



Expanko Resilient Flooring  
1000 East Park Avenue | Maple Shade, NJ 08052  
800.345.6202 | sales@expanko.com | www.expanko.com



## FLOATING FLOOR AND GLUE DOWN INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT 800.345.6202**

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

Please read these instructions thoroughly before starting an installation.

Vallarex Cork Floating Floors can be installed over many different substrates including plywood, concrete and existing floor coverings that are smooth, level (1/8" in 10') and clean. All sub-floors must be in good condition and structurally sound. Vallarex may be installed on grade, above and below grade. Vallarex can also be installed as a glue down system using Expanko recommended adhesives.

**Do not install Vallarex over carpet, or in bathrooms with showers or tubs. Wood floors installed over concrete must be removed prior to installing Vallarex since moisture could be trapped under the wood resulting in installation problems or failure.**

If material is to be installed on a radiant heated sub-floor, the radiant heat system must be activated 1 week prior to installation, regardless of outdoor temperature. Two days before installation, the heating system must be reduced to a temperature of 64°F. After the installation is complete, begin gradually over a period of one week to raise the temperature of the heating system to its desired operating level. **Surface temperature should never exceed 84°F.**

Cork is a natural product and like all natural products, is subject to shade variations, fading and indentations. **Shade variations in cork are inherent and add beauty to this product.** *The Vallarex collection is a natural products and some shade variation is an inherent and attractive characteristic. To achieve the most pleasant blend of shades, shuffle before laying.* When subjected to sunlight, cork visuals will fade. In areas where rugs and furniture are placed on cork, fading will not occur and contrast will occur when moved. Fading is not considered a product defect. Furniture and appliances may cause indentations which when moved may not recover 100%. Stiletto high heel shoes may cause indentations that will not fully recover. Indentations will not reduce the life of the floor.

### SUB-FLOOR PREPARATION:

SUB-FLOOR MUST BE PREPARED SO THAT IT IS SMOOTH AND LEVEL. HOLLOW SPOTS OR VOIDS IN THE SUB-FLOOR CAN CAUSE DAMAGE TO THE FLOATING FLOOR IF LEFT UNFILLED.

**Level Tolerance** - 1/8" in 10 Feet

**Moisture Emissions Level** - Must be less than 5 lbs/1000 ft<sup>2</sup>/24 hours as tested using a calcium chloride test or have a moisture content of less than 4.5% (concrete). Wood sub floors shall have moisture content less than 14%.

The existing sub-floors must be swept/vacuumed and clean of dirt and debris. Patch low areas using acceptable filler and scrape or sand high spots to bring the sub-floor within a tolerance of 1/8" level in 10'.

Prior to installation, remove all existing wall base (or quarter round only) and undercut doorframes to allow floating floors to slide under them.

After the sub-floor has been prepared, a vapor barrier and/or acoustical cork underlayment may be advisable depending upon the condition and needs of the installation site. A vapor barrier is required for all installations over concrete even when covering existing vinyl floor covering. Install a 6 mm polyethylene vapor barrier overlapping each sheet 8" onto the adjacent sheet. Pull the vapor barrier up the wall at least two inches. In cases where concrete sub-floor moisture is greater than 5lbs/1000 ft<sup>2</sup>/24 hours a moisture emissions control product must be applied. *Never install Vallarex floating floors with without using a PE moisture barrier film with a minimum thickness of 0.2 mm (.008").*

Although Vallarex comes standard with a layer of cork attached to the bottom side of the plank, acoustical cork underlayment can be installed in areas where additional sound control is desired.

#### **KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL INSTALLATION:**

Upon receipt of material verify you received the correct pattern. Place material back in the original cartons. Cork is a natural product and should not be left out of cartons for extended time prior to installation.

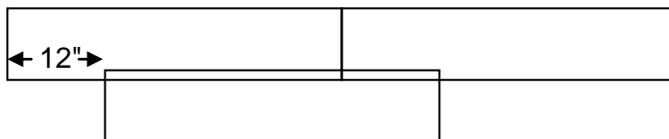
#### **DO NOT INSTALL FLOOR IF PLANKS ARE DEFORMED OR IRREGULAR IN ANYWAY. STOP AND CALL EXPANKO TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY AT 800.345.6202.**

Maintain job site temperature between 65°F and 75°F and humidity constant between 45% and 65% for 72 hours prior to, during, and after installation.

