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Technical Newsletter #28 2.0

Subject: : Oxidation and color variations in hardwood floors

This newsletter presents the main reasons why hardwood floors can change color.

The phenomenon of oxidation

The color of all hardwood flooring naturally evolves over time, regardless of species or initial color. Exposure to light, oxygen, and environmental conditions can alter the wood's natural pigments. Depending on the species, the floor may gradually develop warmer tones, darken slightly, or become more yellow in appearance.

To better understand the phenomenon of wood oxidation, move a carpet or piece of furniture from a new floor after it has been exposed to light for a few weeks. The newly uncovered area will be lighter than the rest of the floor that had been exposed to light.

Normal aging process

Wood is a natural material composed primarily of cellulose, lignin, and extractives. These components influence both the wood's original color and the way it evolves when exposed to sunlight, artificial light, heat, and the natural aging process.

Regardless of the precautions taken to preserve a floor's original appearance, natural aging will result in some degree of color variation. It is important to note that these changes occur within the wood itself and do not indicate a defect or deterioration of the finish.

How long before changes become apparent and what types of variations can be expected? That depends on the duration and intensity of light exposure. Some changes occur quickly, while others can take weeks, months, or even years to appear.

Effects of intense light exposure

Prolonged exposure to direct sunlight or high-intensity artificial lighting can accelerate the natural color change process. Depending on the species, the wood may become lighter, darker, or develop different tonal variations over time. In cases of intense exposure, these changes may occur more rapidly and be more noticeable. To help promote a more uniform appearance, it is recommended to limit prolonged exposure to direct sunlight whenever possible.

Partial discoloration

If carpets are used, the area of the wood floor beneath the carpet will be paler. This lighter surface will gradually darken to more closely match the rest of the floor once exposed to light. Even though the rest of the floor surface exposed to light will also continue to change, this will occur at a slower rate. In time, the difference in color will become much less noticeable but will never disappear completely.

Responsibility

Color variation resulting from the natural aging and oxidation of wood is a normal characteristic of hardwood flooring. As such, changes in color resulting from these natural processes are not considered manufacturing defects and are not covered under warranty.

If you have any other questions about this topic, feel free to contact our Technical Service Department.