



INSTALLATION GUIDELINES

8 MM LAMINATE FLOORING

Maintenance Instructions and Limited Warranty Included

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Buyers and owners are responsible for thoroughly reading all materials provided by the retailer at time of purchase prior to the installation of flooring, including the installation guidelines, maintenance instructions, and the product warranty information. The following instructions apply only to Golden Elite's 8 mm laminate floors, included within the Rio Collection. This product is installed through a side click installation method. These instructions do not apply to Golden Elite's 12 mm laminate floors.

Golden Elite is not responsible for the installer's application of the product and requires the product to be inspected prior to installation. The installer should contact the supplier immediately for replacement if the product (whether an individual plank or more) appears doubtful in appearance, such as grade, color, finish, or quality. The supplier is responsible for replacing flooring materials in a timely fashion if the product is determined to be defective. However, Golden Elite is *not* responsible for flooring that has been previously installed or damaged on the surface (or tongue) of the plank by the installer. For flooring that is determined to be defective post-installation, Golden Elite will be responsible to reimburse the buyer for the materials only, labor costs or any other related expenses will not be reimbursed.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

- Laying the floor should be the last step of your project.
- Laminate floors can be installed above or below grade level.
- Check with your building inspector before installing laminate stairways. In many areas, laminate stairs fail to meet code.
- **Maintain relative humidity of 50-60% before, during, and after the installation at the jobsite.**
- Laminate floors expand and contract with changes in relative humidity, making it necessary to leave 3/8" (10 mm) expansion space around the perimeter of the room and all other objects.
- Use a hygrometer [relative humidity indicator] to check moisture content in the air to ensure that relative humidity is within the recommended range.
- The heating system must be functional and the building must be heated up to 15-20° C (70° F) for a minimum of 7 days.
- The floor floats and is installed without glue. It is safe to walk on the floor during and immediately after installation.
- **The installation of some Golden Elite laminate flooring is not guaranteed for radiant heated floors. For installation on radiant heated floors, contact Golden Elite to obtain written authorization from the manufacturer by calling 1-888-642-8844.**
- It is recommended to install flooring parallel to the longest wall in the room or parallel to the main window in the room.
- To calculate the flooring material requirements, measure the length and width of the room where you will be installing the laminate floor and multiply them together to determine its area. Add 10% to the room's area to determine square footage of laminate flooring, underlayment, and vapor barrier that you will require. We recommend you purchase a few extra cartons of flooring to be used in case you have some damaged pieces, miscalculate the size of the room or miss cut some pieces.
- *Document Each Test:* To ensure that the flooring product is being installed according to the outlined guidelines, Golden Elite requires for the buyer or installer to document each step of the preparation process prior to installing the flooring. This involves taking a photograph of the test reader that displays the humidity level, the temperature of the jobsite, the subfloor, etc., along with the date and time that the photograph was taken. This can be completed quickly using a basic camera on your cell phone and helps protect the buyer or installer in the case that a claim needs to be filed.

MATERIALS & TOOLS

Materials

- Laminate floors
- Underlayment / Membrane
- Vapor barrier (if needed)
- Transitional moldings (if needed)

Tools

- Measuring tape
- Carpenter's square
- 2" (51 mm) wide moisture resistant adhesive tape
- Utility knife
- Safety glasses
- Dust mask
- Pencil/marker
- Pull bar
- Tapping block
- 3/8" (10 mm) thick spacers
- Power saw (any of the following):
 - Table saw
 - Miter saw
 - Circular saw
 - Jigsaw
- Handsaw or doorjamb saw

Golden Elite recommends purchasing Supex Cushion (3-in-1) underlayment and membrane, which is used as an acoustic underlayment, heat reflector, and vapor barrier. Or we recommend purchasing Silver Guard (2-in-1) underlayment and membrane, used as a heat protector and vapor barrier. For more information regarding acoustic membranes, see your local distributor of Golden Elite, or call 1-888-642-8844.

