

# DESIGN | FLOORS

## GENERAL INSTALLATION GUIDELINES SIERRA ACOUSTIC



## Storage & transport

Boxes should be stored and transported on a flat surface in neat stacks - always store the boxes flat and never put them upright/on-end. Do not store the boxes in very cold (less than 0°C) or very warm (more than +35°C) or damp places.

## Prior to installation

### Visual inspection

Please ensure the product is inspected and checked for damage, defect or variation prior to installation in adequate light conditions. Check that the colours correspond to those ordered, the quantities are correct and there is no visible damage to the boxes. Check the Sierra Acoustic panels during installation for any visible defects. Do not install any panels that display any imperfections. We recommend that you always use materials from a single production batch for each installation, as we cannot guarantee a shade match between different batches. Be aware that some designs have a natural variation within them. We also recommend that the product is mixed or shuffled between different boxes.

For defects that are visible prior to installation, Design Floors will never assume responsibility for the uplift & relay costs. Installation implies acceptance.

### Suitability

- Sierra Acoustic can be laid on concrete, cementitious screed, anhydrite (calcium sulphate), timber, plywood, particleboard and ceramic tiles, raised access floors, that is reasonably flat and smooth or have been suitably prepared (see Floor Preparation).
- Sierra Acoustic can be used with traditional water-based underfloor heating and cooling systems. See separate section on underfloor heating. The subfloor surface temperature must never exceed 27°C.
- Sierra Acoustic is only suitable for indoor installation.
- Seasonal temperature conditions: Sierra Acoustic can be used in most situations, such as temperature-controlled conservatories and holiday homes. Keep the temperature between 6°C (min.) and 35°C (max.). Where temperatures are outside of this range, installation may still be possible, see note at the end of this document (\*).

- Special care must be taken to avoid hot-spots or isolated areas of prolonged exposure to direct sunlight through unprotected glass, in front of a wood burner, other direct heat source, etc.. It is recommended that the floorcovering is shaded from direct sunlight and otherwise protected from any direct heat source that increases the temperature in a localised area.
- The Sierra Acoustic joints are water resistant (not 100% waterproof) after installation. Following the installation instructions carefully makes the floor fit for use in bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms and entrance areas. For reasons of slip resistance, the panels are not recommended for use in wet areas, e.g. pool areas or surrounds, saunas and rooms with build-in drains like showers. Frequent ingress of water under the floor may induce bacteria and/or mould growth.

## Composition, construction and quality of the subfloor

Knowledge of the composition and construction of the subfloor or base provides valuable information that allows you to correctly check the acceptable humidity, flatness, compressive and tensile strength of the subfloor. In addition, it tells you what type of floor preparation, levelling/smoothing compound, and possible moisture barrier you may need during the installation process. When there is ambiguity or doubt about the quality or composition of your subfloor, check your local installation standards and/or seek advice from your floor preparation, levelling compound manufacturer/supplier.

### National regulations & standards

- Site and installation conditions must always comply with the relevant national regulations and installation standards.
- In case the national standard or regulation conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendation, the most stringent of the two prevails.

## Subfloor preparation

### Irregularities in the subfloor

Good preparation is essential for a trouble-free installation. It is vital for an excellent Sierra Acoustic finish. The appearance of Sierra Acoustic will only be as good as the quality of the base over which it is installed. Although Sierra Acoustic is intended for renovation of not perfectly even subfloors, some larger irregularities, steps, sudden level variations in the subfloor may show through the finished floor and must be suitably prepared before installation.

The subfloor must be hard, structurally sound, relatively flat, clean and permanently dry, as well as being free from steps or defects and fit for the purpose intended. When required, scrape off and remove old adhesive residues and loose or de-bonded levelling compound. Make sure the subfloor is free from chemical substances and other contamination.

Unevenness of the subfloor may not be greater than 5mm measured over a length of 2m, measured with a suitable straight edge or level. Sierra Acoustic is capable of bridging small holes of up to 30 mm, grout-lines, joints and cracks of up to 10mm in the subfloor. However, avoid installing Sierra Acoustic short end joints over sudden deviations/undulations of 2mm or more. In this instance we recommend to move the end joint connection 300mm away from this deviation.

