


SECTION 14: CARPET, RESILIENT FLOORING, WOOD FLOORING, CERAMIC TILE, BRICK, MARBLE AND STONE FLOORING

Background

All types of flooring are subject to flaws, conditions and stresses of the surfaces to which they are applied. Examples include, but are not limited to, expansion and contraction, warping, settling, moisture and temperature fluctuations, most of which occur during a stabilization period. This section will focus on the installation and workmanship of flooring products, which are the builder's or remodeler's responsibility. The quality and durability of the products vary greatly. Frequently, two different floor types will meet. The point at which these floor types meet there may be slight differences in height between the two surfaces. This difference is referred to as "lippage."

Carpet

Carpet is manufactured in a variety of weaves, patterns, weights and grades. Carpet is subject to "dye lot" differences because a limited quantity of a given material is produced at the same time. There may be noticeable differences in the same pattern of flooring produced from one dye lot to another (color, texture and pattern variations). The number of seams may vary due to the different widths in which carpet is available. This standard is concerned mostly with the installation of the carpet.

14.1 Observation: Carpet does not meet at seams.

Standard: It is not unusual for carpet seams to show; however, a visible gap at the seams is not acceptable.

Builder's Responsibility: If the carpet were installed by the builder, the builder will eliminate gaps at carpet seams.

14.2 Observation: Carpet comes loose or stretches.

Standard: When stretched and secured properly, wall-to-wall

carpet should not come up, loosen or separate from points of attachment at the time of closing.

Builder's Responsibility: If the carpet were installed by the builder, the builder will restretch or resecure as necessary to meet the standard.

Homeowner's Responsibility: Homeowners should avoid dragging heavy objects across carpet to reduce loosening or stretching of carpet.

14.3 Observation: Spots or minor fading are visible on the carpet.

Standard: Exposure to natural light may cause spots or minor fading of the carpet.

Builder's Responsibility: At the time of closing the builder will take corrective action as necessary to remove stains and spots noted at that time.

Homeowner's Responsibility: It is important to check with the maintenance recommended by the manufacturer.

14.4 Observation: Voids (holes) appear in padding below the carpet's surface.

Standard: Carpeted areas should have full pad coverage consistently throughout the carpeted areas.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair any deficiencies to meet the standards.

14.5 Observation: There is excessive lippage at the junction between carpet and hard surface flooring, such as tile or hardwood.

Standard: Lippage greater than 1/4 inch is considered excessive.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair the flooring to meet the standards.

Resilient Flooring

Resilient flooring is a term which describes relatively nonporous materials, including but not limited to: sheet vinyl, linoleum and vinyl tiles. Resilient flooring is secured to a properly prepared surface with an adhesive designed for this application. All resilient flooring is subject to normal manufacturing tolerances, which may be noticed when replacement or repair work is performed. “Dye Lot” refers to a limited quantity of material produced at a given time. There may be noticeable differences in the same pattern of flooring produced from one dye lot to another (color, texture, and pattern variations). A common floor problem occurs when a repair is needed and there is not an exact match between the replacement and the existing flooring due to dye lot variations. Other factors outside the builder’s or remodeler’s control, which may contribute to the impossibility of making an exact match even within the same dye lot, are cleaning product buildup on the existing floor or environmental differences such as sunlight variations or chemical reactions. Also, it may be impossible for the builder or remodeler to obtain the same pattern if it has been discontinued from production.

Definitions:

“Inlaid” and “Rotovinyl” Sheet Flooring: Vinyl sheet flooring is available as “inlaid” (the pattern going throughout the wear layer of vinyl) and as “rotovinyl” (the pattern is printed on top of the flooring). Both are then covered with a layer of wearing surface.

Vinyl sheet floor coverings range from having no cushion at all to having a thick cushion beneath the wear layer. Although the thick cushion increases comfort, the vinyl can be dented by heavy objects and shoe heels.

