

## How moisture affects your hardwood flooring

# MOISTURE AND THE FLOORING



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Wood flooring is a natural product that responds to humidity variation by expanding and contracting. Sometimes these changes may be noticeable. During warm and humid summers wood expands. During dry weather wood contracts. This seasonal movement is normal for wood flooring. The best way to reduce this movement or even hide it completely, is to install humidity controls and make sure they function before the flooring is installed.

### In winter time

In winter, when homes are heated and the air is dry, wood flooring gives up some moisture and, therefore, shrinks. When it happens, thin gaps can appear between planks. This is normal, and a homeowner should be prepared for this. Once indoor heat goes off in the spring and indoor environment regains moisture, most of these gaps will close up. To avoid these separations try to add moisture to the air during dry period. The best way is to install humidifier in the furnace or moveable humidifier in the room with good air circulation. If humidity does not go lower than 45%, no separations will appear at all. To keep permanent control over humidity in the house, install simple humidity meter, so you can constantly monitor humidity level in your house.

### In summer time

During warm and humid summers, when indoor humidity can rise up to 90%, the opposite occurs. Wood absorbs moisture from the air and, therefore, expands. If wood flooring is exposed to extensive humidity even for a couple of days, it can cup. Cupping means that edges of a board are higher than its center. It can also occur after water is spilled onto the floor and is absorbed by the wood. After cupping has occurred, it takes a while for humidity to return back to normal. It is very important to be certain before installation that humidity level on the job site is within allowed range 45-55%.

In extreme cases, if wood expands significantly, boards get under enormous pressure from adjoining boards. As a result, boards can lose structural integrity and crack. To prevent cupping do not allow humidity rise over 60%. Keep air conditioner or dehumidifier running during humid summers.

### Cupping

If you see cupping in your solid hardwood flooring, first, identify and eliminate the moisture source. It can be a plumbing leak in the basement, the terrain of the lot with rain and runoff not moving away from the house or indoor humidity may need to be controlled.

After the source of moisture is eliminated cupping can usually be cured. If cupping is moderate, the floor may improve on its own as it dries out over time. If cupping is excessive, floor may need to be sanded and refinished. Be certain that the floor has thoroughly dried before sanding.

If sanded at the wrong time, before moisture content returns to normal and boards have flattened, crowning may occur. Crowning means that the center of the boards will appear higher than the edges.

# HOW TO CLEAN YOUR FLOORING



#### Daily:

**Frequently** sweep or vacuum floors to prevent dirt and dust from scratching the finish. Use only brush or felt type vacuum head. Be certain the wheels of the vacuum do not damage the finish.

#### Weekly:

**Frequently** scatter rugs to remove dirt and grit.

#### Periodically:

**Periodically** clean with COSWICK hardwood floor cleaner to preserve the shine on your flooring. Buy and use "floor care kit" that your COSWICK dealer recommends instead of counting on any household remedy to clean your floors.

## FLOORING CARE TIPS



### Flooring care tips



Before putting furniture on hardwood floors, attach adequate floor protection (felt pads) to the feet of all furniture to reduce scratches and dents. When moving heavy furniture, place a blanket or a scrap of carpet, face down, under each leg; slide furniture carefully.



- Keep shoes in good repair. If they lose their protective caps, they will dent the surface. Avoid high-heel shoes. Keep pet nails trimmed, paws clean and free of dirt and grease.



Avoid exposing your floors to sunlight. Exposure to sunlight can change color of your floors. Rearrange your rugs and furniture periodically to avoid color change in your floors.



Never use wet mop and do not clean COSWICK hardwood floors with water. This can dull the finish and permanently damage your floor and will void your warranties. Use only cleaning product recommended by COSWICK dealers.



Never use wax or oil-based detergents. They will dull or damage finish, leaving greasy spots and making the floor difficult to clean.



Use area rugs in heavily traveled areas, especially if you have a large family.



Place rugs at all entrances, as well as by kitchen sink and dishwasher.



Remove spills promptly using soft cloth with appropriate cleaning product.



Maintain humidity level between 45-55% at all time.