

TECHNICAL UPDATES

How do we tile onto Wooden Substrates?

Wooden floors vary from traditional wooden floorboards, plywood, chipboard and other wood composites. Wooden substrates exhibit an element of flexibility; it is therefore advisable to ascertain if the timber substrate is capable of withstanding the weight of the tiled surface, before commencing a project.

How can we do this?

Placing a bowl of water on the floor and walking over the boards will ascertain if the boards are too flexible, if the water ripples the floor is unsuitable to be tiled upon without strengthening.

Strengthening the boards is the key!

It is advisable to strengthen the floor by adding additional noggins or support, or by rigidly fixing plywood to the substrate. If the floor is not rigidly braced any deflection exhibited in the floor may cause stresses to build up that are stronger than the adhesion of the adhesive to the tile or wooden substrate. Any consequent stress placed on the flooring will lead to loss of adhesion, bulging or cracking across the face of the tiling.

Preparation is of vital importance!

It is important to ensure the boards are dry and conditioned to the environment that they are to be used in, rigidly fixed and ventilated beneath and free from barriers to adhesion such as paint and varnish. All plywood and flooring grade chipboard should have their backs and edges sealed to prevent ingress of moisture and any atmospheric humidity, the face should be sealed with Ultra Flexi-Prime and left to dry prior to fixing. These boards should be 18 mm thick and screwed or ring nailed down to the joists at 300mm centres or less.

What types of Adhesive should I use?

Ultraflex 2P is a two part flexible rubber crumb adhesive ideal for use on substrates such as tongue and groove wooden floors. For over boarded floors a single part polymer modified adhesive such as UltraProFlex SP is perfect which has been specially formulated for its enhanced adhesion and flexibility.

And finally grouting?

Once the adhesive has been allowed to fully dry, grouting may commence. Due to the slight flexural movement of the floor it is important that a polymer-modified grout such as Ultra Flexible Floor Grout be utilised to accommodate slight movement.

Please refer to BS 5385 Tiling onto Timber sub-floors for further information or contact Ultra Sales on 01827 872244.