Vinyl composition tiles: Solid (or pure) vinyl tiles are homogeneous vinyl which is unbacked and usually has uniform composition throughout. Solid vinyl composition tiles do not have a wear layer top coat.

NOTE: Inlaid, Rotovinyl, and Composition tiles are installed on wood subfloors or over on-grade and below-grade concrete. Rubber backed rugs can effect the finish on these floors.

14.6 Observation: Nail pops appear on the surface of resilient flooring.

Standard: After all appliances are installed by the builder any visible nail pops should be repaired.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair the resilient floor covering in the affected areas. The builder is not responsible for patterns or color variations when repairing floor covering, although efforts will be made to repair with similar materials.

Tears in the Surface of Resilient Flooring

14.7 Observation: There are tears, cuts and scratches in the surface of resilient flooring.

Standards: At the time of closing, there should be no tears, cuts and scratches in the surface of resilient flooring when viewed from a distance of 6 feet, under normal lighting conditions.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair the resilient floor coverings in the affected areas at the time of closing that are visible from a distance of 6 feet, under normal lighting conditions. The builder is not responsible for patterns or color variations when repairing floor covering, although efforts will be made to repair with similar materials.

Homeowner's Responsibility: The homeowner should be careful not to drag items across the resilient flooring. Heavy items, such as appliances, tables and chairs, may tear, cut or scratch the surface.

Discussion: Refer to paragraph 2 in section 13 in the Background (Page 77) for the definition of normal lighting conditions.

14.8 Observation: Depressions or ridges appear in resilient flooring because of subfloor irregularities.

Standards: Depressions or ridges exceeding 1/8 inch should be repaired. The ridge or depression measurement is taken with the gap at one end of a 6-inch straightedge centered over the depression or ridge with 3 inches of the straightedge held tightly to the floor on one side of the defect.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will take corrective action to bring the defect within the acceptable tolerance so that the depres-

sion or ridge is not readily visible and is not more than 1/8 inch. The builder will not be responsible for discontinued patterns or color variations when repairing the floor covering, although efforts will be made to repair with similar materials.

14.9 Observation: Resilient flooring loses adhesion.

Standard: Resilient flooring should not lift or detach from the surface.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair the affected resilient flooring as necessary. The builder is not responsible for discontinued patterns or color variations when repairing the floor covering, although efforts will be made to repair with similar materials.

14.10 Observation: Seams or shrinkage gaps show in resilient sheet flooring.

Standard: Open gaps at seams in resilient sheet flooring are not acceptable. Where dissimilar materials meet, the gap shall not exceed 1/8 inch.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair the resilient flooring as necessary to meet the standard. The builder will not be responsible for discontinued patterns or color variations when repairing the floor cover, although efforts will be made to repair with similar materials.

Discussion: Due to available width in manufacturer products, seaming may be required. These seams may be visible but should not be gaping.

There are many acceptable means of adjusting a gap in the flooring where dissimilar material abutt, including, but not limited to, the use of a transition strip to suit the application.

14.11 Observation: Bubbles appear on roll vinyl flooring.

Standard: Bubbles resulting from trapped air that protrude higher than 1/16 inch from the floor are not acceptable.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair the floor to meet the standard.

Discussion: The standard does not apply to perimeter attached vinyl floors, where only the perimeter part of the flooring is attached to the underlying surface.

14.12 Observation: Patterns on roll vinyl flooring are not aligned.

Standard: Patterns at seams between adjoining pieces should be aligned to within 1/16 inch.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will correct the flooring to meet the standard.

14.13 Observation: Resilient floor tile is loose.

Standard: Resilient floor tiles shall be securely attached to the floor.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will attach loose resilient floor tiles securely to the floor. The old adhesive will be removed, if necessary, to resecure the tiles.

14.14 Observation: Corners or patterns of resilient floor tiles are not aligned.

Standard: The corners of adjoining resilient floor tiles shall be aligned to within 1/8 inch. Non-aligned patterns are not addressed by this standard unless they result from improper orientation of floor tiles.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will correct resilient floor tiles with non-aligned corners to meet the standards.

