

## GENERAL INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAMINATE FLOORING (DROP LOCK)

### Acclimation

Acclimation is a required procedure prior to the installation of laminate flooring. Store the UNOPENED BOXES in a horizontal, flat position in the room where the floor is to be installed for at least 48 hours prior to installation, HVAC systems must be on and set between 65° - 85° F (18.3° - 29° C) and relative humidity in the room should be 35% - 65%.

### Notice to installer

Prior to and during the installation, all material should be inspected for damage and visible defects such as color and gloss variations. Any planks with faults should not be installed. These boards should be put aside and used for cuts or submitted for a product claim. Labor claims resulting from the installation of such boards will not be honored. We recommend keeping a few spare planks for future repairs.

### Tools and materials required

- Safety glasses and dust mask
- Measuring tape and square
- Table type power saw with dust collector, circular saw with (minimum 60 tooth) carbide tipped blade (thin kerf) or a power jigsaw or handsaw
- Handsaw or door jamb saw for door jambs
- Spacer blocks of plastic or wood 3/8" (10 mm) thick
- Pull bar, hammer and tapping block
- If not already attached to the plank, you will need an underlay material with a thickness of max. 1/8" (3.2 mm)
- For installations over concrete or cement type substrates, a vapor barrier is required (see "Concrete subfloor" below)

### The supporting floor

Beaulieu laminate flooring can be installed over most existing floors, wooden, PVC and concrete floors. All existing flooring should be well adhered to the substrate. Beaulieu laminate flooring cannot be installed over any existing flooring that has an attached cushion or is a floating floor. All carpeting and padding as well as adhesives from prior installation must be removed from the surface of the subfloor. Make sure that the surface is clean, dry, and flat 3/16" over 10' (4.7 mm over 3 meters). Supporting floors must be rigid as too much deflection can result in a failed installation.

### Wooden subfloors

Wooden and wood based materials such as (plywood, OSB, particle board) must be dry, (this should be checked with a moisture meter) and must not have moisture reading greater than 14%. Ensure that the boards of the subfloor are properly fastened to the supporting beams and that you do not have any squeaking or depressed areas. Patch if needed and fill depressed areas with floor leveling compound. Raised areas must be sanded down. The subfloor must be smooth, flat, structurally sound and free of deflection.

**Concrete subfloor**

All types of concrete floors, light weight concrete floors or ceramics demand a moisture inhibiting membrane (vapor barrier). Attached underlayment does not qualify as a vapor barrier. Use a polyethylene film of 6-8 mils (0.15 – 0.2 mm). This vapor barrier must be applied with a minimum of 8" (20 cm) overlap and taped with a waterproof tape and turned about 2" (5 cm) up the wall. If not already attached to the plank, you also need a separate underlay material with a maximum thickness of 1/8" (3.2 mm). A vapor barrier can be incorporated into the separate underlayment; however, this underlayment must be approved as a moisture barrier underlayment. Check with the underlayment manufacturer's specifications. Concrete subfloors must be cured for 60 days prior to installation, and should be tested for excessive moisture.

Maximum levels are:

1. Calcium chloride test of 5 lb/24hrs/1000 sq. (ASTM F1869 test)
2. Maximum 75% relative humidity (ASTM F2170)

**\*SUBFLOORS MUST BE CHECKED PRIOR TO INSTALLATION\***

**General information**

Beaulieu laminate flooring is to be installed as a floating floor, which means the boards are not to be glued or tacked in any way. Do not install cabinets or kitchen islands on floating laminate floors. Leave an expansion gap around the perimeter of the room of 3/8" (10 mm) to prevent binding of the flooring. An expansion gap should be maintained when meeting other types of flooring. This applies to any obstructions (columns, pipes, etc.) in the installation as well. Door jambs should be undercut to allow for expansion, do not force the laminate product under tight door jams. Installations greater than 40' (12 meters) lengthwise or greater than 26' (8 meters) widthwise or those with separate rooms will require the use of transition moldings to provide proper expansion space. Remove base moldings. If necessary, the boards in the first row can be cut to a narrower width to ensure the boards of the final row are at least 2" (5 cm) wide. Before installation, clean, sweep or vacuum the subfloor so it is free of dirt and debris. Check the moisture in the subfloor using a moisture meter or another approved method.

**Radiant heat**

Radiant heat systems are required to be embedded in the subfloor. The system must be operating for a minimum of 3 weeks prior to the installation of Beaulieu laminate floor. The system should be turned off at the time of the installation, or, if in winter, should be set at exactly 65° F for a minimum of 48 hours prior to installation. After the installation is complete, or when turning on the radiant heat system from a cold start, the operating temperature may be increased by a maximum of 5° F in a 24-hour period. The maximum allowable surface temperature for laminate floors is 85° F (29° C). Do not use Beaulieu laminate flooring with systems that expose the floor to wide variations in temperature, such as a wire induction mat system. The installation area of the laminate flooring shall not contain heated and non-heated areas, unless expansion joints separate them. A vapor barrier is required for all radiant heat installations. Keep in mind that loose rugs or carpets may accidentally function as heat insulators and raise the temperature to more than the tolerated maximum surface temperature of 85° F (29° C).