A suitable plywood/levelling compound should be selected to ensure that no sudden irregularities show through to the surface of the finished floor. However, the selection of suitable materials, including plywood, smoothing/levelling compounds and any ancillary products, is dependent upon the occupational use of the area and must be agreed by the supplier of the preparative materials and the flooring contractor. All floor preparation materials used must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and in accordance with the national standards for resilient floorcoverings.

### The moisture content of the subfloor

- Unheated cementitious screeds less than 2.0CM% - 75% RH (UK)

- Underfloor heated cementitious screeds less than 1.8CM% - 75% RH (UK)
- Unheated anhydrite (calcium sulphate) screeds less than 0.5CM%
- Underfloor heated anhydrite (calcium sulphate) less than 0.3CM%

Sierra Acoustic is water resistant and has very good resistance to retained construction moisture, however, best practice should be followed to avoid bacteria and mould growth under the floorcovering.

Direct-to-earth concrete and stone subfloors must have an effective damp proof membrane (DPM) in accordance with the national standards for the installation of resilient floorcoverings. Follow manufacturer's detailed instructions for the installation of a surface applied DPM and the use of levelling compound. An overview of manufacturers and suppliers can be provided by Design Floors.

The effectiveness of a liquid applied DPM heavily depends on the type of product, the way of application and the site conditions. It is the responsibility of the installer to get the correct advice from the manufacturer of the DPM and to apply it in accordance with their recommendations.



### Important

Floor installation should not begin until the installer has assessed and approved the subfloor and installation conditions.

## Acclimatisation

Store the planks or tiles in straight piles away from heating, cooling or windows with direct intense sunlight.

## Temperature condition before installation

Sierra Acoustic does not require acclimatisation prior to installation in standard rooms and conditions, see note at the end of this document (\*)

# Starting installation

## Temperature conditions during and after installation

Sierra Acoustic does not require acclimatisation prior to installation in standard rooms and conditions, see note at the end of this document (\*). However, for a troublefree installation, we advise to keep the temperature fluctuations limited during the time needed for the installation.

## Underfloor heating

Sierra Acoustic can be used with traditional water-based underfloor heating systems (according to standard EN 1264 part 1 to 5). Wired electrical systems are not recommended unless the system is encased in a minimum of 9mm of suitable levelling compound. Direct contact with electrical wired heating systems must be avoided. The surface temperature must never exceed 27°C. If in doubt seek further advice. Some infrared heating panels may be suitable, however care should be taken as some of these systems can provide very sudden heat gain which is not recommended. In any circumstance the surface temperature must not exceed 27°C. If in doubt seek further advice.

After installation the underfloor heating must be gradually increased by increments of 5°C per day until it reaches the standard operating temperature conditions, with a maximum subfloor temperature of 27°C. For the suitability of the system please check the manufacturer's instructions.

## Underfloor cooling

Sierra Acoustic can also be installed over floor cooling systems. However, the supply temperature of the cooling water must not be reduced below the dew point temperature. Always keep the temperature of the subfloor at least 3 degrees above the dewpoint. Temperatures below this point will produce

condensation and can therefore create a humid atmosphere behind the floor covering which may encourage mould growth, etc.

## Required Expansion Gap

Sierra Acoustic is a "floating" floor. The panels should not be glued together or fixed to the subfloor.

Sierra Acoustic has more ability to move heavy furniture than traditional flexible LVT click floors, however Sierra Acoustic has limitations: very heavy objects or furniture can prevent the floor from floating and moving freely. For example, do not put very heavy kitchen elements, wood stoves or any other very heavy element which prevents free movement directly on the floor but leave an expansion gap around the element as if it were a wall (see below).

