



Subject: Starting the Claim Process with your Distributor

Date: 9/01/22

Hopefully you have not needed to call in a rep to look at a concern with one of your installations, however if you are in this industry long enough you may eventually have to make that call. When the floor owner first contacts you regarding a concern with their flooring, act quickly and gather as much information about their concern. In most cases, you may need to go look at the issue yourself to verify what they are experiencing. Understanding what information your distributor may ask for can help speed this process up. Most will have an evaluation form from the manufacturer with information that is needed to help you assess the concern. Below you will find the main jobsite specific points of data to make sure you gather and have on hand as you contact your rep.

The below data must be collected before the distributor or manufacturer will get involved:

- Temperature and Humidity of the environment
- Photos of the concern including room scene images
- Photos of the moisture content of the flooring (if applicable)
- Type of installation (floating/nailed/glued)
- Exact fastener that was used (if nailed)
- What type of subfloor the flooring is installed over
- When was the flooring installed
- When was the concern first noticed (before/during/after installation)
- Underlayment used (if floated/nailed)

Having the correct tools to take the above readings can be the difference between coming up with a resolution in a couple of days versus a couple of months. With the collective experience of your company and providing this information during a conversation with your rep, you may be able to ascertain what may be going on and come up with a quick resolution to the concern.



After the initial conversation with your rep and the above-mentioned information has been provided, they may find the information to be insufficient and decide to look at the floor in person. Here lies the second reason for this article; what to expect from that onsite visit from your distributor representative. In most cases, the distributor rep is the local representation and an extension of the manufacturer, visiting the jobsite on their behalf. During this visit, while understanding the concern and gathering information from the floor owner, additional jobsite readings and observations are taken. This is typically an information gathering, **jobsite evaluation**.

Looking at overall product specs, acclimation procedures, environmental conditions before, during and after the installation, installation dates and verifying whether the manufacturers installation guidelines were followed. **During this visit is not where the cause or repair of the concern is given.** No invasive inspection of the flooring will happen at this time.

To set expectations, this should be explained to the floor owner prior to distributor's visit. A representative from your company should attend this meeting with your distributor rep. If you were not the company that installed the flooring but rather subcontracted the installation, make sure the installer that performed the work is also in attendance to answer any specific installation questions.

After the visit, the information and photographs gathered are provided to the manufacturer along with the order history data gathered from the distributors database (i.e., when the distributor received the product, batch code information, retailer purchase date and shipping and/or delivery date, etc.). The manufacturer will look over the information provided and respond to the distributor whether it can be defined as a product related concern or possibly something else. The distributor will relay the manufacturers' findings to the retailer/installation company. It is at this point that a suggestion may be made for a possible repair. If the data gathered during the evaluation raises suspicion of a possible product issue, the manufacturer may request a more invasive or **detailed jobsite inspection** by an industry accredited flooring inspector.

If the floor owner, installer, or retailer disagrees with the findings of the manufacturer, they are welcome to hire their own industry accredited inspector to inspect the concern themselves. If the report from said inspector finds there to be a significant product concern, most manufacturers will reopen the claim.

Additional information can be acquired from the manufacturer's technical department of the products used on your floor. The National Wood Floor Association (NWFA) can be an additional resource. They can be reached at 800-422-4556 or online at www.woodfloors.org.