Acclimate materials **in their cartons** on site 48 to 96 hours prior to installation with relative humidity between 45% and 65%; if humidity is above or below this range, installation should be delayed until proper conditions are met or acclimation should be extended to no less than 96 hours if room will remain at the measured humidity level. Do not put near direct heat or air conditioning.

Cork has shade variations. Blending of shades is the responsibility of the installer. **Claims will not be accepted based upon shade variation after installation.**

Vallarex Floating Floors are to be laid in an ashlar pattern (staggered joints) as shown below. End joints need to be a minimum of 12" from joints on adjacent rows. Leave a 3/8" to 1/2" gap between all walls and vertical obstructions and the flooring material to allow for expansion of the floor.



#### **MEASURE AND PLAN FLOOR LAYOUT PRIOR TO BEGINNING TO INSTALL**

1. The lay out of the floor should take into account incoming light, traffic patterns and the typical line of sight in the room. Installing the floor parallel to these factors will maximize the look of

your floor. For halls, the installation usually looks best when planks are installed parallel to the longest wall.

2. Measure the width of the room. If the measurement is not an exact multiple of the width of the planks plus the expansion distance, you will need to cut the last row making it narrower than the other rows. If the last row is narrower than 6", scribe the first row to follow the contour of the wall. You will need to cut a sufficient amount off the first row so that the last row will be 6" or more inches.
3. If the area of installation is greater than 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> or spans a distance greater than 30 linear feet, an expansion joint shall be installed in the floor. In addition, any doorways also require a transition strip. The expansion joint shall be at least ¼" wide and shall be covered with "T" molding to allow for expansion and contraction of the floor. Be sure that the molding is attached to the sub-floor only and is wide enough to cover the floor if it contracts.

## FLOATING FLOOR INSTALLATION:

Besides a saw, other tools/materials needed to install Vallarex, are tapping blocks, pull bars and wedges. These are all available from Expanko. **Installations done without proper tools are subject to failure and will not be covered by the Expanko Warranty.**

Planks are installed by attaching them together using a mechanical locking system, they are installed by inserting the tongue into the groove at an angle then rotating the plank downward locking it in place. Never glue or nail planks to surrounding walls. Gravity will hold the floor firmly to the sub-floor and prevent it from moving. **DO NOT FASTEN CABINETS OR ANY OTHER PERMANENT OBJECTS TO VALLAREX.**

In order to evenly distribute natural shade variation in the planks, install material carefully looking at EACH plank as it is installed to be sure it "blends" satisfactorily. Planks can be removed from one or two cartons and shade selected prior to installation to ensure uniform distribution. Never leave cork out of cartons overnight.

1. After the room has been measured and the installation has been planned, install the proper underlayment. Once done, begin to install the planks. NOTE: you can assemble the first two rows approximately two feet from the starting wall. This will allow room to work with your back toward the starting wall. Once assembled slide these rows up to the wall leaving the 3/8" to 1/2" gap.
2. Start in the corner of the room laying the floor from left to right. Remove the tongue on the end of the first plank and the tongue along the length of all planks that will be positioned against this starting wall. **Material must be installed so that there is a gap of 3/8" to 1/2" between the planks and the walls of the room.** If the starting wall is uneven or in your measuring you determine your first row cannot be full planks, trim to match the contour of the starting wall.
3. Lay the first row with the tongue sides (which are cut off) of the planks facing the wall. Install the first row and place wedges between the wall and the floor. A minimum of 2 wedges per planks must be placed along each of the planks to hold them firmly in position. This will prevent the floor from shifting during installation.
4. Attach the next plank in the first row by holding the plank at an angle and rotating downward locking the planks together. Continue this way for the entire first row. Cut the end plank of the first row to the correct length, and if possible start the second row with the left over piece. Beginning and starting pieces should be a minimum of 10 inches.



5. Lock the first plank of the second row into place making sure the end joints are staggered at least 12 inches from the adjacent rows. Continue with the second row by placing a weight, like a carton of flooring, across the short ends of the planks of the first two rows. Place the tongue of the short end of the second plank in row two into the groove of the first plank in the row. There will be a gap in the long joint, lift the long side up slightly and press downward until the edges meet. There should be no gaps.
6. To tighten seams, a tapping block and a pull bar can be used. **Never use a hammer or mallet directly on the edge of the floor plank.** Tapping blocks should be held flat on the floor, gently tapping planks into place. Tap only until the seams close together. Do not over tighten the joints or damage to the locking system can occur. As planks are assembled, insert wedges at the end of each row against the wall to help minimize movement.



