

Product Guidelines

Please read this document completely and together with the
Clever Choice Warranty before installing your new floor.

1 PRODUCT SELECTION

- **Oak, Bamboo & Engineered Timbers** are beautiful naturally grown real timbers harvest from the finest trees. Grain, Feature, Grade & Colour varies from batch to batch. Your flooring may differ from the instore sample, depending on the time of harvest and manufacturing, and also depending on the age and position of the display sample in store. Every floor will be unique in its features and appearance.

- **Laminate, Hydro & Hybrids** have between 6-12 HD prints protected with a durable, strong wear layer offering real timbers look and feel, with gloss, embossed and EIR technology. These flooring products are more consistent by controlled colour tones and grain features, mixed in your cartons.

- **Acoustic & Thermal Underlay**

Hybrid flooring is manufactured with an acoustic and thermal underlay attached to the back of the boards. Additional underlay is not required for this product. Clever Choice supplies the highest quality 2mm EVA floating floor underlays and 3mm AcoustiCORK to suit all floating floors and building acoustic requirements. Denser and thicker underlays provide higher acoustic and thermal reductions. Clever Choice underlays are manufactured with a build in moisture barrier to protect against rising damp/moisture and control the stability of your floor. An extra moisture barrier is recommended, if you suspect you may have rising damp/moisture issues or for new slabs. Installation as a floating floor requires an underlay mat to be installed directly over the bare level subfloor prior to the flooring to be installed to create an acoustic and thermal layer. Lay the underlay moisture barrier side down, by taping the overlapping moisture barriers together using the included tape. For additional moisture protection, also apply a wide adhesive tape to the joins to create a complete seal.

- **Oak & Engineered Timbers** can be installed as a floating floor, by either clicking the boards together with products that have a click profile or Using a Cross-Linked water resistant PVA glue on boards that have a Tongue & Groove profile. However, as Oak & Engineered Timbers are a natural product and will expand and contract during seasonal Humidity and Temperature change vertical movement and squeaking is to be expected. The Direct stick or Dual Bond method is recommended to avoid this from occurring.

- **Weight Restriction** over a properly installed floor up to 200kg is the recommended weight capacity for all Clever flooring products.

2 DIRECT STICK / DUAL BOND

- **Oak & Engineered Timbers** are recommended to be adhered directly to the subfloor. Products excluded and not recommended for direct stick include Bamboo, Hydro, Hybrid & Laminate.

- For concrete slabs where acoustic ratings are not required, firstly sweep the floor clean and dust free. Apply Mapei V4SP or Ultrabond Eco S955, following the manufacturer's guidelines.

- For dwellings where acoustic ratings are required, a dual bond method is recommended.

- For concrete slabs, firstly sweep the floor clean and dust free. Apply Mapei Ultrabond Eco V4SP, following the manufacturer's guidelines. then cover the floor with 3mm AcoustiCORK underlay, ensuring no gaps are left or present. Once the subfloor is completely covered with the AcoustiCORK underlay, apply Mapei Ultrabond Eco S955, following the manufacturer's guidelines.

- If this process is not followed as per manufacturer's guidelines, your floor could become drummy and bounce, causing vertical movement, bouncing, squeaking or board failure.

3 TONGUE & GROOVE INSTALLATION

- When installing Oak & Engineered Timber boards manufactured with a Tongue & Groove profile, it is recommended to fill the grooves using crossed link water resistant PVA glue to both the side and end Groove prior to installation.

- Install the boards by sliding the tongue into the groove tight until no gap is present on both the sides and ends.

- If any excess glue squeezes through the top of the board wipe it off immediately.

- Use flooring strap clamps to hold the boards tight together while the glue dries as per manufacture guidelines. This will ensure there are no gaps between boards after installation is complete.

4 GENERAL SUGGESTIONS for GLUE DOWN APPLICATION

- 1) Install four, five or six rows of flooring, either as a direct stick applying glue to the subfloor or as a floating floor by applying Glue into the groove of both the side and ends of the planks. Connect each row of floorboards together to properly fix the tongue and groove connections as much as possible.

- 2) Use the clamps every 90 – 120 cm and ratchet tightly until the gaps between floorboards will close.

Note: Do not over tighten the belt clamps. These clamps are heavy duty but overtightening only concludes problems.

- 3) Place strips of "14 days" blue painters' tape across the newly installed rows of flooring, spaced 45 – 60 cm or so, and overlapping the previous sections of boards by one or two rows. This will hold the boards tightly together until the flooring adhesive dries.