**Layout and measuring**

First, determine which way to run the planks. Rules of thumb are:

- Over wood and floor joist systems, run the length of the product across the floor joist system.

Over concrete the following can be used:

- Lengthwise in the longest direction of the room.
- Lengthwise perpendicular to the main source of incoming light.

To avoid straddling a door jamb with a plank, use a T-molding or measure back to the starting wall to ensure a plank connection within the door jamb area. It is recommended that you will not end up with a narrow strip at the end that is less than 2" (5 cm) wide on any wall in the room. It is recommended to cut the first and last rows so they are equal in width. Undercut all door jambs so that the flooring will easily slide underneath them. Using a scrap piece of flooring and underlayment as a guide, undercut the jambs with a jamb saw or regular handsaw. Always leave an expansion space between the flooring and all walls or other fixed objects.

**Mixing planks**

For best results it is recommended that material be mixed from four to six boxes when installing Beaulieu laminate flooring. Do not put like planks next to each other and randomly stagger end joints for best visual appeal. A 12" inch (30 cm) stagger is preferred but if this layout cannot be achieved, the absolute minimum stagger is determined by the width of the product being installed. EXAMPLE: A 6" wide board must have a minimum joint stagger of 6" plus 2" or an 8" minimum stagger.

**Cutting the planks**

When cutting laminate flooring with a circular saw, it is recommended to cut with the decorative side down. When using a table saw, jigsaw or handsaw, cut with the decorative side up.

- Remember that airborne wood dust can be an explosive hazard and an irritant to eyes, skin and the respiratory system. Use dust collectors on power tools, wear safety glasses and appropriate clothing along with approved dust mask.
- Start each row keeping in mind the minimum stagger requirements.

**INSTALLATION**

Beaulieu's laminate includes the Välinge 2 G™ Drop Lock system. The long side with the tongue needs to be angled into the receiver side of the previously installed piece. The end joints are to be overlapped (end lock placed down into the receiver).

**Getting started**

Check the boards before you start to make sure that they are not in any way damaged or have quality defects. After cleaning the subfloor you may roll out the vapor barrier and/or underlayment material (as required).

**1. First row**

Start installation of the boards in the left hand corner, tongue-side against the wall. Make sure you are placing the short side of the board 1/4" - 3/8" (6-10 mm) from the wall. The long side can be pushed into place when three rows have been assembled, keep in mind the expansion gap distance of 1/4" - 3/8" (6-10 mm). If the wall is uneven, the floorboards must be adapted to its contours. Spacers should be used at the ends of each row to insure that the proper gap is maintained. Using spacers along the length of the first row will insure that this row maintains the proper expansion gap during the entire installation.

**2. Last board in a row**

Place the last floorboard face down and the short side without the locking strip towards the wall. The distance to the wall must be 1/4" - 3/8" (6-10 mm). Mark where the floor board is to be cut.

**3. Cutting the floorboards**

Place the floorboard face down on the work surface and cut to size using a jigsaw. Use a fine-toothed type if you are using a hand saw. In this case cut the floorboards face up.

**4. Starting the second row**

Use a cut piece of board from the previous row to start the next row, keeping in mind the minimum stagger requirements. If this piece is too short, start with a new board or one cut to the correct length to yield the proper stagger. Avoid stair steps or H joints.

**5. Continue laying the floor**

Place the floorboard at an angle against the floorboard in the previous row, press forward and fold down at the same time.

**6. Take a new board**

Take a new board (see Figure 7) and push the corresponding side into the groove of the boards already in place on the floor. Push the board down properly so that it joins with side of the board already in place. For the other pieces you should do the same, put in the long side and push it down so that the two short sides are locked in together.

**7. Laying the last row**

To lay the last row, measure and cut the board. Leave 1/4" - 3/8" (6-10 mm) to the wall.

**8. Holes for pipes**

Measure the diameter of the pipe and drill a hole that is 1/4" - 3/8" (6-10 mm) larger. Saw off a piece and lay the board in place on the floor. Then install the sawed off piece in place using carpenter's glue.

