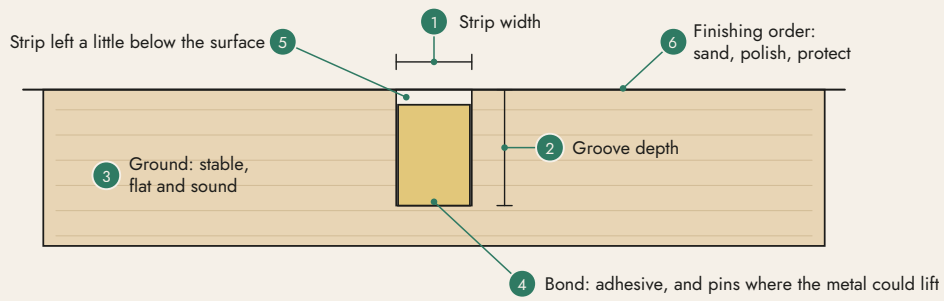
Metal *inlay* specification: strips and movement

The six decisions to write down for a metal inlay, the strip sizes three trades publish, and wording to paste into a specification. No rule exists for decorative inlay depth or tolerance: the partner workshop states them.

AT A GLANCE

Where it is set	What is published	Source	Note
Stringing in furniture and panelling	Typically 1 to 3 mm wide, let flush into a routed channel	Our metal inlay pages	Decorative line. Groove depth, strip thickness and tolerance: no published rule found; the partner workshop states them.
Metal strip in a sanded timber floor	Metal about ¼ in (6.4 mm) thick is preferred, left about 1/32 in (0.8 mm) below the surface before sanding; router bit the same width as the strip	NWFA B300 (3rd ed., 2015)	US trade-body practice for strips routed in on site. No width is given.
Fixing a floor strip	Nails of the same metal and epoxy together, drilled at 9 to 10 in (230 to 255 mm); test the bond through sanding	NWFA B300	Nails and epoxy together so the strip does not curl up when sanded.
Metals to avoid in a sanded floor	Steel and stainless steel: risk of sparks while sanding	NWFA B300	Brass, copper and aluminium are the nonferrous metals it names.
Divider strip in terrazzo	18 gauge to ½ in wide; 16 gauge or 1/8 in (3.2 mm) is standard	NTMA guide (2026)	Zinc and brass for cement terrazzo; zinc, brass, plastic or aluminium for epoxy. Gauges are not converted here.
Movement of the strip	Metal reacts to temperature; timber to humidity. A 300 mm brass line moves about 0.12 mm in a 20 K swing.	NWFA; TL-MET-23	An oak panel 300 mm wide can move about 5.75 mm over 35 to 65 % humidity: see the movement sheet.
Minimum radius, tolerance, joint spacing	No published rule found	none	Ask the partner workshop and approve a sample.

Inches are the sources' units and the millimetre figures are conversions, rounded. The US sources describe US practice, not UK standards.



A metal strip in a timber ground, with the six decisions numbered. The groove is drawn wider than life. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio; not to scale.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

STRINGING IN JOINERY OR FURNITURE

Metal inlay strip [brass, CZ[ ]] [2] mm wide by [ ] mm thick, solid through its thickness, let flush into a groove [ ] mm deep cut into [solid timber / the core of a veneered board], bonded with [an adhesive approved in writing by the workshop] [and pinned at [ ] mm centres]. Finished [flush with the finished surface / [ ] mm below the surface before finishing]. Width tolerance plus or minus [ ] mm; level tolerance plus or minus [ ] mm. Runs across the grain of solid timber not longer than [ ] mm, or broken by [ ] mm joints. Method statement and an approved sample in the project timber and metal before production.

METAL STRIP IN A SANDED TIMBER FLOOR

Nonferrous metal only [brass / copper / aluminium], no steel or stainless steel. Strip [6.4] mm thick, set in a groove cut with a router bit the width of the strip, bonded with [two-part epoxy] and pinned with nails of the same metal at [230 to 255] mm centres. Strip set [0.8] mm below the wood surface before sanding. Bond to be proved on a sample through sanding before the floor is laid. Metal to be sanded in short bursts to avoid overheating.

DIVIDER STRIP IN TERRAZZO

Divider strips [brass / zinc] [3.2] mm wide, of a metal approved by the terrazzo system maker for the [cement / epoxy] matrix, set over joints in the base as shown on drawing [ ] and elsewhere as the pattern drawing. Strip supplier to confirm the metal is suitable for the matrix and the cleaning regime.

TERMS USED

Stringing
A narrow line of inlay, here metal, let flush into the surface to outline a panel, door or table top.

Nonferrous metal
A metal with no iron base, such as brass, copper or aluminium. NWFA names these, and not steel or stainless steel, for strips in floors that are sanded.

Divider strip
A thin metal or plastic strip set on edge in terrazzo to separate colours, mark a pattern or follow a joint in the base (NTMA).

Ground
The surface a piece is let into: here the timber or board that holds the groove.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- NWFA Technical Publication No. B300, Ornamental Floors: Design & Installation, 3rd edition (2015): pages 17 to 18 and 21; US practice.
- National Terrazzo & Mosaic Association, Terrazzo Systems Reference Guide (2026): system table, dividers; US practice.
- Library sheet: thermal expansion of metals (TL-MET-23): brass coefficient.
- Our metal inlay and brass inlay strips pages: 1 to 3 mm stringing.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/metal-inlay-specification. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.