- 4) Release the tension and remove the clamps.

- 5) Repeat cycle.

- 6) Remove tape once flooring adhesive has set – consult manufacturer installation instructions for cure time.

- 7) Enjoy your floor. Warning – using tools can be dangerous. Always take care and keep away from children. Wear protective eyewear in the work area at all times. Select correct type and size of tool for work.

5 WASTAGE

- When measuring the area for your flooring, ensure you add 5 to 10% to the overall measurement depending on the size and shape of the dwelling. This is to cover for the off cuts & minor damage during transport & installation.

- For natural **Oak & Engineered Timbers**, increasing your wastage gives you more boards for better board selection options during installation, if required to increase the timber grade and colour variation appearance.

6 LOCAL CLIMATE

- Your flooring is a natural living product, and the stability and performance is controlled by its environment. Prior to installation investigate what your local temperature and Humidity is, to help you control your indoor environment for optimum performance.

7 ENVIRONMENT CONDITIONING

- 24 to 48 hours prior to your flooring being installed, indoor temperature needs to be set consistently between 18oC-27oC with a relative humidity of 40%- 60% to avoid flooring failure.

- In extreme weather conditions, allow extra time for the boards to be stored and conditioned to your controlled environment.

- Clever Choice recommends obtaining a thermometer and hydrometer to monitor the temperature and humidity in the dwelling.

- The use of internal cooling & heating systems such as air-conditioning, ducted heating and fireplaces, etc must be monitored & regulated to prevent excessively dry environments. This will affect the performance of your floor if not controlled.

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8 EXTREME TEMPERATURES

- Should your floor be exposed prior to installation to extreme temperatures under 18°C or over 27°C during storage or transport, ensure the boards are stored in the controlled environment for at least 24 hours.
- Floor should never be exposed to extreme temperatures and humidity for extended periods, as this will affect the long-term performance of your flooring and may cause board damage.
- Ensure the cartons are not stacked directly on bare slabs and away from external walls to prevent excess moisture from entering the cartons.
- For easy installation and optimum performance, install the flooring as soon as the cartons are opened, as the boards will acclimatise on the floor once clicked together.

9 ADDITIONAL SURFACE MOISTURE

Applicable to Hybrid and Hydro flooring only

- Hydro and Hybrid flooring have moisture protection elements added to the core board for extra stability and durability.
- Water protection applies only to surface-level liquid in small areas; these products are not waterproof sealers.
- This surface protection does not include protection from continuous water exposure, flooding or extreme wet mopping.
- Surface water protection applies to surface water only, and not water that enters the core of the board, from subfloor or runoff from wet areas. Keep this in mind when you are installing your flooring throughout your home.

10 EXTERNAL PROPERTY INSPECTION | LOCALITY & DWELLING ENVIRONMENT

- **The flooring installed can be affected by many external factors - removal of causes prevents problems.**
- Flooring can be damaged by the external environment to the home; what happens under and around your home will affect your floor's performance.
- Please check for any water run-off, sources of ground moisture and relative humidity (RH) or temperature factors that may be influenced by overhanging tree canopies and sun direction.
- This site inspection should include checking for soil or debris built up higher than weep holes, or under floor ventilation of the subfloor.
- These external factors are very important to consider when selecting the correct floor to suit your environment and ensuring your floor performs to optimum levels.

11 BUILDING SITE CONDITIONS

- For new home installations, other wet trades are to be completed and weather conditions must be considered during installation.
- For the exterior of the building or dwelling, all gutters, downpipes and drainage systems need to be in place and operational prior to laying the floor.
- Similarly, groundwork needs to be sufficiently completed to ensure water drains away from the building and that no pooling of water occurs either adjacent to slabs and footings or beneath the building.
- Prior to the product being delivered to site, the building should be weather tight with all windows, doors and seals in place. Wet trades including plastering, tiling, painting and plumbing should be complete and the building should be given time to dry out from the higher levels of moisture released from these trades.

12 APPROPRIATE WINDOW FURNISHINGS

- Harsh sunlight directly on your floor can cause discolouration to the surface and compromise the integrity of the UV coating.
- Prolonged exposure to excessive dry heat can cause your floor to contract and expand abnormally, which can cause gapping between boards, boards becoming exposed from under the perimeter finishing's, and boards becoming bowed and cause vertical movement resulting in squeaking.
- Check all external windows and doors have appropriate covers such as blinds, shutters, curtains and window tinting to prevent harsh direct sunlight affecting the floor.
- Any areas of your flooring covered for extended periods of time will change colour.
- For dwellings under construction or where window coverings are not yet fitted, it is recommended to cover the windows with Black builders plastic.

