

Hardwood Wood Floors: Performance, Expectations

One of the leading causes of customer dissatisfaction with their hardwood floor is that the floor does not live up to expectation. No matter how experienced the installer, how good an install that he/she performs or what the quality of the hardwood is; there are number of things that can be expected from a hardwood floor.

- Hardwood Floors will dent: the term "hardwood" is relative to "softwood" as far as a comparison in terms of hardness. Hardwood floor will dent from impact with "high heel" shoes, furniture sliding across the floor and even your pet's nails. No finish that is applied to the hardwood will prevent the dents but the finish must contour to the dent to protect the hardwood from moisture and household use. Scratching the finish with any abrasive or sharp object is not considered normal use or wear.

- Hardwood is not a monochromatic product: hardwood, since it is a natural product, will vary in appearance from one board to the next. It is not a manufactured product but is milled from kiln-dried wood that comes from a tree. It will have grain and color variations consistent with the grade and species of the selected hardwood flooring.

- Hardwood may "gap": although the hardwood floor "strips" may start tight together it will since it is a natural product, continue to absorb and release moisture. The "hygroscopic" process causes the hardwood to expand and contract from season to season with the changes of humidity in the environment. As a result, some gaps may

appear between some of the individual boards in the floor.

It is critical to the performance of the hardwood floor that the house temperature remains between 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit and the interior house humidity be within the range of 35-55 percent moisture content.

- Species characteristics: each species of hardwood reacts differently to temperature, humidity, and sunlight and will continue to expand and contract at different rates as well darken and lighten as the UV rays from the sun react with the wood. Each Species has a different degree of hardness and will dent to varying degrees depending on the hardness of the species.

- Maintenance of the floor: each hardwood floor needs to be maintained on a regular basis to avoid excessive deterioration and damage to the finishes and the hardwood itself. Regular sweeping, vacuuming or mopping with a dry mop are recommended to assure that sand, grit and other debris do not damage the surface of the flooring.

Damp mopping with manufacturer-approved cleaners is recommended to maintain the hardwood floor's original appearance and luster. Place a mat or area rug at all entries or high use areas to protect the floor's finish from excessive wear.

SUBMITTED BY GERALD RUPPER FROM FLOOR TO CEILING

Digging Soon? Make A Call To 811

(ARA) - It's that time of year again. All across the country, homeowners can finally put away the snow shovel, put on a pair of shorts and venture out into their yards with a digging shovel for an adventure in home improvement.

Now that the weather is getting warmer, Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the association dedicated to protecting underground utilities and the people who dig near them, reminds homeowners and professional diggers that calling 811 is the first step to protect everyone from the risk of unintentionally damaging an underground line.

Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811, which connects you to your local one-call utility notification center. Installing a mailbox, building a deck and planting

a tree or garden are all examples of digging projects that should only begin a few days after making a call to 811.

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1. One free, simple phone

■ 811, Page 12 please

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