

TECH TIPS

(By Steve Marley)

(What's Causing My Floor To Splinter?)

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SPLINTERS!!!

DEFINITION: Sharp fragment of wood separated/fractured away from the edge or face of the board protruding from the floor (National Wood Flooring Association Technical Publication Problems, Causes, And Cures C200).

All of us have received complaints from our customers and/or consumers from time to time concerning splintering and what causes them to occur? With that being said, I want to take a moment to address how and why splinters can and do occur:

Manufacturing Related: Manufacturing related splintering is usually confined to the long side (edge) of the plank and is typically caused by the profiling cutter rotating into what is known as runout grain. If the wood grain is weaken/fractured (i.e., by high winds, fungus attack, and/or during the felling of the tree), it can cause the wood to tear out along the annual growth ring resulting in what is known as grain tear-out.

Note: The good news is that this type of splintering condition is often identified during the milling process and the affected planks are culled out before being packaged. That being said, sometimes affected planks do make their way into boxes, and if/when this does occur it is the responsibility of the installer to cull out the affected plank(s), and/or cut out the damaged area which will allow them to utilize the planks as starter and/or ender boards.

Installation Related: Installation related splintering is typically caused by rough handling of the flooring material during the installation process (i.e., during the un-packaging of the material, dropping the flooring planks, stepping on the unprotected edge of the planks and/or NOT using a tapping block to drive the planks snug to one another, but rather drive the planks together by striking the planks edge with a firm rubber mallet, or sometimes a metal hammer, thereby causing a condition known as compression stress and/or compression set). **Note:** Compression related damage is clearly identifiable as the wood fibers take on a crushed, indented appearance, which can/will result in fractures along the annual growth ring resulting in wood grain tear-outs AKA splinter tear-outs, which are typically discovered during the cleaning process as they can get caught up in the cleaning pad/applicator resulting in tear-out.

Maintenance Related: Maintenance related splintering is the result of the cleaning apparatus (Usually a micro-fiber) snagging onto the run out grain, and/or wood grain that was damaged/weakened from one of the aforementioned causations.

Cleaning Tip: When cleaning the floor (Especially textured floors) with a micro-fiber, and/or when dusting the floor with a dust magnet (Dry towelett), instead of cleaning the floor parallel to the long direction of the planks, **try cleaning the floor at a 45° angle**, by doing so you are less likely to experience cleaning fiber snags on either run out grain, and/or wood grain damaged by compression related damage and/or one of the other aforementioned causations.