SUBFLOOR PREPARATION

A. General Subfloor Preparation & Precautions

- Subfloors must be clean and free of dirt and debris prior to installation.
- Subfloors must be structurally sound and flat prior to installation.
- Subfloor moisture must be tested prior to installation and should not exceed 12% throughout the installation area.
- Carpet is not a suitable underlayment for laminate floors. All carpet, carpet pad and carpet tack should be removed prior to installation.
- Variations in the subfloor flatness should not exceed 1/16" per 3 ft. (2 mm/m). Floors must be leveled to meet this specification prior to installation. Level by filling depressed areas with floor leveling compounds and sanding or grinding down any raised areas. Subfloor thickness must be a minimum of 15 mm (5/8").

B. Concrete

- Concrete subfloors must be properly cured and allowed to dry for at least 30 days prior to installation. Test concrete subfloor for moisture prior to installation.
 - Tape 3' x 3' (91 cm x 91 cm) pieces of polyethylene vapor barrier to subfloor.
 - If condensation appears on the film after 24 hours or concrete appears dark, in color, moisture is likely present and a Calcium Chloride test must be performed.
 - The maximum allowable moisture emission is 5 lbs./1000 ft.² per 24 hours (2.26 kg/101.6 m² per 24 hours).

- A 0.12" (3 mm) thick underlayment and 8 mil. (0.2 mm) polyethylene vapor barrier must be used when installing over concrete.
- Overlap vapor barrier edges by 8" (20 cm) and seal with moisture resistant adhesive tape.
- Run vapor barrier 3/4" (2 cm) up wall and trim after wall base is installed.
- Underlayment edges should not be overlapped. Butt end edges together and seal with adhesive tape.

C. Wood

- Wood subfloors must be structurally sound and screwed or nailed to supporting beams.
- Do not install laminate floors over wood subfloors applied directly to concrete.
- If installing floors over a crawl space it is recommended that an 8 mil. (0.2 mm) vapor barrier be installed.
 - Overlap vapor barrier edges by 8" (20cm) and seal with moisture resistant adhesive tape.
 - Run vapor barrier 3/4" (2 cm) up wall and trim after wall base is installed.
- A 0.12" (3 mm) thick underlay must be installed prior to installation of laminate floors.

D. Vinyl (sheet/tile), Linoleum, Ceramic Tile

- If vinyl, linoleum, or ceramic tile is installed over concrete an 8 mil (0.2 mm) vapor barrier must be installed over it.
 - Overlap vapor barrier edges by 8" (20 cm) and seal with moisture resistant adhesive tape.
 - Run vapor barrier 3/4" (2 cm) up wall and trim after wall base is installed.
- A 0.12" (3 mm) thick underlayment must be installed prior to installation of laminate floors.

E. Radiant heat

IMPORTANT: Due to the speed of sudden temperature changes, which has the potential to negatively affect laminate flooring construction, it is not recommended to install over any **electrical radiant heating system**. Installation over electrical radiant heating systems will not be covered by the manufacturer's warranty. Buyer must obtain written authorization from the manufacturer in order to install flooring over radiant, call 1-888-642-8844.

Owner and installer are solely and jointly responsible for pre-installation subfloor moisture level check and must ensure that all conditions and/or specifications listed in this guide have been thoroughly met prior to installation of the floor.

ROOM PREPARATION

A. Wall Base/Trim

- Removal of existing wall base/trim is optional.
- Wall base or trim will need to be installed once the flooring installation is complete to cover the expansion space around the perimeter of the room.
- Always nail/adhere wall base and trim to the wall. Never nail/adhere it to the laminate flooring.

B. Doors/Door Jambs

Laminate floors should be installed under door jambs so your door jambs will need to be undercut accordingly. To do so:

- Use a laminate flooring off-cut and a small piece of underlayment to support your saw blade at the correct height for undercutting.
- Check door clearances and make any necessary height adjustments before installing laminate floors.
- Make sure to leave the correct expansion spacing.

C. Wall Irregularities

Walls are not always perfectly straight. Golden Elite laminate floors will need to be cut so as to fit within irregularities of your walls. To do so:

1. Install a complete, first row of the laminate floor and ensure that all long edges of the laminate flooring are aligned flush with one other.
2. Slide the whole row against the wall; you will now notice any of these irregularities (i.e. areas where the wall is not straight.)
3. Trace the contour of the wall onto the row of laminate flooring with a pencil or marker.
4. Once traced, uninstall the planks carefully so as to not damage the locking system and cut along the traced line.
5. Re-install the planks leaving the necessary 3/8" (10 mm) expansion space.

