

# Installation Instructions

imagine™  
floors by Airstep.

Soleil

HYBRID

## Preparation

These instructions are intended to assist in achieving an optimum installation and that of best practice. Any variation to these instructions by installers may affect the warranty. Soleil Hybrid floors must be installed using a floating floor system and should not be adhered, nailed or pinned in any way to the subfloor or structure.

Floating floor installation systems should NOT be used if any type of loads are likely to exceed 200kg per object area or if the load is greater than 30kg/cm<sup>2</sup> – In this case, we recommend only direct stick products should be considered.

## Pre-Installation Checks

It is the installer's responsibility prior to commencing installation to verify that the product and accessories supplied are the correct product, colour, pattern and quantity. Prior to installation, each plank should be carefully checked in good natural light for any obvious visual defects. Never install defective product. If the product is incorrect or has any visual defects or damage, contact your nearest retailer. Airstep Flooring will not be responsible for any visible defects after the flooring has been cut and/or installed.

## Site Testing and Conditioning

Concrete subfloors must be tested in accordance with AS1884-2012 for moisture using the relative humidity in-situ probe test. RH levels can be up to 95%. Generally, Soleil Hybrid Floors do not need to be acclimatised. However, if boxes are exposed to extreme temperatures within the 12 hours prior to installation, please refer to the Extreme Temperatures note below.

## Extreme Temperatures Prior to Installation

Should your Soleil Hybrid Floor be exposed within the 12 hours prior to installation for over 2 hours to extreme temperatures (under 5°C or over 50°C) (which may be due to storage in vehicles or transport to site), acclimatisation is required at a room temperature between 18°C to 28°C for a minimum of 12 hours, in unopened packages prior to installation. Ensure individual stacks are no more than 3 packs high and they are spaced at least 200mm apart to allow airflow between stacks. The temperature must remain between 18°C to 28°C for the entire installation period and a minimum of 48 hours after installation completion. The ambient relative humidity in the installation area should be maintained at 30-60% to prevent condensation forming under the laid flooring.

## Subfloor Testing and Preparation

Subfloors must be clean, dry, flat & structurally sound.

Concrete floors should be checked with a straightedge 2m long. When the straight edge is placed at rest on the subfloor no part of the surface shall be more than 3mm below the length of the straightedge.

Depressions and cracks must be filled using a suitable approved levelling compound in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All irregularities must be levelled.

Timber, plywood and particleboard subfloors, must be checked for any loose boards/panels or excessive deflection or movement. If loose boards are found or movement is excessive, the subfloor should be repaired and damaged boards replaced, then if required, sanded to a level, smooth and dust free surface.

The floor can be installed over most existing floor covering (e.g. ceramic tiles, linoleum, PVC etc.) provided the floor is flat, dry and in the case of ceramics in a residential installation, grout line tolerances are no more than 3mm wide and 3mm deep. Otherwise grout joints should be filled to the level of the tiles with a suitable leveler. Carpet, carpet underlay and/or existing floating floors are **not** a suitable subfloor.

## Underfloor Heating

Soleil Hybrid Flooring is suitable for installation with underfloor heating provided the heating system selected is a Hydronic In-slab system and is installed and operated as per the heating system manufacturer's installation and operating recommendations. See further pre-laying instructions below.

Soleil Hybrid Flooring should never be installed over any electrical radiant heating system - the speed of sudden temperature changes having the potential to negatively affect the floor.

## Hydronic Radiant Underfloor Heating System

Before installing Soleil Hybrid Flooring with underfloor radiant heat systems, operate the system at maximum capacity for a minimum of 7 days to force any residual moisture from the cementitious topping of the radiant heat system. The moisture content of the screed prior to installation must be less than 1.5% (CM method). Shut down the floor heating at least 48 hours prior to installation. Make sure that the temperature in the room is at least 15°C during installation. It is recommended that the radiant heat be applied in a gradual manner (no more than 2°C per day) after installing the Hybrid Flooring. After installation, ensure the surface temperature of the subfloor never exceeds 27°C.

## Underlay

Your Soleil Hybrid Floor has its own pre-adhered acoustically rated (BCA compliant) 1 to 1.5mm underlay so there is no need for additional underlay.

