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FLOORING

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GAPS NORMAL AND ABNORMAL

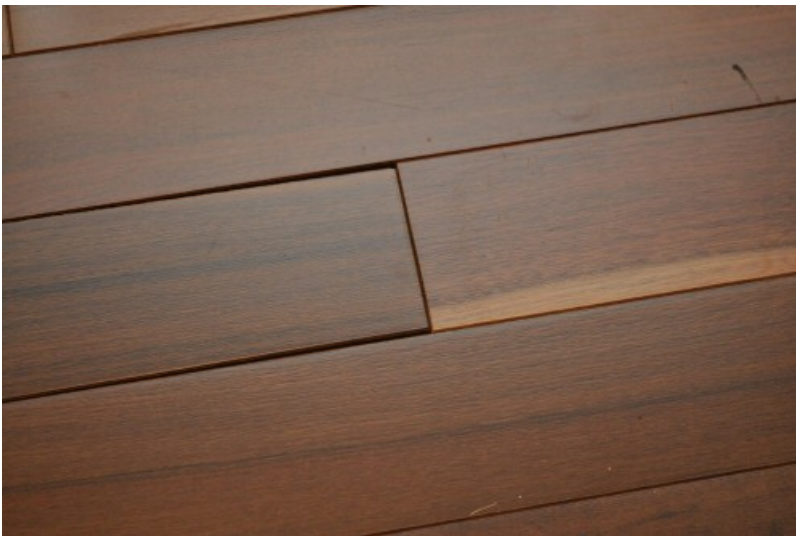
Gapping is the space between installed strips/planks in wood flooring on either the ends or sides, usually the long sides of the boards. Gapping is permanent, normal or abnormal as stated by the (NWFA) National Wood Flooring Association.

Most normal gaps are caused by seasonal fluctuations in relative humidity; the floor expands with high humidity and contracts during periods of low humidity. Domestic hardwoods, Oak, Maple, Cherry and Hickory will contract in low humidity, but once the warmer weather comes back the wood will go back together. Should the gaps close or close to 1/32", they are considered normal. Normal gaps are not easily noticed from a standing position.

Normal gaps can be minimized by using the HVAC system to control fluctuations in humidity in the building. The use of humidifiers or dehumidifiers can narrow the overall fluctuation range.

Permanent gaps appear during the first year of installation usually during the fall/winter months right into spring. Exotic hardwoods are prone to permanent gapping since most of them contain high levels of moisture and are improperly acclimated at the job site.

In order to avoid gapping in any hardwood floor, the installer and homeowner must follow a few simple rules.



The Installer should not install the hardwood flooring until the wood and subfloor are within 2% for hardwood 3" or wider; and 4% for wood less than 3". The relative humidity should be between 40% and 60% at the time of installation.

The Homeowner must maintain relative humidity between 40% and 60% year round. All doors and windows must remain closed during the life of the hardwood floor.