ACCLIMATION

IMPORTANT: Do not open boxes until ready to begin installation.

Laminate floors must be acclimated to the conditions of your home before they are installed. To do so, cross-stack unopened cartons in the area where they will be installed and away from outside walls, heat and air conditioning vents. Allow 48 hours for your floors to acclimate to the conditions of the installation area before opening the cartons. Installation temperature should be at a minimum of 64° F (18° C) with a maximum relative humidity of 75%.

INSTALLATION

A. Basic Procedures

- It is recommended that planks be mixed from at least three cartons to achieve the most natural and varied results.
- Inspect every plank for damage before installing it. If any plank is determined to be defective, contact the distributor as soon as possible. Golden Elite recommends for the buyer to be present during the installation of the floor to inspect all the material with the installer prior to the installation.
- The first and last row of the installation should be wider than 3.5" (9 cm). To ensure this will be the case, prior to installation:
 1. Measure the width of the room and divide it by the width of the planks you are installing.
 2. If the remainder is less than 3.5" (9 cm) cut 3.5" (9 cm) from the width of the first row. If this is not possible, simply ensure that both edge planks are as even in width as possible.
- The first and last plank in a row should be a minimum of 16" (40 cm) long.
- Stagger the planks from row to row by a minimum of 16" (40 cm).
- Prepare the subfloor and room as per the corresponding instructions found in this guideline.
- Use spacers to maintain the 3/8" (10 mm) expansion space between the first row and the wall.
- Select a starting corner of the room and work from left to right.

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B. First Rows

- 1.) First install the underlayment, per width and gradually as you progress. Let the membrane (underlayment) run up the wall a bit before cutting to size. A molding will be attached to this later. See diagram 3A.
- 2.) Begin the first row with a whole plank. First saw off the tongue on both the long and the short sides. See diagram 3B.
- 3.) Put the plank with sawn off sides against the wall. Put spacers between the planks and the wall. This will ensure that your expansion joint is wide enough, 8 to 10 mm (5/16" to 3/8"). See diagram 3C.
- 4.) The diagrams indicate where the panels are clicked together by angling up and down or where they are tapped together flat. Follow the diagrams precisely. See diagrams 4A - 4F. For a more pleasing appearance, the floor should be installed with a staggered random length for the starting planks in each row. Be careful not to create a repeating pattern. For example, start the first row with a whole plank, second row with 1/3 of a plank, third row with 2/3 of a plank, then a whole, then 1/2, then 1/4, then back to whole, then short, then medium, etc. Alternating the length of the starting plank on each row will avoid creating a zigzag or stair step pattern in the floor.
- 5.) In places where it is too difficult to install the planks with the tapping block (e.g. against the wall), you can tap them together using the pull bar and a hammer. See diagrams 5A-5B-5C.
- 6.) There must also be an 8 to 10 mm (5/16" to 3/8") expansion joint between the last row and the wall. Keep this in mind when sawing the last row of panels.

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C. Installing in Wet Areas

Since prolonged water exposure could damage your laminate flooring, the following installation recommendations should be closely followed to validate your residential water warranty. Wet areas would include, but not limited to, bathrooms, powder rooms, kitchens, mud rooms, foyers, and laundry rooms. Neither flooring panels nor accessories are recommended for extreme humid applications. The water warranty excludes all products thinner than 8 mm (5/16") and does not apply to beveled edge products when used in bathrooms. An expansion area of 8 to 10 mm (5/16" - 3/8") must be provided around all vertical obstructions including walls, permanent cabinets, pipes, etc. All perimeter expansion areas must be completely filled in with a water repellent flexible silicone sealant. When applying sealant, it is helpful to first apply a strip of masking tape parallel to and approximately 1 mm (1/32") from the edge of the flooring. Then fill the expansion area with sealant, remove any excess with a plastic scraper or putty knife, then remove the tape. Let dry for 24 hours before exposure to water.

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D. Pipes

In rows where there is a pipe, make sure the pipe falls exactly in line with the short side of two panels. Take a drill bit with the same diameter as the pipe plus 20 mm (3/4") for the expansion. Click the panels together on the short side and drill a hole centered on the joint between the two panels. Now you can install the panels in the floor. See diagrams 6A-6B-6C.

