

# Wood Pro Inc.

The wood floor experts

## What can you expect from your beautiful new hardwood floor?

### Why Choose Wood Flooring?

**Warmth & Beauty-** The timeless beauty of real wood flooring has the ability to instantly enhance the decor of any room in your home. Wood is also 16 times more efficient as an insulator than concrete, 415 times as efficient as steel, and 2,000 times as efficient as aluminum. Solid hardwood flooring gives a home or business foot-cushioning comfort, natural insulation, and lasting style for the life of a home.

**Health-** Real wood floors are a great choice for people with allergies because they do not trap dust, dust mites, and other allergens, making them the perfect choice for a healthy home.

**Variety-** The choice is yours! There are a variety of colors, styles and species of wood flooring available for you to choose from.

**Ease of Maintenance-** To clean your wood floor simply sweep or vacuum it on a regular basis. The occasional use of a professional wood floor cleaning product is also recommended.

**Affordable-** Because there are so many options to choose from, any budget can accommodate for a high quality, natural hardwood floor.

**Add Value to your home-** Like fine furniture, wood flooring increases in value over time. In fact, 90% of real estate agents surveyed stated that a home with wood flooring will sell more quickly and for a higher amount of money than a comparable home with any other type of flooring. And most importantly, wood floors will last a lifetime.

**Below are some of the issues that you may encounter with your wood floor if it is not installed properly. These issues are listed only to prepare you for what could occur if it is not installed according to the manufacturers instructions. Hiring a qualified dealer or installer will greatly diminish the possibility of these issues occurring.**

### Summer "Cupping" will occur when moisture is present.

An increase or decrease of moisture to the flooring environment is the ONLY thing that will cause a hardwood floor to warp or distort. Hardwood flooring is manufactured to be in balance with normal comfortable living conditions in your home- thus the '70/40 Rule'. For the best performance from your hardwood floor, maintain a living environment that is approximately 70 degrees Fahrenheit and 40 degrees relative humidity. If your floor is starting to 'cup' (in a bowl-like manner) this means there is an increased amount of moisture (below) causing the bottom of the flooring to swell, which will expand the board and raise the edges above. Even when the living conditions seem comfortable, moisture, typically from below the surface (such as a damp or flooded basement or crawl-space) is the reason for unsightly cupping. When wood flooring cups- moisture is the culprit and changes have to be made.

To correct cupping in hardwood flooring, decrease relative humidity using a dehumidifier and heat. Dehumidifiers work best when connected to a drainage hose that can take water away from the flooring environment. Dehumidifiers that use drainage pails often fill quickly, shutting off the unit leaving it ineffective. When the environment gets closer to 70degrees Fahrenheit at 40% relative humidity, within 72 hours you should begin to see the cupping subside. Areas below hardwood flooring like crawl spaces and basements should be well ventilated. Using an exhaust vent on a timer (much like those required in bathrooms) can help reduce airborne moisture issues. Placing 6-mil black plastic sheeting over earthy ground cover (crawl spaces and dirt basements) will assist in deflecting moisture away from the hardwood flooring above. Making sure rain diverters like gutters and drain pipes are clear and moving rain water away from foundations, basements, and crawl spaces will greatly reduce the amount of airborne moisture that can accumulate below your hardwood flooring.

Other contributors to below-grade moisture are: Sprinkler systems and lawn irrigation, cracked foundation, high water tables, inoperable sump pumps, leaky or sweaty plumbing, leaky door seals, leaky dishwashers and icemakers. Even the geography of your home such as lake and oceanfront property will experience higher-than-normal relative humidity levels. If a wood floor begins to 'buckle' or rise from it's sub floor- call a professional wood floor installer immediately to assess the situation. Slight cupping that occurs in summer months, and then flattens during winter, is considered normal.

**Are gaps in my floor normal during the heating months? YES!**

Well, 'tis the season... the season for cracks in your hardwood flooring. When the temperature drops, the heat goes on and the humidity goes bye bye. That's when the phone calls start coming in: "This floor is brand new, why am I getting cracks? Can you send someone from the factory out? I have gaps everywhere." The calls will continue until the heat goes off and the humidity returns.

Let me reassure you that not only are gaps common at this time of year, but they are almost welcome. If you have a tight floor in winter, there is a good chance you will have compression the following summer, and that's bigger trouble. It has been said that here in New England we have two seasons, July and Winter, or in wood terms, heating and non-heating seasons. There are several other reasons for cracks in floors that have little to do with moisture. Here are a few: Foundation settlement, over-drying above forced air heating ducts, and improper sub floor materials. The truth of the matter is that conditions vary greatly from site to site, but for certain, the heating months bring about the most significant changes in wood flooring and here's why as taken from the NWFA technical manual:

"Wood is an hygroscopic material. When exposed to air, it will dry or pick up moisture until it is in equilibrium with the humidity and temperature of the air in its environment. Absorption of moisture causes wood to swell. Loss of moisture causes wood to shrink. Shrinkage begins at 25-30% moisture content, the fiber saturation point. Shrinkage continues to 0% moisture content, an oven-dry state. Swelling occurs as wood gains moisture. Swelling occurs from 0% to 25-30% moisture content, the wood saturation point. Wood does not shrink or swell equally in all directions. Wood changes approximately: 0.1% along the grain and annular rings (radially) quarter sawn, and 5% to 15% across the grain parallel to the annular rings (tangentially), plane sawn.". Knowing that the majority of flooring used is plain sawn, you can see why we have so much gapping here in New England.

"If a 3/4" x 2-1/4" oak strip is exposed to an environment which changes the moisture content by 4% (i.e. from 7% to 11%) the strip may swell as much as 1/32 of an inch. The opposite is true, if a 2-1/4" strip begins at 11% moisture content and loses moisture to 7% moisture content, the strip may shrink as much as 1/32".

Moisture changes such as those here in New England can range upwards of 9%. Change as drastic as this could cause strip flooring to lose a full 1/16"! As humid as it was this summer, you can understand why gapping this heating season will be nearly unavoidable without some form of humidification system. The NWFA Technical Manual offers a more in-depth study of moisture relative to wood flooring including some helpful chart, scales and diagrams and is available through the [National Wood Flooring Association. NWFA.org](http://www.nwfa.org)

**Your wood floor will get dented if not treated properly?**

Yes, wood floors dent. High heels, dropped heavy objects, metal tips on furniture, and rolling appliances such as refrigerators or freezers across the floor can all cause dents. Prevention is the best cure for this problem. A no high heel policy, relocating heavy objects to lower cabinets, furniture protector pads and air sleds/furniture dollies will prevent all these problems. A floor that dents IS NOT an indication that there is something wrong with your floor. A common sense approach and routine cleaning, will eliminate the chance for denting and serious scratching.

**Certain Species of wood flooring will darken in color when exposed to light.**

As time goes by, normal exposure to sunlight will change the color of any hardwood floor. Shift your mats and furniture occasionally because they block sunlight. This discoloration is normal and is not due to a manufacturing fault. Customers should be informed that certain species, particularly cherry and many exotics, will change color greatly as they age.