



Swirl Marks

Swirl marks, in moderate form, are common in all new wood installations or refinished wood floors where disc sanders are used in the flooring surface sanding process.

MFMA has no written policy or specification regarding the appearance or frequency of swirl marks in MFMA flooring installations. Generally speaking, minor swirl marks are apparent in some locations on most flooring installations. They are considered excessive if close-up inspection yields noticeable uneven or gouged areas of the flooring. When viewing a floor for swirl marks, the view should be from a standing position of 5 feet up and 2 feet away under normal lighting conditions and at different times of the day.

There can be a number of causes of swirl marks. The most common occurrence in wood flooring itself results from the use of disc sanders. These are very different from swirl marks between layers of finish, which are typically seen when lighting is reduced and angled reflections are observed.

Between-coat buffing is desirable to ensure proper adhesion of successive coats of finish, and in fact is required under certain finish manufacturer warranties. Flooring appearance in these cases is akin to a fresh wax job on a black automobile -- when viewed at a specific angle under specific lighting conditions, the marks should be visible. Swirl marks of this type are not damaging to the surface. Typically, the marks will soon become less noticeable with age.

If you have additional questions, please contact MFMA's Technical Director at 888-480-9138.

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