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E. Under Door Jambs

When sawing the panels, ensure that the expansion joint under the door jamb is at least 10 mm (3/8"). If you cannot lift the panel, use an adapted tapping block or pull bar and hammer to tap the panels together with the planks flat on the floor. See diagrams 7A-7B.

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F. Finishing

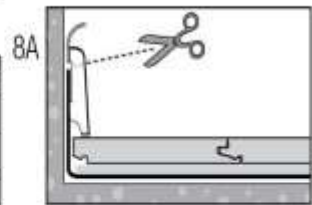
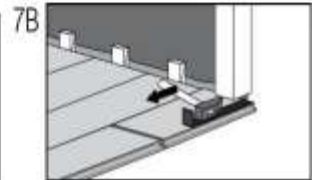
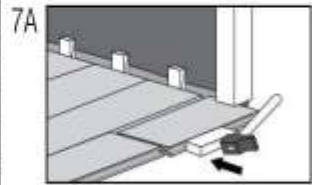
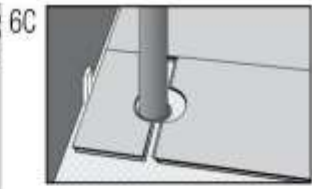
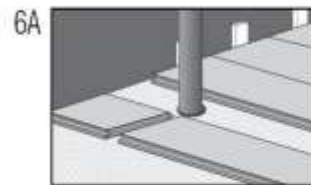
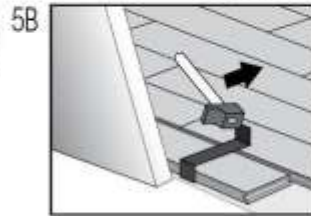
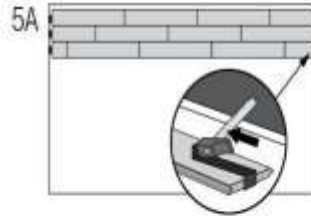
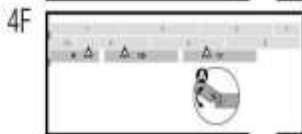
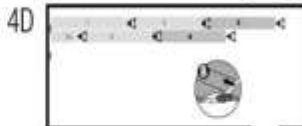
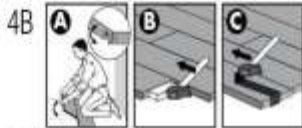
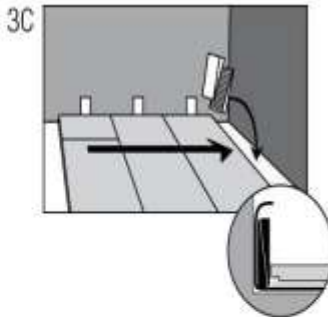
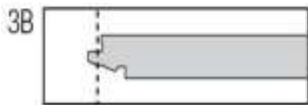
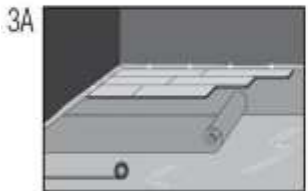
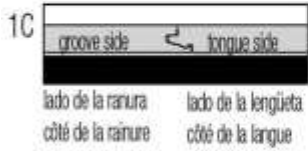
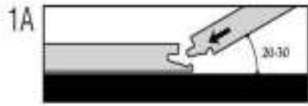
- Remove all spacers.
- Install the molding on the aluminum film from the membrane that runs up the wall from under the floor. Never attach the molding to the floor. This method allows the floor to expand and contract under the molding. (See diagram 8A).
- For a perfect finish around pipes, use rosettes or flexible silicone caulking.
- In places where profiles or skirting cannot be placed, fill expansion gaps with flexible silicone caulking.