A 0,75mm expansion gap, per linear meter of Sierra Acoustic is required in any direction and must be incorporated at the perimeter of the room/area in "standard rooms and conditions", see note at the end of this document (\*). Room size without expansion profiles: wall to wall length maximum 16m.

|      |   |               |
|------|---|---------------|
| 2 m  | ➔ | <b>1 mm</b>   |
| 3 m  | ➔ | <b>1.5 mm</b> |
| 4 m  | ➔ | <b>2 mm</b>   |
| 5 m  | ➔ | <b>2.5 mm</b> |
| 8 m  | ➔ | <b>4 mm</b>   |
| 10 m | ➔ | <b>5 mm</b>   |

A 1,5mm per linear meter expansion joint in any direction must be incorporated at the perimeter of the room/area in extreme rooms and conditions, see below and note at the end of this document (\*). Room size without expansion profiles: wall to wall length maximum 8m.

|      |   |               |
|------|---|---------------|
| 2 m  | ➔ | <b>3 mm</b>   |
| 3 m  | ➔ | <b>4.5 mm</b> |
| 4 m  | ➔ | <b>6 mm</b>   |
| 5 m  | ➔ | <b>7.5 mm</b> |
| 8 m  | ➔ | <b>12 mm</b>  |
| 10 m | ➔ | <b>15 mm</b>  |

Standard rooms and conditions are areas with temperatures between 6 and 35°C, e.g. no direct sunlight through glass in sun facing rooms (unless the glass has a very effective built-in heat-shield). Extreme rooms and conditions are areas with potential surface temperatures between 0 and 60°C, such as conservatories, non-occupied holiday homes, etc. Special care must be taken to avoid hot-spots or isolated areas of prolonged exposure to direct sunlight through unprotected glass, in front of a wood burner, other direct heat source, etc. these will not fall under the definition of ambient room temperature, variation or condition. It is recommended that the floorcovering is shaded from direct sunlight and otherwise protected from any direct heat source that increases the temperature in a localised area.

When installing in an “extreme room”, in accordance with the above definition, where the temperature during installation is above 25°C, and the product has been acclimatised, it is recommended to take the expansion gap of the “standard room” to avoid too large a shrinkage gap in colder temperatures.

For a more extensive definition of standard rooms and conditions we refer to the note at the end of this document (\*).

If existing skirtings are present, and you do not wish to remove them, it is possible to trim off the lower part of the skirting with a specialist trimming tool, existing on the market. E.g. Bepo multipurpose trimming saw. Alternatively, the use of Xtrafloor® Fit-Over Paintable Skirting board or a suitable Scotia Trim is recommended.

**For smart solutions to cover the expansion gaps, see ‘Finishing Your Floor’**

## Installation methods

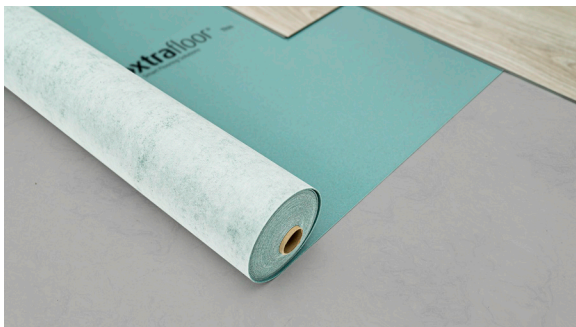
As Sierra Acoustic comes with an integrated underlay, it is simple: just install it looselaid on the subfloor! Sierra Acoustic is a floating floor and should never be adhered to the subfloor.

For alternative installation methods, not included in this overview, always seek technical advice from Design Floors.

**Sierra Acoustic is a floating floor and should never be adhered to the subfloor**

## Recommended underlay

Because Sierra Acoustic comes with an integrated underlay already, a separate underlay is not required before installing the Sierra Acoustic panels.



## Installation step by step

### Recommended tools

- Tape Measure
- Pencil
- Chalk line/laser line to ensure the installation starts/remains straight
- Set Square
- Tapping block
- Heavy-Duty Utility Knife
- Nylon- or rubber hammer
- Spacers for maintaining the expansion gap along the wall and to ensure a straight installation
- Optionally, fine tooth jigsaw for intricate cutting and/or a hole-saw or step-drill for circular cuts



- The Sierra Acoustic planks or tiles can be joined in two different ways, either tongue-in-groove or groove-under-tongue.

