

Understanding Laminate Flooring Noise: An Occupant Guide

Minimising Noise Impact

At Sandwell Council, we want tenants to enjoy a comfortable living environment. This booklet provides essential information about laminate flooring, including DEFRA guidelines and tips to minimise noise impact on neighbours.

LAMINATE FLOORING: What you need to know



Laminate flooring is a popular choice for many tenants. However, it can significantly increase noise transmission, especially in flats. This noise can cause disturbances to neighbours.

For council tenants, adding laminate flooring is considered an alteration and you **MUST** complete an [alteration request](#).

DEFRA Guidelines on Noise Control:

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) emphasises the importance of minimising noise disturbances caused by hard flooring. Their research had shown key recommendations to include:

- **Resilient Underlay:** Aim to install a high-quality underlay designed to reduce impact noise.
- **Floating Floors:** Ensure laminate flooring is installed as a "floating" layer, without nails or fixings passing through the underlay.
- **Soft Footwear:** Consider the impact footwear can make in increasing the sound of your footsteps.
- **Use of Rugs** – Consider the placement of rugs to help reduce noise in problem areas



Noise performance of common floor coverings

The best way to minimise noise of laminate flooring is by laying resilient underlay. The image below shows the performance of different floor coverings.



- Bare floor
- Laminate with no underlay
- Laminate with standard underlay
- Laminate with specialist underlay
- Foam backed vinyl
- Carpet
- Carpet with underlay

DEFRA 7 STEP Best Practice for installing laminate and wooden floors

Step 1 – lay underlay so that it lies flat and not uneven

Step 2 – ensure the underlay edges are connected and do not overlap as this will create an uneven surface for your flooring

Step 3 – lay the underlay so that it has at least 10cm extra, turned up at each perimeter wall

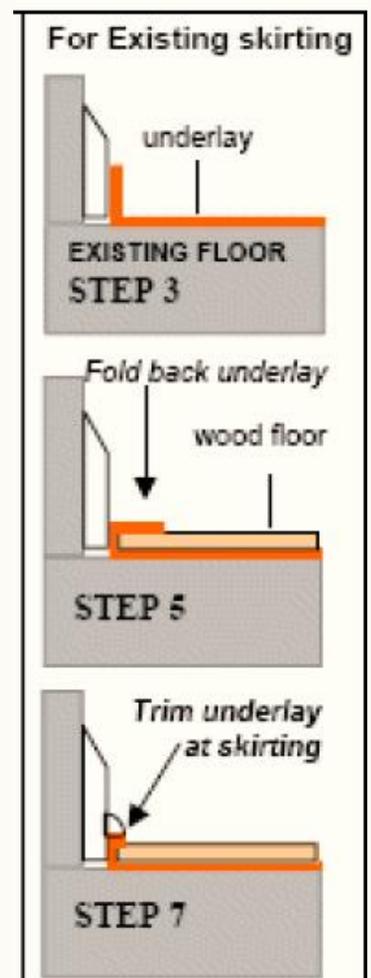
IF EXISTING SKIRTING NOT BEING REMOVED

Step 4 – lay the laminate/wood floor so that it stops at least 2cm from the wall or existing skirting

Step 5 – pull the underlay around the edge of the laminate

Step 6 – fix a small wood channel to the base of the skirting or wall, so that the underlay passes between the floor and channel.

Step 7 – trim off any underlay sticking out



DEFRA 7 STEP Best Practice for installing laminate and wooden floors

IF USING NEW SKIRTINGS OR REMOVING AND RE-USING OLD SKIRTINGS

STEP 4 – lay the laminate/wood floor so that it stops at least 2cm from the wall

STEP 5 – pull the underlay around the edge of the laminate

STEP 6 – fix the skirting to the wall, so that the underlay passes between the floor and skirting base

STEP 7 – trim off any underlay sticking out

THE IMPACT OF LAMINATE FLOORING

According to DEFRA's laminate flooring noise impact report: Excessive noise can disturb daily life and impact mental health

Consideration for Neighbours

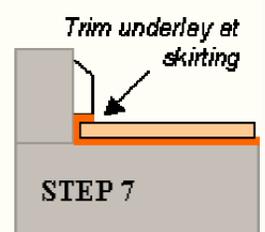
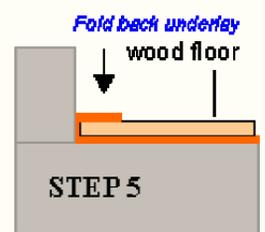
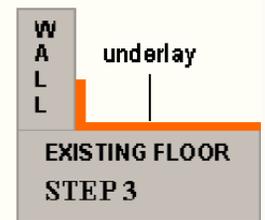
Noise disturbances can lead to disputes and stress. To maintain good relationships with your neighbours, please consider following best practice guidelines and installations tips to minimise noise impact. Please also understand how your neighbour may feel if they attempt to communicate their concerns.

ALL property types can be affected by the noise of laminated and wooden flooring:

- In detached houses, the noise may impact you and your family.
- In semi detached and terraced houses noise can travel, and neighbours may be affected by shared walls
- The property type most affected are flats and apartments.

In all instances it is best to follow the DEFRA best practice for installing laminate wooden floors

For New Skirting



Reminders and :

For Council Tenants:

Installing laminate flooring in a Sandwell Council property is considered an [alteration request](#). Alteration requests are subject to approval.

If flooring is installed without the council's permission, you may be asked to remove it. Any re-install of your flooring, which will be carpets if laminate flooring is rejected, will be at your own expense.

Useful Resources

You can read more information at:

[DEFRA guide for the control of noise of laminate flooring](#)

[Tenancy Conditions](#)