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G. Precautions

- Protect furniture and chair legs with proper felt or rubber caps.
 - Avoid bringing dirt, water and sand indoors by providing a suitable solid backed floor mat at the door.
 - Furniture on casters/wheels must use soft, rubber wheels that are suitable for a laminate floor and/or use a suitable protective mat.
 - Ensure that humidity in the room is always at least 50%. Use a humidifier if you need to.
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INSTALLATION DIAGRAMS



MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Golden Elite laminate floors are among the highest performing floors available, but they are not indestructible and minor cosmetic scuffing is normal wear for any laminate floors. To ensure your floors perform as well in the future as they do the day after you install them:

DO:

- Place walk off mats and area rugs at main traffic entrances and protective pads under furniture legs to prevent scratching.
- Sweep or vacuum using the wand attachment.
- For spills, just wipe up with a cloth or sponge.
- Allow time for floor to dry after washing.
- Immediately wipe up wet areas from spills, foreign substances, or wet feet.

DON'T:

- Use soap-based detergents or "mop and shine" products, as these may leave a dull film on your laminate floor.
 - Use abrasive cleaners, steel wool, or scouring powder, which can scratch your floor. And, in very sandy areas or at the beach, sweep or vacuum regularly.
 - Wax or polish your floor.
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25-YEAR RESIDENTIAL WARRANTY

WHO'S COVERED

As the original purchaser of your Golden Elite laminate floor, you are covered by this warranty.

TRANSFERABILITY

This warranty is not transferable.

LENGTH OF COVERAGE

This limited residential warranty is valid from the date of purchase of the flooring up to the number of years indicated on your invoice and 5 years for commercial foot traffic

WHAT'S COVERED

Your Golden Elite laminate floor is warranted against finish wear from normal household conditions resulting in the exposure of the bare wood.

It is also warranted against grading, finishing and milling defects in excess of the waste factor. Waste factor is an industry term that refers to an allowance for manufacturing and natural defects in flooring and is represented by a percentage. While board selection may vary according to personal preference, waste is determined by NWFA standards. Accordingly, it is warranted that no more than 5% of the total square footage of your purchase of a domestic species and 10% for exotic species will exhibit any manufacturing or natural defects.

WHAT'S NOT COVERED

Moisture (or Lack of Moisture): Damages caused by moisture (such as leaking pipes, spills, wet mopping, pets, relative humidity, subfloor moisture, etc.) are excluded. Moisture (and dryness) can cause issues such as checks, cupping, crowning, warping, buckling, peeling, twisting, or gapping.

Other Site and Environmental Conditions: Defects or damages resulting from extreme indoor conditions (such as extreme heat, radiant heat, or exposure to sand); indentations and scratches (caused by pets, furniture, appliances, tools, heels, toys, etc.); improper maintenance and accidents; misuse and abuse; and any wear that conflicts with the care and installation instructions are not covered.

Gloss reduction: Fading or loss of gloss is not finish wear and not a product defect.

Within the waste factor: Defects in flooring that do not exceed the waste factor are not covered under this warranty. Consequently, it is a good rule of thumb to add the applicable percentage above to your total square footage when ordering your floor.

Other finishes: This warranty covers the factory applied finish. Applying another finish and/or sanding in preparation for another finish may damage the factory applied finish and voids the warranty against finish wear.

Poor Installation: For example, damage caused by sub-surface, sub-flooring and jobsite environmental deficiencies; improper transportation, acclimation and storage; damage, and bumps or surface dimples created by nailing machines or staples are not covered. Additionally, damages caused by any advice or instructions that conflict with Golden Elite laminate installation instructions are excluded from this warranty.

Non-Traditional Installations: For example, intricate patterns, installations on walls or ceilings and usages for purposes other than flooring (like furniture or countertops) void this warranty. Boards Installed with Visible Defects: If you see any board with defects DO NOT install it. This includes visible manufacturing, natural or other defects.

Natural Wood Characteristics: Wood flooring is a natural product. It may change as a result of the conditions to which it is exposed including seasonal and environmental factors. Seasonal gapping due to the wood's expansion and contraction in heating and non-heating seasons may occur. Color changes due to aging or exposure to UV/sunlight may also occur. In addition, natural wood variations from board to board, like differences in grain, color, tone and knots, may exist. Issues relating to these natural wood characteristics are not covered under this warranty.

Color and Shade Variations: New or replacement flooring may not always match samples, printed color photography (including websites and catalogs), existing flooring or other wood products (such as cabinets, stair railings, trim and moldings) due to natural variations that occur by species, age, growing conditions, exposure to UV/sunlight and other factors. Consequently, these variations should be expected.