- The Sierra Acoustic system allows you to choose your own starting position. You can start in the middle of the room/area and work to both sides, or start at the wall and work your way in. In that case you need a combination of groove-under-tongue and tongue in groove installation.
  - Step 1: Determine the installation direction of the Sierra Acoustic. Measure the room carefully to determine whether the first row of panels needs to be narrowed. If not, the lower groove lip of the first row of panels needs to be removed. Use a utility knife or fine tooth saw to neatly cut off the lower groove lip.
  - Step 2: Lay the first row in a straight line and click the head ends together: put the short side of the profile into the head end of the previous panel and press the panel downwards. It is recommended to use a nylon or rubber hammer/mallet for connecting the head ends so that the joint fits securely.
  - Step 3: Use the spacers to fill out the contour of the wall with the required expansion gap so that the panels do not move.
  - Step 4: For the end piece of the row, measure the last plank so that the required expansion gap is maintained. Do not lay the panel completely tight to the wall. Cut away the marked piece and fit the end panel in the same way as the previous panels. When cutting the panel with a utility knife, make sure that you cut through the wear layer before breaking the panel. Large pieces can be snapped off by hand, with small cuts it might be necessary to use pliers (or alternatively a saw).
  - Step 5: For the second/next row, take a new panel and decide how big the first piece must be (or use one of the left-overs from previous rows). For an attractive and natural appearance, we do not advise to use the piece left over from row 1 as the first piece in the following row, install at random intervals. Otherwise this creates a so called "staircase effect".
  - Step 6: Fit the second row as you did for the first: start on the left-hand side and slide the groove of the panel under an angle of about 25° over the tongue of the previous row, clicking the groove into the tongue by laying down the panel while pushing it firmly against the first row. Along the long edge, ensure the click mechanism is firmly locked together. Due to the very close fitting mechanism, there is an intentional tension in the connection. Some panels may need to be tapped-in to close the gap: use a suitable tapping block. Please note: panels should be laid in a random fashion, the end-joints should be staggered at least 200mm.
  - Step 7: Next, fit the second panel at an angle of 25° into the previous row. Position the corner of the head end against the previous panel and then drop the short side of the profile into the head end of the previous panel, push downward. It is recommended to use a rubber hammer/mallet for connecting the head ends so that the joint fits securely.
  - Repeat steps 5 to 7 until all rows are complete, and only the last row needs to be placed.
  - Step 8: To fit the last row of panels you will usually need to narrow them. Do this as follows: lay a panel on top of the previous row, lay another panel upside down up to the edge of the wall and mark the panel underneath. Cut the panel to size and fit the last row.
  - Heating pipes, fixed legs, etc. also need to be individually fitted, maintaining the movement gap. A step-drill bit or hole-saw is suitable for circular cuts. Always use a bigger diameter saw to leave appropriate movement for the floating floor.
- NOTE: Sierra Acoustic is meant to be a floating floor system and must not be restricted in any way, e.g. permanently fixing, fixtures and fittings through the floor covering, or very heavy objects which restrict movement.

Ensure that the end joints of the panels in two successive rows are never in line. Always ensure that the joints are staggered by at least 20 cm and avoid a "staircase effect" by using your cut-off pieces randomly



and not always for your next row. For the last piece, measure the last panel so that the required expansion gap is maintained. Do not lay the panel tight to the wall. Cut away the marked piece and fit the end panel in the same way as the previous panels. When cutting the panel with a utility knife, make sure that you cut through the wear layer before breaking the panel.

In places where it is too difficult to install the Sierra Acoustic panels with the tapping block (e.g. against the wall), you can tap them together using the pull-bar and a hammer.

**For smart solutions to cover the expansion gaps, see 'Finishing your floor'**

## Finishing your floor

Xtrafloor® offers a range of smart flooring solutions to your finishing needs. The offer combines unique functionality with style: a hardwearing solution that ensures smooth transitions at all times.

