

STAINMASTER™ resilient flooring

SoftStep Plus Collection

Installation Instructions



DESCRIPTION

STAINMASTER™ resilient flooring SoftStep Plus Collection is a fiberglass reinforced, vinyl back twelve feet wide resilient sheet flooring product. STAINMASTER™ resilient flooring SoftStep Plus Collection can be installed using one of these installation methods: a traditional fully adhered technique, a pressure sensitive “releasable bond” technique or a loose laid technique depending on the size, complexity and intended use of the area.

GETTING STARTED

The first step is to determine the amount of flooring product you will require for the job. Draw a simple sketch of the area you wish to cover, including all offsets or alcoves and measure the width and length of the area. Keep in mind that the SoftStep Plus is available only in 12' wide widths. If the area is less than 12' wide in one direction just determine the actual length of the area in the other direction. Typically you will want to add at least 3" to this length measurement. Multiply the required length by 12' to determine the required square feet of product for the project. It is helpful to know that 3" = .25 feet, 6" = .5 feet and 9" = .75 feet. Example: Your room is 11' wide by 14'6" long. Multiply 14.75 (the actual length + 3") by 12' to determine that you will require 177 square feet of flooring product.

If the area is wider than 12' in both directions, the flooring product will need to be joined, use your sketch to determine the best placement of the seam. Ideally the seam should be positioned away from the main traffic path and be as short as possible. In addition to determining the length you will also need to determine the “fill” using the correct pattern match. The pattern repeat is typically available on the sample or at the point of sale. Your Lowe's flooring professional will assist in determining the required square feet for your project.

Once the product requirements have been determined it will be necessary to prepare the area to receive the flooring product. The conditions and size of the area will determine the exact type of subfloor preparation that will be required, but in all cases the subfloor must be clean, smooth, flat and dry.

JOB SITE CONDITIONS

Environmental Requirements

SoftStep Plus is designed to be installed in climate controlled, interior locations only. The temperature should be maintained between 65°F and 90°F for at least 48 hours before, during and after the installation is completed.

Structural Requirements

The type and method of construction, the grade level, and the flooring system components all impact the installation of the SoftStep Plus. The structural flooring systems are either constructed of concrete (or cement like materials) or wood.

Wood Subfloors

Wood subfloors are constructed of stripwood planks or wood composite or plywood panels. Typically, these subfloors will require the use of a ¼" underlayment to provide a smooth, clean surface on which to apply adhesives. In the case where the loose lay flooring installation (see Installation Section) is used these subfloors may be appropriately prepared to provide a solid base for the flooring product. Prepare these subfloors by sanding smooth all panel/ board joints, removing any surface contaminant or stains that have the potential to discolor SoftStep Plus.

When underlayment is being used it should have a minimum thickness of ¼" and meet the following criteria:

- Be specifically designed and warranted for use as a flooring underlayment
- Be dimensionally stable

- Have a smooth, fully sanded top surface so graining or texturing that will not telegraph
- Offer resistance to both static and impact indentation
- Offer uniform density, porosity and thickness

Concrete Subfloors

Regardless of age, time in place or grade level, concrete subfloors must be tested for moisture to insure that the concrete subfloor is indeed sufficiently dry. Concrete subfloors must have a minimum compressive strength of 3000PSI and a dry density of at least 100 pounds per cubic foot. The concrete surface must be free of surface defects or surface contaminants. Surface defects include cracks, holes, flaking, or dusting of the concrete surface. Surface contaminants should be considered as any substance that may interfere with the adhesive bond or that may cause bottom up staining of the resilient flooring. Surface defects must be repaired using a Portland cement floor patching compound designed for this purpose. Surface contaminants must be sanded or ground off, do not use any chemicals or solvents to remove these surface contaminants. Surface contaminants are paints, sealing or curing compounds, oils, solvents or existing adhesives.

Warning: Certain paints may contain lead. Exposure to excessive amounts of lead dust presents a health hazard. Refer to applicable federal, state, provincial and local laws and Lead-Based Paint Interim Guidelines for Hazard Identification and Abatement in Public and Indian Housing (September 1990) or subsequent editions published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding (1) appropriate methods for identifying lead-based paint and removing such paint; and (2) any licensing, certification and training requirements for persons performing lead abatement work.

Existing Floor Coverings

It is always prudent to remove existing floor coverings in order to inspect the soundness of the original subfloor.

Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings

Do not sand, dry sweep, dry scrape, drill, saw, bead blast, or mechanically chip or pulverize existing resilient flooring, backing, lining felt, asphaltic “cutback” adhesive, or other adhesive. These products may contain asbestos fibers and/or crystalline silica. Avoid creating dust. Inhalation of such dust is a cancer and respiratory tract hazard. Smoking by individuals exposed to asbestos fibers greatly increases the risk of serious bodily harm. Unless positively certain that the product is a non-asbestos containing material, you must presume it contains asbestos. Regulations may require that the material be tested to determine asbestos content. RFCI's Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings are a defined set of instructions addressed to the task of removing all resilient floor covering structures.

SoftStep Plus may be installed over a single layer of existing resilient floor covering if:

- The existing flooring is firmly and fully adhered to a solid subfloor
- The existing flooring is not a foam-backed or cushioned resilient product
- The existing flooring is not perimeter fastened
- The existing flooring is not asphaltic tile, self-stick tile or rubber tile

In many cases it is practical to use an embossing leveling compound to smooth the texture of the existing flooring.