Odd Lots & Third-Party Purchases: An odd lot is flooring that is discounted because it did not pass our rigorous inspection process and is not covered under this warranty. Additionally, only purchases made directly from Golden Elite in store, online or by phone are covered by this Golden Elite Warranty.

Special, Indirect or Consequential Damages: Losses, damages or expenses relating to anything other than the floor itself are not covered. For example, personal damages/costs that may arise while pursuing a quality issue, such as missed time from work, hotel stays, storage fees, kennel costs for pets, etc., are not covered. Further, costs relating to the removal of defective flooring or installation of replacement flooring are not covered under the warranty. Countertops, cabinets, built-in appliances or other fixtures should not be installed on top of your floor and the cost of the removal or replacement of these items is not covered.

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR WARRANTY

Follow the Pre-Installation Requirements: Prior to installing a single board, you or the installer must determine the job-site environment and the sub-surfaces meet or exceed applicable industry and product standards. Just a few of these standards state:

- You must comply with all applicable environmental and building codes, regulations and laws.
- Your installation area and subfloor must be dry, stiff and flat within industry standards. Also, use a moisture barrier according to the installation instructions and acclimate your flooring to the area where it is being installed. Once acclimated and before work begins, measure the moisture content of the flooring and subfloor with a moisture meter and document it. The moisture levels between the flooring and the subfloor must be 4% or less.

□ Your installation area must be between 60° to 80° Fahrenheit with a relative humidity between 30% and 50% for at least five days prior to delivery and throughout the life of your floor to ensure optimum performance.

Boards Installed with Visible / Invisible Defects: If you see any board with defects DO NOT install it. This includes visible manufacturing, natural or other defects. For flooring that is determined to be defective post-installation, Golden Elite will be responsible for reimbursing the buyer for the materials **only**.

Plan on being present during installation to ensure that all required procedures are completed and boards with visible defects are not installed. It is important to inspect individual boards and to frequently step back to observe the “whole picture” before installation is completed. If you’re not present during the installation, you are responsible for the installer’s judgment in board selection and placement. It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure that the product delivered is the product that was selected.

If quality issues are suspected before or during installation, immediately contact the store where your floor was purchased.

Touch-ups During Installation: If you or your installer use stain, filler or putty stick for touch-up during installation, they are considered normal practices and procedures in regard to this warranty.

Follow the Golden Elite Laminate Installation and Care Instructions: It is your, or the installer’s, duty to make sure the installation requirements are strictly followed, especially in the use of moisture barriers, installation tools such as nailers and trowels, and in evaluation of job site conditions and moisture testing.

WHAT WE WILL DO

If any portion of your floor should fail with respect to this warranty, we will provide a store credit for the purchase price paid for the defective portion of the flooring (excluding any installation costs and labor) in excess of the applicable waste factor mentioned in “What’s Covered.” A store credit is the sole remedy under this warranty and can be used for store product purchases only. There is no guarantee that the same or a similar product to the original flooring will be available at the time a store credit is issued.

We reserve the right to investigate, assess and validate reported claims by, among other things, requesting samples from you for technical analysis and performing an inspection of the flooring and installation location.

AS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE "WHAT'S NOT COVERED" SECTION, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL WE BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES. FURTHER, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL OUR LIABILITY ARISING OUT OF OR RELATING TO THE PURCHASE OF YOUR GOLDEN ELITE LAMINATE FLOORING EXCEED THE TOTAL SUM PAID BY YOU FOR THE FLOORING AT ISSUE.

HOW TO FILE A WARRANTY CLAIM

Just visit the store where you purchased your floor, or contact a Golden Elite Representative by calling 1-888-642-8844. Claims must be submitted within ninety (90) days of the date that the problem with the floor is first discovered.

YOUR RIGHTS

The terms above represent the sole and exclusive warranty with regard to your Golden Elite laminate flooring. WE DISCLAIM ALL OTHER WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT ANY SUCH WARRANTIES CANNOT BE VALIDLY DISCLAIMED UNDER APPLICABLE LAW.

This warranty gives you specific legal rights, and you may also have other rights which vary from State to State or Province to Province. We maintain the exclusive right to alter the obligations and limitations of this warranty.