The use of additional underlay/cork will negatively impact the performance of the installed floor and locking system.

## Wet Areas

Although Soleil Hybrid Flooring is waterproof it should not be used as a moisture barrier, and should not be installed in areas that have a continual risk of excessive moisture/flooding such as saunas or outdoor areas.

If your Soleil Hybrid Floor is being installed in a wet area (e.g. bathroom, laundry etc.) follow the instructions set out in the Installation procedure.

Additionally:

Separate/isolate the wet area from the balance of the floor/area with an expansion trim or similar at the doorway or other adjoining areas.

Seal the perimeter expansion gap of 6mm to 10mm using a bathroom grade silicone to prevent moisture seeping under the floor do not allow water to pool on the floor for long periods of time. Wet towels or bath mats should never be left on the floor to dry.

## Perimeter/Expansion Gaps

A perimeter expansion gap of no less than 8mm to 10mm must be maintained against all fixed vertical surfaces (e.g. walls, kick plates, cabinets, sliding doors, island benches, plumbing fixtures etc.) For installation over large areas or in between multiple rooms that exceed a total of 30m in length or 15m in width, an 8mm to 10mm expansion gap is required within the floor area or between rooms. A trim or skirting/scotia can be used to cover this gap, ensuring the floor is not pinned to the substrate or vertical surfaces. Silicone or caulking compound is not recommended.

Note: For installations that include the floor passing through possible pinch-points, for example doorways and transitional areas from smaller passageways to larger rooms, consideration should be given to additional perimeter expansion allowance at these points.

## Tools Required

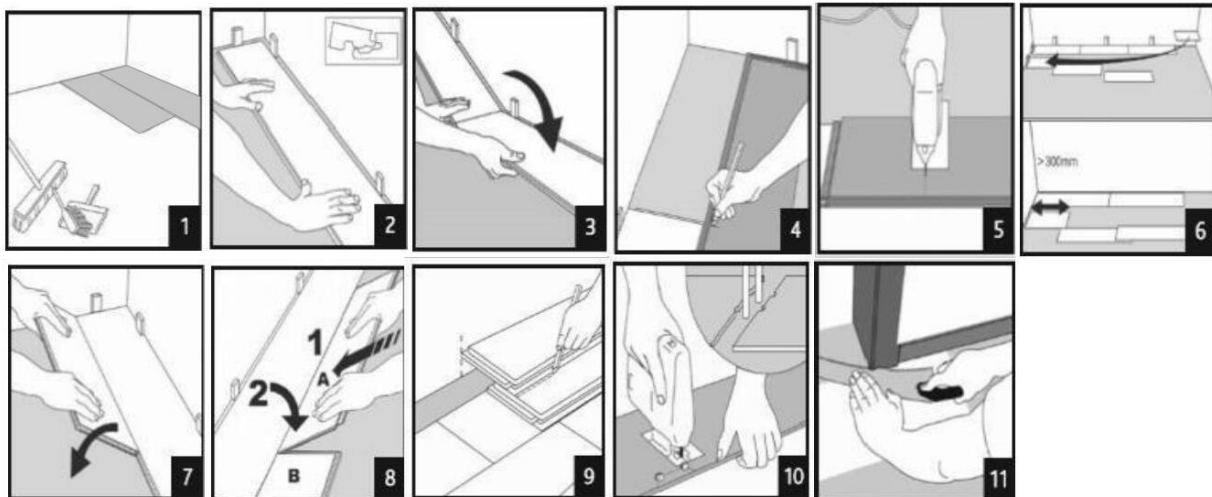
• 8mm to 10mm Spacers • Jig Saw • Utility Knife • Straight Edge • T-Square • Pull Bar • Pencil • Tape Measure • Safety Glasses. As a floating floor, the floor should not be adhered, nailed or pinned in any way to the subfloor or structure.