13 BOARD MOISTURE CONTENT

- **Oak, Bamboo & Engineered Timbers** consist of between 8%-10% moisture in your floorboards.
- Your floor will expand and contract as the moisture level within the boards change as the temperature and humidity changes.
- Do not install the boards if they are wet due to transport or storage prior to installation.

14 SUBFLOOR PREPARATION & TESTING

- Check your subfloor meets Australian standards for level and moisture content.
- The subfloor surfaces need to be clean and free of loose materials and contaminants.
- Using a laser level or straight edge, check for flat, smooth and level with a tolerance no greater than 2mm over 2m. Correct any changes in levels by either diamond grinding the surface of the slab, sanding the surface of the timber subfloor and/or using a levelling compound, as this removes high spots.
- After levelling, wait the manufacturer's recommended time to allow the compound to dry completely before laying your floor, to prevent moisture related issues.
- Check concrete slabs have been cured with the moisture content being less than 5% and relative humidity below 75%. Suspected dampness in a concrete slab, must be checked by a moisture meter using "plugs" drilled into the slab.
- Keep a record of the moisture content of the subfloor on your installation checklist.

15 SUBFLOOR HEATING

- **Laminates, Hydro, Hybrid, Oak and Engineered Timbers** can be installed over under-floor hydronic heating. Max 27°C
- **DO NOT** install Bamboo over subfloor heating.
- Installation over subfloor heating may cause moisture issues such as cupping or over expansion and will void any warranty, if a regular temperature is not controlled.

16 HYDRONIC RADIANT UNDERFLOOR HEATING

- Before installing over newly constructed hydronic underfloor radiant heat systems, operate the system at maximum capacity for a minimum of 7 days to force any residual moisture from the cementitious topping of the radiant heat system.
- The moisture content of the screed prior to installation must be less than 1.5% (CM method).
- Shut down the floor heating at least 48 hours prior to installation.
- Make sure that the temperature in the room is at least 17°C during installation.
- It is recommended that the radiant heat be applied in a gradual manner (no more than 2°C per day) after installing your flooring.
- Refer to the hydronic underfloor radiant heat system's manufacturer recommendations for additional guidance.

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17 SAFETY EQUIPMENT & TOOLS

- Please wear and use all required PPE and safety equipment for tools being used.
- If cutting indoors, dust extractors must be used.
- Tools to consider: hand saw, chisels, pulling tool, utility knife, drop saw, table saw, electric planer, router, circular saw, jig saw, multi-tool / undercut saw, moisture meter, pencil, spacers, tape measure

18 RECEIVING YOUR GOODS

- Check that correct flooring has been supplied as per your purchase, prior to opening cartons or installing.
- If you are not satisfied that the flooring does NOT match your purchase. Stop! Contact Clever Choice immediately to discuss your concerns.
- Once installation commences you accept the flooring and Clever Choice will take no responsibility for exchange or replacement.

19 BOARD SELECTION

- During installation inspect boards for defect or damage, remove any boards from the installation area if they have a visual defect or damage. These pieces can be used as your start and finish rows.
- It is our position that you, the installer, and/or homeowner, accept the appearance and take responsibility for any visual variation or defect in boards you choose to install and not separate for cuts or replacement.
- Any defects should be reported to Clever Choice immediately for inspection and/or replacement.
- Your flooring is a natural product and has variations in shade and grain.
- Boards should be installed from several cartons at the same time to ensure good colour and shade mixture.

20 UNDERCUTTING

- Undercut all architraves and plaster board to the total height of the underlay and board.
- If skirtings are not being removed, undercut skirtings to allow the boards' clearance under them for natural expansion and contraction.

Perimeter Expansion Gap	Coverage	
Classic Laminate	10-12mm	10-12mm
Hydro	8-10mm	8-10mm
Hybrid	5-7mm	5-7mm
Oak	10-12mm	10-12mm
Bamboo	10-12mm	10-12mm
Engineered Timber	10-12mm	10-12mm

- This includes around fixtures and cabinetry, to allow your flooring to move naturally in both directions (expansion and contraction depending on seasonal changes).
- Failing to do this may result in gaps appearing from under skirting or scotia, between boards, cupping or buckling during temperature changes.