### How to finish your floor at a wall

#### Xtrafloor® standard skirting in matching designs

- The identical connection for your Sierra Acoustic floor
- Water-resistant
- Wear-resistant
- Perfect water-resistant corner solution as the HDF carrier does not come into contact with cleaning water



#### Xtrafloor® paintable skirtings: style by choice

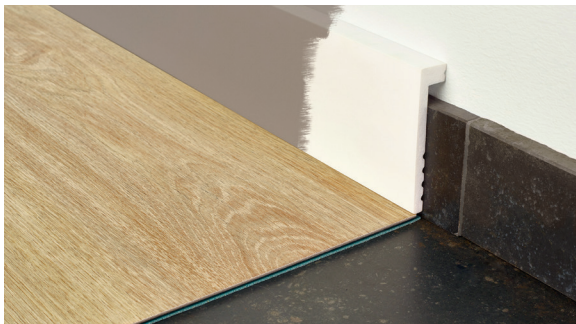
- Unique water-resistant material
- Colour coordinate your pre-primed skirting boards with the walls
- Use our renovation skirting to cover existing skirting boards



How to cover the expansion gap within the floor surface, for runs longer than 16m (8m in extreme rooms and conditions).

#### **Xtrafloor® T-profile**

- Sleek aluminium profile on a strong aluminium base for a minimalistic design that lends a smart and modern look
- Durable and easy solution to cover the gap between 2 adjacent floors at the same level



#### **Xtrafloor® end profile**

- Sleek aluminium profile on a strong aluminium base for a minimalistic design that lends a smart and modern look



How to connect your floor with higher or lower level floor surfaces

#### **Xtrafloor® Adapter profile**

- Sleek aluminium profile on a strong aluminium base for a minimalistic design that lends a smart and modern look
- Connect the floor with lower floor surfaces, with a height difference up to 6mm
- Also suitable to make the transition between 2 different types of floorcovering (e.g. Carpet)



**For specific installation instructions on Xtrafloor® see [www.installandclean.com](http://www.installandclean.com)**

## Maintaining your floor

Appropriate maintenance procedures will help to preserve the appearance and will extend the life of a Sierra Acoustic floor. The frequency of maintenance will depend on the amount and type of traffic, degree of soiling, the floor colour and type.

Below we will give a short summary of the 5 key points to effective maintenance.

For full maintenance instructions and recommended products we refer you to [www.installandclean.com](http://www.installandclean.com).

### 1. Preventative measures

- Keeping dirt off the floor is easier and less expensive than removing it.
- Proper entrance walk-off material is able to remove large amounts of dry soil as well as absorb water or oil-based moisture.



- Prevention also means making the right choice of floorcovering and design/colour for the right area, e.g. avoid too dark or too light colours for high traffic areas near the entrance of a commercial building.
- Protect against scratching from furniture feet by using wide, free-moving, castors, glides, rollers or pads, e.g. [www.scratchnomore.nl](http://www.scratchnomore.nl). NOTE: felt protection pads can pick up dirt and grit and subsequently cause scratching or further damage to the floorcovering.



- Use furniture caps or other protection under heavy items or appliances to prevent indentation.
- Avoid rubber or latex backed mats, furniture feet and the like as the rubber or latex may leave permanent stains.
- Almost all flooring will vary in colour over time when exposed to UV light. Avoid this by using curtains or sunscreens when the sun is very bright.
- Mechanical damage of the floorcovering, caused by heavy overloading or sliding of furniture/items and permanent stains caused by rubber/latex are not covered by the product warranty.

## 2. Vacuuming

Regular vacuuming is the most important part of a successful maintenance program to remove all grit, debris and other solid particles. Vacuuming is far more effective for this type of soiling than wet mopping, which normally moves soiling from one place to another, rather than removing it.



## 3. Spill and spot cleaning

Spills and spots are inevitable, but they don't have to be permanent. Remove a spill quickly and there is less chance of permanent staining. First try to blot the spill with a dry cloth/kitchen towel, then use water. Only use detergents/cleaning products when the above is not sufficient to remove the spill/stain. Use neutral pH detergents, e.g. from the product range of [www.james.eu](http://www.james.eu).



## 4. Periodic cleaning

- Inspect and assess the appearance of the floor. Seasonality may also alter the maintenance requirements.
- Vacuum to remove all grit, debris and other solid particles.
- For light cleaning, a damp mop may be sufficient. Do not use cleaning products when not required.



