Basingstoke and Deane

Noise associated with laminate and wood flooring

This guide provides highlights the potential noise issues of a hard floor and some advice to help combat them.

Hard flooring surfaces such as timber laminates, sanded floorboards and ceramic tiles have become increasingly popular leading to an increase in the number of noise disturbances to neighbours, especially for residents in apartments and fats.

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Apartments and flats

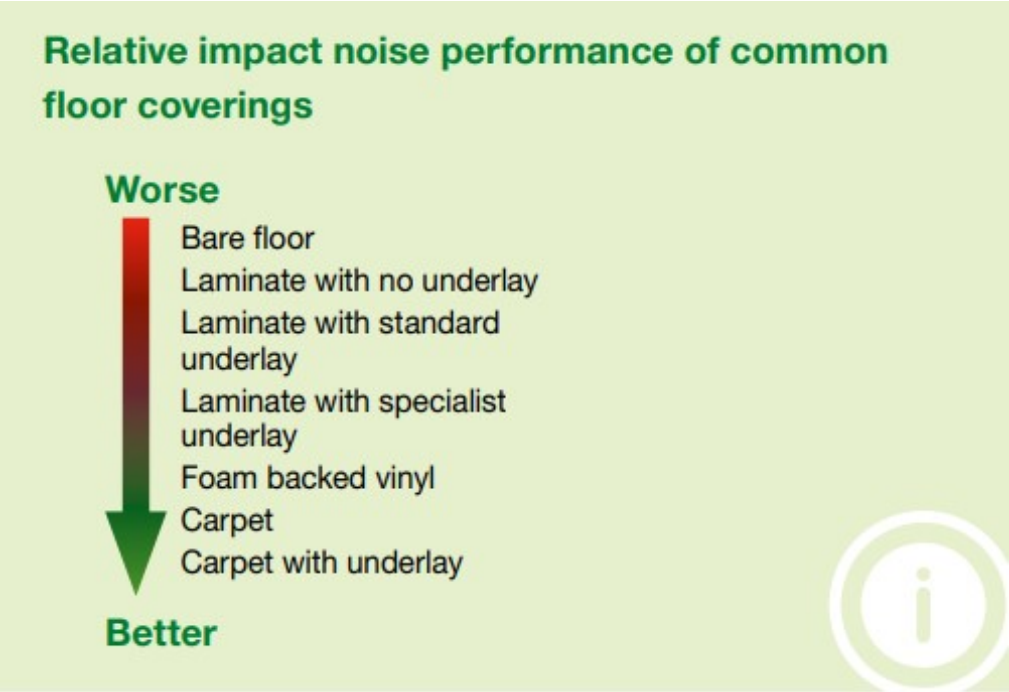
Research has shown that when a carpet is removed and replaced with wood or laminate flooring the noise your neighbour in the property below experiences can increase significantly.

If you live in a flat or an apartment and do not have any properties below, this will generally not cause noise issues (see best practice for installation for houses).

The removal of carpet in your home could change the noise environment of your neighbour's home – especially those below you - from relatively quiet to unbearable. Noise nuisance can lead to significant distress for occupants and tension and disputes between neighbours. It can also result in legal action being taken against you. To avoid disturbing your neighbour you should install a resilient underlay under your laminate floor. Extensive use of rugs in areas where you walk a lot will also help. Wearing soft soled shoes, such as slippers, will also reduce the amount of noise you generate.

Minimising noise transmission

If you are considering installing a laminate or wood finish floor you should minimise the amount of noise which could be heard by your neighbours. The best way of doing this is by laying a resilient underlay.



Advantages of underlays:

- they reduce noise transmission to your neighbours
- they prolong the life of your laminate or wood floor
- they reduce noise and vibration in your own home
- they allow the floor to be more resilient and reduce injuries to children and the elderly when they fall

Seven step best practice

Installing laminates and wood floors

Step 1 Lay your underlay so that it lies flat and not uneven.

Step 2 Ensure the underlay edges are abutted and do not overlap as this will create an uneven surface for your laminate/wood floor.

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

If existing skirting is 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.

Installing laminates and wood floors

Step 7 Trim off the protruding underlay.

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 the protruding underlay.

Attached houses

Noise transmission can occur horizontally if wood or laminate floor finishes are able to touch the shared party wall between the houses. To reduce the possibility of complaints the seven step guide should also be followed.

Detached houses

To reduce noise transmission within your own home using such floor finishes the seven step guide should also be followed.

Renting a house or apartment

If you rent your dwelling from a housing association, registered social landlord or private owner you should check your lease or rental agreement and contact the appropriate person to check if laminate or wood finish floors are permitted to be installed. If you install such flooring without the appropriate permission you may be asked to remove it and re-install carpets at your expense.

What to do in the event of problems

By far the best way to resolve problems with noise from neighbours is through talking to your neighbours and explaining your concerns. It is more than likely that they are unaware of the problem and will be happy to discuss a solution. Suggest that if an underlay has not been installed that the floor be lifted and one installed. Alternatively laying rugs on the area of the floor where problems are most experienced may be less costly and would be far more effective at reducing the noise level.

An alternative solution could be to consider mediation.

A guidance to mediation (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-guide-to-civil-mediation)

If mediation has not been successful you can contact the council to make a noise complaint by using our online form:

Inform us about a noise nuisance (/report-nuisance)

Or telephone **01256 844844**

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm
Closed bank holidays

Text phone and Minicom users: dial 18001 followed by 01256 844844 to contact us via the Relay UK service.

Contact details

Environmental Health team

If you have an enquiry, send a message to the Environmental Health team

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