7. Cut and install the last row, leaving the 3/8" to 1/2" gap between the wall and the installed floor. The cut on the final row of planks can be measured by placing a plank on the last installed row and marking a line on it 12 3/8" from the wall. A pull bar and tapping block can be used to complete this row.
8. After installation is complete, install base boards and base molding to cover the 3/8" - 1/2" expansion gap left around the room. **Attach molding to walls only so that the floor can expand and contract freely.** Be sure to use molding that is wide enough to compensate for both expansion and contraction of the floor.

#### **POST INSTALLATION FLOOR TREATMENT:**

12 hours after installation, the floor should be cleaned with a well wrung-out damp mop and Expanko approved general purpose cleaner (available from Expanko).

While not required, in order to have a more seamless finish, Expanko recommends the application of one to two additional coats of *Bona Traffic* polyurethane be applied to all Vallarex floating floor installations. This will help to seal the floor seams to prevent any water penetration in the event of a spill. This should not be done for 72 hours after installation. **Only a qualified professional should do this process and only Expanko Resilient Flooring approved polyurethane should be used.** Polyurethane Application Instructions For Pre-finished Cork (Document ID: 430) are available and should be followed. If no additional coats of polyurethane are being applied, allow the floor to set 12 hours before resuming normal use.

## GLUE DOWN FLOOR INSTALLATION:

The items listed below are the only recommended adhesives for glue down Vallarex:

- Wakol MS260
- Bona R850
- MAPEI P990- 1K

**Installers Note:** An experienced flooring contractor should perform Vallarex as a glue-down installation. The subfloor must be complete dry and meet moisture levels as dictated in this document. Recommended adhesives are specially developed and recommended for these types of floors (floating floors). Planks must be completely bonded to the substrate. No voids in the application of the adhesive. The installer has to take care to close accurately the joint between adjoining flooring materials. Use a water resistant material at the joint such as a polyurethane jointing material adjusted to the color of the floating floor or the ceramic tiles.

Subfloors must be permanently dry (on concrete subfloors without radiant heat, the maximum humidity less than 75% RH or less than 2.0 % weight (CM) or less than 3 lbs/1000 sq.ft./24 hours in USA and Canada), firm, level and free of cracks, contamination and substances which hinder bonding.

If moisture is a concern and exceeds above values, use a moisture barrier that is compatible to the adhesive being used.

The maximum unevenness of the subfloor is 3 mm/2000mm (0.12" in 6.6 feet), no dents are allowed. Ardex leveling systems are recommended.

### INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS (follow guidelines used in the floating installation):

Follow the instructions for adhesive application of the products on the packaging labels as well as the information from technical data sheets.

- Install Expanko Vallarex floating planks preferably following the direction of the main source of light or in the direction of the long wall.
- Leave an expansion joint of 10 mm to walls, stairs, or other fixed equipment, and areas between separate rooms.
- Do not bridge expansion joints with Vallarex. The expansion joint can be covered with an appropriate skirting, profile or elastic polyurethane material adjusted to the color of the floating floor.
- To make the start of the installation easier, secure the start row with wedges or when necessary, cut it according to the wall line.
- If you are installing floating floor planks or panels, start the next row with the piece left over (must be at least 300 mm / 12" long).
- Floating floors, tiles 605 x 445 mm, "brick" or "half brick" installation method must be used.
- Start by applying adhesive on the subfloor alongside the planks in an area of two rows of planks at a time. If using Wakol MS260 adhesive, apply the adhesive with a 3/16" by 1/2" by 1/4" V-notch trowel (Wakol B5). For other adhesives use a 1/4" by 1/4" by 9/16" V-notch trowel. Install the Vallarex planks into adhesive following the standard Vallarex Floating Floor instruction. Do not exceed the open time of the adhesive during the installation. Roll with a 100lb roller to set the Vallarex into the adhesive bed. Vallarex floors that are completed can be opened to traffic in 24 hours.

- No additional coats of adhesive are required. Additional coats of Bona Traffic can be applied at a later date as desired.
- Protect Vallarex Flooring against damage by other Trades on the jobsite.
- Expanko Resilient Flooring recommends walk-off mats be used in entryways.

**Complete *Vallarex Care and Maintenance Instructions (Document ID: 411)* are recommended.**

**TOOLS AND MAINTENANCE PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FROM EXPANKO:**

- *Bona Traffic* polyurethane
- Polyurethane applicators kits
- Tool kit, which includes pull bar, tapping block and wedges
- Floor Cleaner

For more information visit [www.expanko.com](http://www.expanko.com) or call 800-345-6202.