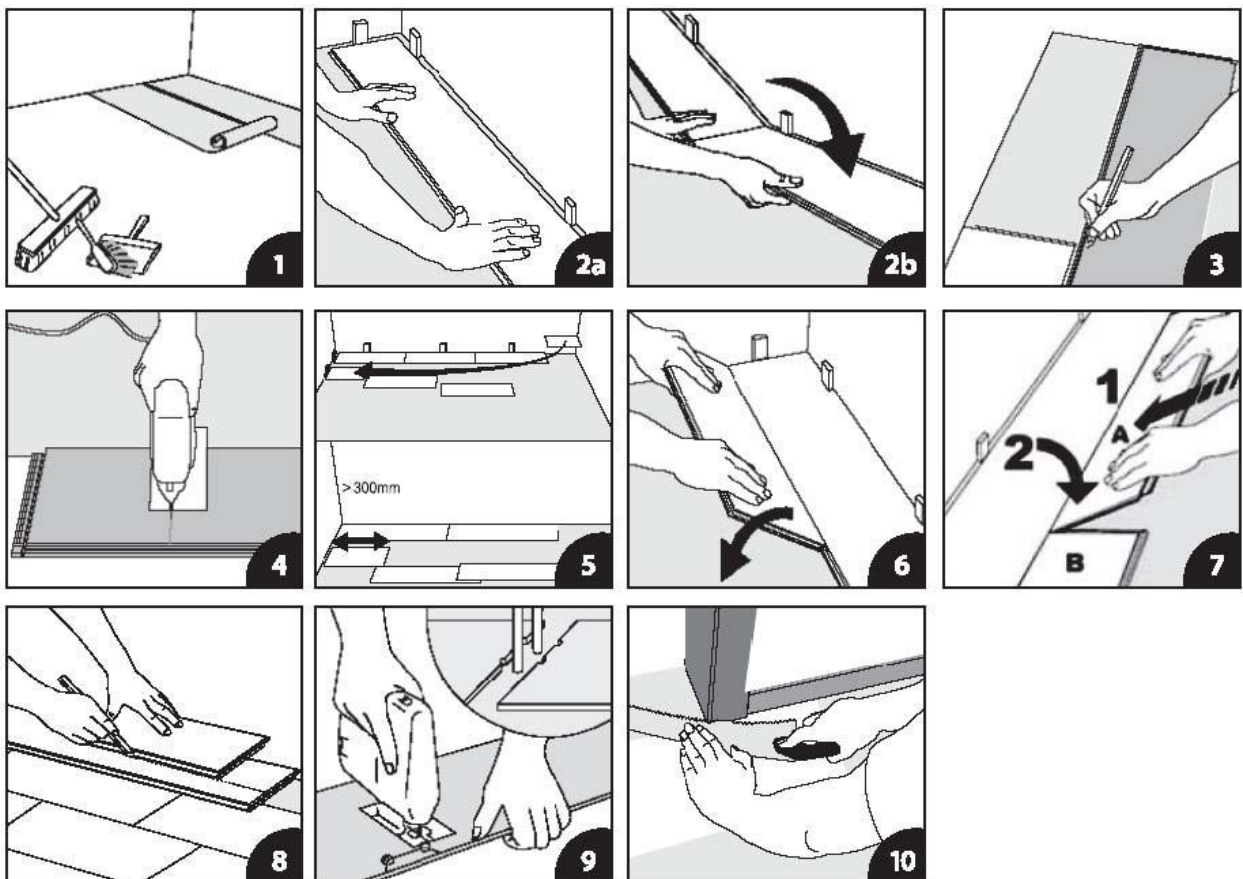
**9. Door molding and skirting**

Lay a board and any additional underlayment (with the decorative side down) next to the door molding and saw. Then slide the floorboard under the molding.

**CARE AND MAINTENANCE**

- DO NOT WAX, STEAM OR POLISH your laminate floors.
- For everyday cleaning, use a vacuum cleaner with wand attachment, a sweeping broom or a slightly dampened mop. DO NOT USE EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF WATER ON YOUR FLOORS
- Only use cleaning products that are specifically recommended for laminate floors and are certified PH neutral.
- DO NOT CLEAN YOUR FLOOR WITH ABRASIVE CLEANERS, ABRASIVE SCRUBBING PADS OR SCOURING POWDERED PRODUCTS.
- Any spills need to be removed right away.
- Use appropriate mats at entryways to collect tracked-in dirt, sand and pebbles and to absorb moisture.
- Furniture legs (chairs, tables, cabinets, etc.) should have protective pads at their base, felt pads are the preferred type but non marking PVC can be used. Both types of pads need to be maintained on a regular basis. Office chairs should have soft wheels with at least a one inch wide surface area per section. Chair pads are required under chairs with rollers.
- Care is also required whenever furniture is moved; furniture should never be dragged or slid across the floor. Use appropriate moving pads or a dolly if required.

**INSTALLATION ILLUSTRATIONS**





**GENERAL INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS  
FOR LAMINATE FLOORING (DROP LOCK)**

Please note this document may have been revised and updated. Please visit our website at [beaulieuflooring.com](http://beaulieuflooring.com) for the most up-to-date version of this document.

Warranty information as well as care and maintenance instructions can also be found on our website at [beaulieuflooring.com](http://beaulieuflooring.com) or you may contact Beaulieu Technical Services at 800-944-2840 or [tek.services@beaulieugroup.com](mailto:tek.services@beaulieugroup.com).

**Rev date 4/14/16**