouge and finish that small section with a new coating, but they may also be able to use urethane. Please check with your floor installer to see if this option is available to you.

Replacing damaged floor planks can be an option when you have deeper grooves/gashes in your flooring. This can be the ideal solution when you have leftover SPC/rigid core click-lock floor planks.

***Our rigid core bamboo flooring CANNOT be refinished.***

## **Additional Notes & Resources**

The NWFA has put together a job site checklist for you or your installer to fill out before, during, and after the installation of your new flooring. It's a great way to ensure the installation goes smoothly and can be filed away to use as a reference in the future. **Download and print the checklist here:** [National Wood Flooring Association: Jobsite Checklist](#)  
- *The installer avoids using this checklist at their own risk.*

Ambient will not accept responsibility for flooring damaged on installation. All installation procedures should follow Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) recommendations. For further information, contact NWFA National at 800.422.455

