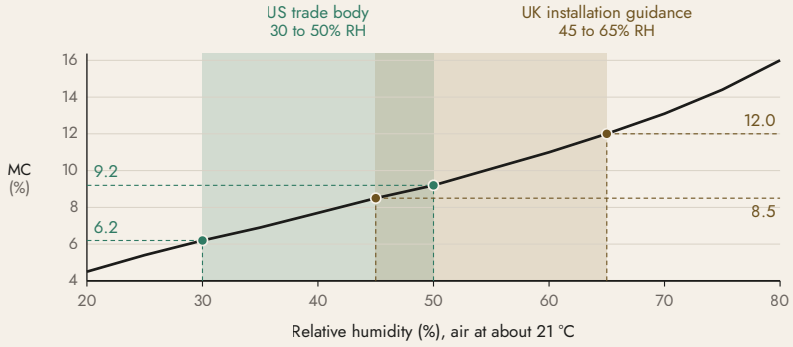
Timber floor *acclimatisation* and site conditions: reconciling the advice

Published advice on acclimatising timber floors conflicts because the sources assume different humidity, products and starting points. Specify the room conditions and the moisture readings, not a number of days.

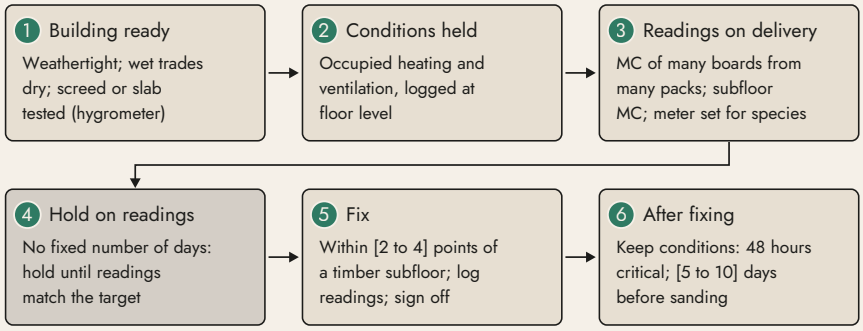
AT A GLANCE

Question	US trade body (NWFA)	UK distributor, makers, retailers and press (2015 to 2026)	How to read it
Days in the room	No fixed days. Flooring already at the in-use moisture content, with a matching subfloor, may be installed at once (A)	At least 72 hours (F, I). None for one maker's pre-finished engineered boards (G). Engineered 24 to 72 hours, solid 5 to 14 days or more (H). Kiln-dried 10 to 14 days, reclaimed up to 4 weeks (J)	Days stand in for a moisture reading
Room humidity and temperature	30 to 50% RH and 60 to 80 °F (16 to 27 °C) (B); or the RH planned for occupants and 65 to 75 °F (18 to 24 °C) (C)	45 to 65% RH and 15 to 25 °C, kept for the life of the floor (F). 35 to 65% RH (G)	The two bands overlap only at 45 to 50% RH
Flooring moisture content	Match the in-use equilibrium. Solid flooring is made at 6 to 9% (D)	6 to 9%, or 6 to 8% at fitting (G). 8 to 12% in a UK home (H)	6 to 9% goes with 30 to 50% RH, and 8.5 to 12% with 45 to 65% RH (E)
Flooring against a timber subfloor	Subfloor no more than 4 points above strip under 76 mm and parquet, and 2 points above plank 76 mm and wider and end grain (A)	Timber subfloor under 14% WME (F). Floorboards within 2 to 4 points of a subfloor under 12% (I)	Tighter for wider boards (A)
After fixing	5 to 7 days before sanding unfinished solid (A). Conditions kept for 7 days after (C)	48 hours the most critical; 10 days before sanding unfinished floors (F)	Keep the conditions; wait before sanding

Letters are the sources under "Source by source". NWFA figures are US units converted (1 in = 25.4 mm). RH is relative humidity; WME is a moisture-meter reading of a timber subfloor. Figures are what each source states, not a standard; the maker's written instructions take precedence.



Moisture content wood settles at against relative humidity (Wood Handbook 2021, Table 4-2, air at about 21 °C). Shaded: the NWFA band and the UK guidance band. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.



The sequence of site-condition gates. Values in square brackets are examples from the guidance read, to be replaced by the maker's figures. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

SITE CONDITIONS BEFORE DELIVERY

Wood flooring is not to be delivered until the building is weathertight, the wet trades are complete and dry, and heating and ventilation have held the in-service conditions of [45 to 65]% relative humidity and [15 to 25] °C for not less than [7] days, as recorded by a logger at floor level in each room receiving flooring. The log is to be issued to [designer] and [floor contractor] before delivery. Conditions are to be held during fixing and for not less than [7] days after. Unfinished floors are not to be sanded until [10] days after fixing, or the maker's period if longer.

MOISTURE CONTENT AND ACCLIMATISATION

No fixed acclimatisation period applies. Flooring is to be held in the room, or in an equivalent conditioned space, until the moisture content of not fewer than [40] boards per [93] m^2, taken from [several] packs with a meter set for [species], averages [x]% [+/- y]% and no board exceeds [z]%. Over a timber subfloor, the flooring is to be within [2] percentage points of the subfloor for planks [76] mm and wider, and within [4] for narrower strips and parquet. Readings, meter and date are to be issued to [designer] before fixing. The maker's written instructions take precedence.

TERMS USED

Acclimatisation

Leaving timber flooring in the building so it can reach the room's temperature and humidity before laying; recommended times range from about 72 hours to several weeks depending on the source.

Equilibrium moisture content (EMC)

The moisture content at which wood is neither gaining nor losing moisture in air of a given humidity and temperature. A floor settles towards it, so aim for it on delivery.

Relative humidity (RH)

The amount of water vapour in the air as a percentage of the most the air can hold at that temperature.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- NWFA (US trade body): Acclimation/Conditioning (c 2019): Source A, with B, C and D (linked in the source table). All read.
- US Forest Products Laboratory, Wood Handbook (2021), chapter 4: Table 4-2. Read. Source E.
- BS 8201:2011: BSI lists it as current (31 October 2011). Not read: confirm every figure attributed to it. Source K.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/timber-floor-acclimatisation-and-site-conditions. 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.