## Installation

1. Prepare the subfloor in accordance with Australia Standard 1884-2012 and as set out in these instructions.
2. Plan the direction of the area to be installed to maximise the visual appearance once installed. The direction of the tile/plank grain should be confirmed and the installation should be balanced from the centre of the area to minimise waste.
3. Measure the room and estimate the number of rows required. If the last row is not at least 50mm wide, the first row should be cut so that the first and last rows are similar in width.
4. To minimise shade variation, mix and install product from several different packs alternately. After laying a small quantity of product, view from a distance that allows you to clearly see the overall effect. If there is any doubt cease installation immediately and contact your nearest retailer.
5. Once the subfloor is prepared, start installation from the left corner of the room, put the first plank in place using spacer blocks against the walls to maintain the appropriate expansion gap so both the end and side seam grooves are facing outwards. Planks are to be installed from left to right. To assist in laying the first row straight, the use of masking tape across each short end locking system is recommended. Continue this for the first two rows and remove after completion of installation. (Fig 1-2)
6. Install the second plank in the first row by laying the short-end tongue onto the previously installed plank short-end groove. Lock the planks together by pressing down over the join, or lightly tap using a soft, white No. 2 rubber mallet to vertically engage the lock. You will feel the planks lock together as the end join engages. Care must be taken to properly line up the end join and NEVER force the join while out of alignment, otherwise this could result in permanent damage to the end groove. (Fig 2-3)

7. Continue in this manner for the rest of the first row. The last plank in the row should be cut to length while maintaining the appropriate expansion gap along the perimeter of the room or fixed vertical surfaces. (Fig 4-5)
8. Use the off cut from the last board in the first row (min length 150mm) or cut a plank that is at least 150mm shorter than the first plank to start the second row. Install the first plank in the second row by inserting the long side tongue into the groove of the plank in the first row at a low angle to the installed plank. Then firmly lower the plank while maintaining a slight pressure toward the installed plank. The planks should fit snugly together and lay flat maintaining the appropriate expansion gap along the perimeter of the room or fixed vertical surfaces. (Fig 6)
9. To install the remaining planks in the second row, first align the long edge tongue into the groove of the previous row at an angle. Slide the plank to the left until it meets the previously installed plank. Firmly lower the plank while maintaining a slight pressure towards the installed piece. The planks should fit snugly together and lay flat. Engage the short edge joint as per first row. (Fig 7-8)
10. Work across the length of the room installing all planks in the second row.  
It is critical to keep these first two rows straight and square, as they are the “foundation” for the rest of the installation. Check often for squareness and straightness while installing the floor as failure to do so can result in gapping.
11. Continue installing, being certain to maintain a random pattern repeat, assisted by offsetting end joins by at least 150mm. Maintain the appropriate expansion gap against all fixed vertical surfaces.
12. Check to be certain all planks are fully engaged; if slight gapping is noticed or the planks will not lay flat, simply disengage the long side joint and then carefully slide the short/end joint apart. Do not pull up on this joint as it will damage the locking mechanism! Reinstall the plank. (Fig 9-11)
13. The last row (possibly the first row) plank width should be no less than 50mm on the long side. Remember to allow for the appropriate expansion gap to the wall.
14. Install wall mouldings and door transition mouldings last. Be sure that all mouldings are fastened directly to the wall or subfloor; do not place any fasteners through the floating flooring. Care must be taken when fitting wall mouldings that they do not push down on the floor. This will affect the floors ability to expand and contract and may lead to product failure.

**NOTE:** If necessary, to disassemble your Soleil Hybrid Floor, separate the whole row by lifting it up carefully at an angle. To separate the planks, leave them flat on the ground and slide them apart. If planks do not separate easy, you can slightly lift up the planks (15°) when sliding them apart. (Fig 9-11)



**For Care & Maintenance of your Soleil Hybrid Floor, please refer to the Cleaning, Care & Maintenance guide.**

#### Post Installation

If construction works are still underway, the floor should be protected from site debris, dirt, soil, traffic etc. by use of a protective surface (e.g. sheet plastic, hard boards). Please be careful to ensure no condensation occurs and any adhesive tape or protective material does not affect the aesthetics of the finished installation. Use window coverings to protect the floor from heat and fading under direct sunlight. Dramatic temperature fluctuation of the floor could cause joints to lip or gaps to occur and is not covered by the warranty.

These guidelines are intended to assist in achieving an optimum installation. Any variation to the recommendations above may affect any warranties. For further information, please contact your local retailer.