Discussion: Some tiles are not uniform in size and complete alignment maybe impossible.

Wood Flooring:

Wood flooring, because of its very nature as a wood product, may expand, contract, cup and warp due to moisture and temperature variations of the home. Because of these changes taking place in the wood itself, separations or gaps will be seen between individual

boards and at butt edges. Wood flooring is also subject to “creaking, cracking, and popping” sounds under normal foot traffic. It should be noted that these characteristics will not necessarily be consistent throughout the entire floor area. There are many wood flooring species, domestic and imported, available to the consumer today. The harder the wood, the less susceptible it is to denting. Many of the wood flooring characteristics are inherent in the species selected and should be expected and will warrant no concern or correction. Pet traffic, unprotected chair and table legs, high heel shoes and athletic hard sole or spike shoe traffic will increase the occurrence of scratches, dents and mars. Some stains and wood species wear differently than others. Areas directly over heat runs may experience more movement than in other areas. These conditions are beyond the control of the builder.

14.15 Observation: Gaps exist between strip wood floor boards.

Standard: Gaps between strip wood floor boards shall not exceed 1/16 inch in width at time of installation.

Builder’s Responsibility: The builder will repair gaps that do not meet the standard.

Homeowner’s Responsibility: The homeowner is responsible for maintaining proper humidity levels in the home.

Discussion: Proper repair can be achieved by filling the gap. The relative humidity of the home will cause noticeable fluctuations in gaps up to 1/4 inch between floor boards. This is normal in spaces that experience significant shifts in humidity. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining proper humidity levels in the home; however, even with the proper humidity levels, gaps still will appear as a result of the changes caused by the heating and cooling systems.

14.16 Observation: Strip wood floor board is cupped.

Standard: Cups in strip wood floor boards shall not exceed 1/16 inch height in a 3 inch maximum span measured perpendicular to the long axis of the board. Cupping caused by exposure to moisture beyond control of the builder is not covered.

Builder’s Responsibility: The builder will correct or repair to meet the standard.

Discussion: The relative humidity of the home can cause noticeable fluctuations between floor boards. This is normal in spaces that experience significant shifts in humidity. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining proper humidity levels in the home to help ensure minimal changes and fluctuations in floor boards. Even with proper humidity levels, changes still may appear as a result of the heating and cooling systems.

14.17 Observation: There is excessive lippage at the junction of wood flooring products to other flooring material at the time of installation.

Standard: Lippage greater than 1/16 inch is considered excessive.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair flooring to meet the standard.

Discussion: Lippage is the difference in height at the juncture of two types of flooring materials. Some type of transition strip may be necessary.

14.18 Observation: Crowning (or warping) of strip flooring has occurred.

Standard: Crowning (or warping) of strip flooring shall not exceed 1/16 inch in a 3 inch span when measured perpendicular to the long axis of the board.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair to meet the standard.

Discussion: The relative humidity of the home can cause noticeable fluctuations between floor boards. This is normal in spaces that experience significant shifts in humidity. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining proper humidity levels in the home to help ensure minimal changes and fluctuations in floor boards. Even with proper humidity levels, changes still may appear as a result of the heating and cooling systems.

14.19 Observation: Wood flooring buckles from its substrate (underlying support).

Standard: The wood flooring should not become loose from substrate.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair to meet the standard.

14.20 Observation: Slivers or splinters appear in strip flooring.

Standard: Slivers or splinters that are present at the time of closing are unacceptable.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair to meet the standard.

Discussion: Imperfections can be shaved and filled prior to sanding and finishing. Any corrections made after finishing may not match.

14.21 Observation: Sticker marks or planer burns appear through the finish on the surface of strip flooring.

Standards: Discoloration from stacking strips or planers on flooring is unacceptable.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder shall repair or replace finished areas with sticker marks or planer burns.

