

Installation over Radiant Heating

Radiant heat has gained a lot of popularity over the past few years, and it is important to know the specific flooring challenges that go along with it. LAUZON's NextStep Fusion Engineered and Authentic wide plank collections are ideal for radiant heat installations; however, our Classics Collection is not recommended for this application. To ensure successful installation, consumers and installers should understand how radiant heat can affect hardwood floors. Certain basic rules and procedures should be observed to ensure a successful installation.

The most important factor is a dry subfloor. To accomplish this, the radiant heat system should be turned on prior to installation. Failure to do so could result in floors expanding, contracting, shrinking, cracking, cupping and bowing excessively. The following steps will ensure a successful installation over radiant heat:

1. Ensure that the floor is dry: Prior to any type of installation over concrete, sufficient time must be allowed for the slab to dry and cure naturally (usually between 30-60 days). Starting up a radiant heat system before the subfloor is cured could have a negative impact on its structural integrity.
2. Turn the system on for 14-16 days, at 2/3 of the system's maximum temperature. This will remove excess moisture. Halfway through this period (around day 7-8), increase the temperature to maximum output for 2 days.
3. Once the slab or subfloor is completely dry, turn the system off and wait 1-2 days before installation. The temperature of the subfloor cannot exceed 68° F (20° C) at the time of installation.
4. Install flooring as per the Installation Guide.
5. Start system: 24-48 hours after installation, start radiant heat system and gradually increase the temperature in increments of 10° F (5° C). Do not allow the temperature to exceed 80° F (26° C) at any time after installation.

NOTE: The moisture content of the wood flooring will vary during various heating cycles. Wood dries rapidly when the heat is first turned on and its moisture content will probably be at its lowest level towards the end of the heating season. It is normal to have a certain amount of shrinkage and/or cupping during this time. Once the system is turned off, moisture will reintegrate itself into the flooring. When cold weather returns, it is best to restart the system gradually, as a sudden amount of high heat could cause a rapid adjustment in the wood and possible permanent damage. Turn the heat on gradually and maintain relative humidity levels between 35-60% to minimize the effect on the wood.