

Floored for choice? Particleboard flooring has all the answers



Image courtesy of Carter Holt Harvey Woodproducts

Cost-effective, long lasting and easy to install; particleboard flooring is widely used in residential, commercial and industrial projects.

With cost and robustness being two most significant factors in what goes underfoot, it is not surprising that architects, engineers and designers choose particleboard flooring.

Well-established as a sub floor surface in the Australian home building industry, particleboard flooring is also used in larger projects, such as sporting and community halls, educational institutions, and light industrial and commercial areas.

Strong, hardwearing, and requiring very little time or effort to install, particleboard flooring is an ideal base for a range of floor coverings, including timber, vinyl, carpet, tiles, slate and parquet.

Particleboard is a wood panel product, made up of flakes of wood in a variety of sizes that are bonded together, under heat and pressure, with a high-strength resin.

The resin-enriched surface of the panels ensures that particleboard flooring can withstand exposure to the weather for up to three months, a huge plus given its use in platform construction, where the sub floor is built prior to the walls and roof being installed.

Particleboard flooring is tongue and grooved to ensure an easy and tight fit for adjoining panels. It is available in a series of thicknesses for specific flooring needs. Panels can be easily identified by a colour-coded wax (and tongue) around the edge: yellow/green indicating 19mm thick board, red/beige 22mm thick and blue 25mm thick product. Typical sheet sizes are 3600x900mm for 19 and 22mm board and 3600x600mm for 25mm board.

Whilst 19 and 22mm thick board is generally used in residential applications (at 450 and 600mm floor joist spacings respectively), 25mm thick is ideal for commercial, industrial and institutional buildings where heavier loads are the order of the day.

The benefits of particleboard flooring for architects, designers and builders are many, the fact that it is easy to install, requiring only the dry trades, is particularly important. This, of course, contributes to the overall cost-effectiveness of the installed product, as does the lightness of sub-floor construction and the subsequent reduction in the cost of foundations.

Also, by their nature timber sub-floors are more comfortable than concrete for people who are required to stand for long periods of time (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers).

Particleboard flooring is available in Australia with a range of treatments that increase its dimensional stability and its resistance to moisture, fungus, termites and fire, adding to its versatility and durability for the building industry.

Unlike the particleboard used in furniture and cabinetry, particleboard flooring products incorporate a wax solution into the resin, meaning greater edge protection when the panels are cut.

Sustainable, cheap, easy to install

As far as environmental credentials go, particleboard flooring stands on its own as a flooring material. Like all timber products, particleboard flooring has low embodied energy, enhanced by the fact that it is manufactured almost entirely from recycled timber or timber waste. Particleboard flooring also has all the acoustic damping properties inherent in timber, and a low thermal capacity, making it an excellent choice in the design of buildings for passive heating and cooling.

Sustainable, cheap, easy to install, and readily available Australia-wide, there is every good reason to incorporate particleboard flooring into the design and construction of an array of building types

**For information on suppliers visit
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