14.22 Observation: The top coat of wood flooring finish has peeled.

Standard: The top coat of wood flooring finish should not peel during normal usage.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder shall refinish any field-applied finishes that have peeled. Peeling of the pre-finished coating will be referred to the manufacturer.

Ceramic Tile, Brick, Marble and Stone Floor

Ceramic tile is a product manufactured in many shapes and colors. Ceramic is usually bought and installed as individual pieces or small sheets of tile. It is secured to the properly prepared surface with adhesive designed specifically for ceramic tile installation. Most of the problems with ceramic tile occur as a result of the stabilization of the surfaces on which the tile is applied. Adding tile over concrete that has cracked can create an ongoing problem for the homeowner and in such cases, an alternative choice of flooring material should be given serious consideration. It is normal for concrete to crack (see Section 3.11 Cracks in Basement Floor or Slabe on Grade).

While various crack fillers or suppressant materials can be used, they do not prevent the crack from expanding and contracting. As the movement of the concrete takes place, it can cause the tile or grout to crack.

Definitions:

Quarry Tile - Quarry tile is made of clay and shale. It comes in natural and pastel tones, with color distributed throughout the tile. It is usually cut in 6 inch squares or larger. New quarry tile has a dull, unglazed surface.

Glazed ceramic tile - Glazed ceramic tile has a shiny, matte, or textured look, resulting from a finishing spray that is applied before firing. The finish keeps liquids from soaking into the tile pores, but may dull the surface in high traffic areas. Manufacturers generally recommend sweeping the tile with a soft broom and an occasional damp mopping with water. Soap is not recommended, as it leaves a cloudy film. Glazed tiles may be slippery. Manufacturers rate a tile's slip resistance on a scale of I through IV, with the higher number indicating better resistance.

Grout - Grout is a thin mortar used to secure tiles. Grout sealers may be used to prevent its discoloring from soil and moisture.

Marble - Marble is a naturally occurring, recrystallized limestone. It is soft and porous. It will stain easily if not initially sealed with at least two coats of penetrating sealer. White marble is softer and less dense than colored marble, so it stains more easily. Dark marble shows scratches more easily.

14.23 Observation: Tile, brick, marble or stone flooring is broken or loose.

Standard: Tile, brick, marble or stone flooring should not crack or loosen under normal wear.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will replace cracked tiles, bricks, marble, and stone flooring and resecure loose tiles, brick, marble or stone once during the service period, unless the defects were caused by the homeowner's actions or negligence. The builder is not responsible for discontinued patterns or color variations when replacing tile, brick, marble or stone flooring.

14.24 Observation: Cracks appear in the grouting of tile joints or at junctures with other materials, such as a bathtub.

Standard: Cracks in grouting are normal and to be expected, however cracks in grouting or caulking in excess of 1/16 inch should be repaired one time during the service period.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair grouting or caulking where cracks exceed 1/16 inch to meet the standard. The builder will not be responsible for color variations or discontinued colored grout.

Discussion: Cracks in grouting, or caulking where appropriate, of ceramic tile joints commonly result from normal shrinkage conditions.

14.25 Observation: There is excessive lippage of adjoining ceramic or marble to other flooring materials.

Standard: Lippage greater than 1/16 inch is considered excessive, except where the materials are designed with irregular heights.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair to meet standards.

Discussion: Lippage is the difference in height at the junction of two types of flooring materials. Some type of transition strip may be necessary.

14.26 Observation: Grout or mortar joint is not a uniform color.

Standard: Color variation that is visible from a distance of 6 feet under normal lighting conditions at the time of closing is unacceptable.

Builder's Responsibility: The builder will repair to meet the standard.

Discussion: Due to the porous nature of grout, discoloration and staining under normal household conditions should be expected and is not the responsibility of the builder.

Normal lighting conditions are defined by indirect sunlight or medium artificial light. High intensity lighting, direct sunlight, or artificial lighting aimed directly on an area is not considered within the definition of normal lighting. Likewise, sconce lights which cast light directly on a wall surface is not within the definition of normal lighting.