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Technical Bulletin – Recommended Humidity

American consumers continue to request flooring in wider widths, longer lengths and exotic species. Owens Flooring unfinished and prefinished engineered flooring accommodates these trends beautifully. Owens' platform marries the structural stability and environmental responsibility of an engineered floor with the appearance and durability of a solid wood floor.

However, it is important to remember that engineered Owens Flooring is still made from 100% wood and will thus react to changes in humidity and moisture content.

In order for the floor to perform properly, the relative humidity should be maintained between 35% and 55% year round. When the humidity is too low, the sawn lumber face of the engineered flooring contracts and creates stress between itself and the plywood substrate. This causes cupping, and if the stress becomes too great, it will cause cracks and delamination. This is especially true of exotic species, such as Brazilian Cherry, that are accustomed to the high humidity conditions of a rain forest.

The best way to fix this problem is to avoid it. If you notice cupping on an Owens floor, increase the humidity to the recommended levels of 35% to 55%. This will enable the floor to return to equilibrium and avoid damage. If you are installing flooring into an environment that will push the limits of the recommended humidity, choose a species that is less reactive to moisture. Rift and Quartered is an ideal choice, as the orientation of the grain makes the wood extremely stable. Using a stained oak product, rather than an exotic species, is also an option along with selecting narrower widths.

Attention to humidity is vitally important when installing Owens hardwood flooring over radiant heat, as the transfer of heat through the flooring can cause excessive drying if the humidity is not carefully maintained. In-floor or under-floor data logger(s) are recommended to be installed by the flooring contractor to ensure that temperature and humidity conditions do not exceed flooring tolerances. Placing these sensors should be determined with the assistance of the radiant heat system installer to gain the most accurate floor temperature readings.

Following the above recommendations will help ensure that the consumer receives a lifetime of enjoyment from their Owens hardwood floor.

For more information on Owens Flooring please visit our website at owens-flooring.com.

Thank you,
The Sales Team at Owens Flooring