For heavier cleaning, e.g. to remove oil/grease/surface dirt in kitchen area/entrance ways, wet mopping with detergent may be required, e.g. products from [www.james.eu](http://www.james.eu). In this instance always use the so called “two bucket” method, which is one bucket with water and detergent and one bucket with clean water for rinsing.



- A common error is to use excess detergent, which then leaves a film on the surface. In this instance, clean the floor a few times without any detergent to remove the excess soap/detergent, this would bring you back to a standard condition. Care should be taken to dilute detergents in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.
- For larger (commercial) areas, a professional cleaning machine with rotating brushes and vacuum extraction can be used.



## 5. Deep cleaning

- Periodic cleaning is far more beneficial to the floorcovering than infrequent heavy or deep cleaning. However, seasonality can influence the amount of cleaning required.
- Remove surface dust and grit by vacuuming.



Once dust and debris free, with a spray, apply a solution of neutral pH cleaner to the section to be cleaned (or dependent upon the level of soiling, a light alkaline cleaner), carefully diluted to the manufacturer's instructions. Leave for enough time to react with and lift the soiling. Some agitation with a soft brush may be required.



Pick up the solution with a clean “microfiber” mop, using a continuous and steady side-to-side motion. When the mop head becomes loaded, it will leave residues and start to streak the floor. At this point the dirty mop head should be removed, wrung out, placed into a suitable bag and a clean mop head fitted. The cycle should then be repeated until the whole floor is

completed, is clean and streak-free. Do not move dirty water from one place to another, extraction cleaning may be required.



- The dirty mop heads should then be machine washed and dried ready for reuse.
- Heavy soiling and soiling in the grain, may require a "scrubber dryer" with immediate wet vacuum extraction prior to mopping. Numatic International have a range of appropriate machines for this application. Further advice can be obtained directly from the manufacturer, their distributors or specialist floor care companies.



**Important part from the warranty:**

- Almost all flooring will vary in colour over time when exposed to UV light. Avoid this by using curtains or blinds when the sun is very bright. PVC also has a tendency to yellow in the dark. The combined effect can cause covered areas (under furniture, under permanently closed doors, etc.) to differ in colour compared to non-covered areas. This is a characteristic of all PVC floorcoverings and is excluded in our warranty conditions.
- Avoid rubber or latex backed mats as they may leave stains. Rubber and latex castors or protection caps under furniture must not be used (we advise the use of castors type "W" in accordance with EN 12529).
- In case of loose lay installation, damage of the vinyl flooring caused by heavy overload, rolling loads or sliding activities is excluded in our warranty conditions.
- Do not allow cigarettes, matches and other very hot items to contact the floor as this causes permanent damage.
- Important: Cleaning or maintenance may only take place if the floor is correctly installed and there are no visible imperfections.
- Contact your representative / supplier for the complete warranty conditions.
- (\*) Design Floors considers standard rooms and conditions as:  
Minimum temperature during transport and storage: 0°C  
Minimum temperature during installation: +6°C  
Minimum temperature during use: +6°C  
Maximum temperature during transport and storage: +35°C  
Maximum temperature during installation: +35°C  
Maximum temperature during use: 35°C  
Acclimatisation period: none  
Room size without expansion profiles: wall to wall length maximum 16m.  
No hot spots allowed.
- Design Floors considers extreme rooms and conditions as:  
Minimum temperature during transport and storage: 0°C  
Minimum temperature during installation: +6°C  
Minimum temperature during use: +0°C  
Maximum temperature during transport and storage: +35°C  
Maximum temperature during installation: +35°C  
Maximum temperature during use: +45°C  
Acclimatisation period: 12 hours if the temperature difference between the storage and the installation is more than 20°C  
Room size without expansion profiles: wall to wall length maximum 8m  
No hot spots allowed

- This document was issued on (see at the end of this document) and supercedes all previous versions, at the same time it is superceded as soon as a new version is published. For the latest version please always check [www.installandclean.com](http://www.installandclean.com). The original English version is always leading.
- In case of conflict between these installation instructions and the local technical standards/legislation, the most stringent of the two prevails.

IVC Group - 07/06/2022