Existing ceramic tile flooring may be leveled using a cementitious patching compound designed for this purpose.

Follow all directions provided by the embossing leveler or patching compound manufacturer.

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DETERMINE INSTALLATION TECHNIQUE

The overall size, the subfloor construction and the complexity of the job site all influence the best installation technique to use with SoftStep Plus.

Loose Lay/ Floating (no glue)

The loose lay technique is really only practical when the work area is less than 12' wide and there are no seams required in the flooring. The loose lay technique should not be used if the work area is complex with center islands or multiple alcoves and closets. The loose lay system can be used over many types of substrates that would not be acceptable when the flooring product is adhered to the subfloor. When employing the loose lay technique the flooring product must be trimmed back approximately ¼" from all fixed vertical surfaces (this gap will be covered with wall base or quarter round) so that it lays completely flat with no "pinch points" or fullness.

Releasable Bond Fully Adhered (using pressure sensitive releasable adhesive)

The fully adhered "Releasable Bond" option is viable over concrete and most wood panel substrates in use in climate controlled, occupied, existing homes. (Unconditioned wood panel substrates are not dimensionally stable and are subject to too much movement) To achieve a "Releasable Bond" the appropriate adhesive is applied over the substrate with a ¾" nap paint roller and allowed to dry before positioning SoftStep Plus into the adhesive. The flooring is then positioned into the dry adhesive and smoothed out with the use of a clean, soft bristle push broom. Because of the thin, dry adhesive film this method can be used with many types of substrates including clean, lightly embossed existing resilient flooring without the use of a leveler and over clean, dry and smooth OSB substrates without extraordinary floor prep. The coverage rate of the adhesive will be increased to approximately 300 sq. ft. per gallon when applied with a paint roller.

Permanent Bond Fully Adhered

The fully adhered "Permanent Bond" option is the most secure and is the best option if there is heavy foot or rolling traffic or if the layout is cut-up and complicated. Because the Permanent Bond is achieved by placing SoftStep Plus into tacky-wet adhesive applied with a ¼" x ⅜" x ⅜" notched trowel the substrate must be smooth and have sufficient porosity to receive the adhesive. In most cases this requires the use of an appropriate underlayment over wood substrates, that the concrete surface is smoothed using an appropriate Portland cement patching compound. Additionally, SoftStep Plus must be rolled in both directions with a 50 lb. (or heavier) three section floor roller.

CUTTING & FITTING

Regardless of the installation technique used SoftStep Plus must be cut to fit the work area. This can be accomplished using free-hand knifing, pattern scribing or direct scribing techniques. The material is flexible and will handle easily when cutting and trimming. Avoid creasing or kinking the material during handling and layout; always fold the material in a wide radius.

One Piece Installation

Remove any quarter round, shoe base or wall base and undercut any doorways.

Thoroughly clean the subfloor, sweep or vacuum to remove all dust and debris.

When the free-hand knifing technique is used, pre-cut the floor covering to fit the area, allowing 2" to 4" extra length and width for fitting. Position the sheet squarely in the room. Allowing enough material to drop into offsets, alcoves and closets; make relief cuts on

all inside and outside corners. Using a sharp flooring knife trim the vinyl to lay flat.

When pattern scribing a paper template is made of the work area and then transferred to the sheet flooring product. This is the most precise method of fitting sheet vinyl into a room.

If the loose lay technique is to be used, make certain the sheet vinyl is positioned squarely in the room and laying flat ¼" short of any fixed vertical surfaces. Take care to fasten the wall trim into the wall and not into the flooring material.

If either of the fully adhered techniques are used, the material is folded back to expose half of the subfloor. Apply the adhesive as required and gently place the material into the adhesive. Roll or broom as required. Gently fold back the other half of the flooring product and apply the adhesive. Position the sheet into the adhesive and roll or broom as required.

Replace wall base or trim.

Seamed Installation

Before positioning the resilient sheet into the room determine the best possible placement for the seam. If at all possible position the seam out of the main traffic flow. Position the main sheet into the room and determine the length of the second sheet or "fill" piece by taking into account the overall pattern match of the floor covering design.

The pattern match is determined by measuring from one design element to the next identical design element. The pattern match can be found on the sample or at the point of sale. Position the second sheet next to and slightly over top of the first sheet to align the pattern match.

Seams in SoftStep Plus should be cut using the double cut method. When double cutting the seam a steel straightedge is positioned over the top grout line or prevalent design element and both sheets are cut at the same time using a sharp utility knife. This produces a uniformly wide "grout line" and a neat seam cut without gaps or fullness. Once the seam is cut the adhesive can be applied as required. Treat the seam cut with the appropriate seam adhesive/ sealer.

FINISHING & MAINTENANCE

Molding and Base Installation

Protect all exposed edges of the SoftStep Plus with trim or restrictive molding.

- Always use moldings and transition strips over product edges
- Nail wood moldings into the wall and not into the flooring
- Use transition strips where the sheet vinyl meets different types of floor coverings and at doorways
- Apply a bead of silicone caulk at bathtubs, shower stalls, toilets and patio doors

Cleanup & Maintenance

Remove any adhesive smears with a clean cloth dampened with mineral spirits.

If adhesive was used, do not flood the flooring with wash water particularly in the first 48 hours.

Use walk off mats at doorways and entrances.

Use a mild neutral floor cleaner for cleaning.

Do not apply mop & shine type treatments.

For more information

Please see our installation video on YouTube.com for more installation tips or contact us for further information.

(keywords: stainmaster resilient flooring).