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Raft Size

Classic Laminate	8m width	14m Length
Hydro	10m width	18m Length
Hybrid	12m width	20m Length
Oak	8m width	12m Length
Bamboo	8m width	12m Length
Engineered Timber	8m width	12m Length

- Install internal expansion/contraction H trims to avoid exceeding the above raft sizes.
- Each room in the house will generally have its own relative humidity and temperature conditions.
- Installing expansion trims between each room is necessary to allow boards in each room to move independently without being put under pressure.
- If the floor is installed outside these guidelines, it will have too much weight and restrict the natural movement of the floor.
- This could cause issues like bouncing, cupping, splitting and/or squeaking.
- Refer to the hydronic underfloor radiant heat system's manufacturer recommendations for additional guidance.

21 CHANGING ROOMS & SIZE OF ROOMS

- Check that the trim base plates are fully secured between all rooms.
- Any room that exceeds the raft size will require expansion/contraction trims to be installed in the room.
- When installing boards from room to room, leave the minimum gap to the base plate of the trim in the doorways. This will allow the floor to naturally move freely.
- Colour matching trims are available so that they can be installed to blend in with the floor for a pleasing appearance.

22 SOLID OBJECTS

- Kitchens or built-in units are to be installed prior to the flooring being installed.
- They are not to be installed on top of your flooring, as the weight of these structures will restrict the natural movement, causing such problems as gapping, cupping or creaking.
- Install as per the above perimeter expansion rules to these solid objects, including pipes and any other permanently fixed objects.

23 BASE PLATES OF TRIMS

- Must be glued and screwed into place in all required areas as mentioned above, prior to flooring being installed to ensure they remain secure.

24 LAYING DIRECTION

- Although your floor can be installed in any direction, as a rule, floors are usually installed perpendicular to a wall with windows & with the length of the room.
- Installing the floor parallel to the longest walls or runs tends to make a room appear larger and flooring perform better during natural movement.

25 CUTTING & STAGGERING BOARDS & ENDS

- A Drop saw, Jigsaw, Guillotine or Blade (for Hybrid) can be used to cut boards.
- The end joints in adjacent rows need to be more than 400mm apart to create strength in each row.
- The end of each row must not be shorter than the width of the plank, to ensure stability.
- If your last plank is shorter than the width, it is advised to re-cut the first plank in the row.
- The remainder of the plank from your first row can be used as the first plank of the next row.

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- Stagger the planks so no pattern is visible.
- You may need to adjust your off-cut or have 2 or 3 off-cuts to allow rows to be staggered.

26 LAYING BOARDS

- The boards are to be laid with the tongue sides facing away from the wall.
- Starting in one corner of the room, place spacers between the plank and the wall, one spacer on the width and one spacer at each end where one plank joins another.
- Ensure there is enough clearance for boards to pass under during natural movement.
- When laying the planks for the first row, place the first plank flat and against the spacers. The next plank being laid must be elevated at a slight angle to allow the Click to slip into the groove of the first plank. Once flat, push and gently tap the planks together ensuring they "click" in tight and sit level.
- For the second and consecutive rows, elevate the plank on the long side at a slight angle to allow the click to slip into the groove.
- The next plank should be laid the same way but with the click on the left side of the plank falling just next to the previous plank. Once flat, you can lift and lock the planks together until they "click" in tight.
- When you reach the final plank in the row, place a loose plank precisely on the last laid plank. Place another plank on top, but with its edge a minimum gap from the solid object. Trace a cutting line along the middle plank and saw it along that line.
- Lay the plank you just cut and ease it into position.
- Insert spacers between the wall and the last plank laid to ensure the floor doesn't shift during installation.
- Check that the skirting or scotia will cover the board by minimum coverage allowance as mentioned above to allow for natural movement.
- To allow natural movement around obstacles (pipes, solid built-in units, etc.), use a pencil to trace around the object.
- For the final row, lay the board overlapping the second last row. Place a straight edge on top at the edge of the second last row. Using a pencil, draw a line along the board. Cut the board on the line.
- A water resistant Crossed Link PVA glue can be applied to the T&G and locking systems of Engineered Timbers, Oak or Bamboo boards, and also on the end joints of a drop end lock click system to reduce the chance of squeaking during excessive seasonal changes or repairs.

27 FITTING SCOTIA or SKIRTING

- Remove all spacers.
- Fold the moisture barrier along the edge of the walls under the skirting or scotia.
- Cover the expansion/contraction gaps around the perimeter of the floor ensuring the minimum coverage of the boards is achieved.
- Fit the skirting or scotia to the walls, ensuring a 0.5mm-1mm gap is left between it and the floor. This will allow the floor room to move, naturally and freely.

28 FITTING FINISHING TRIMS

- Install the top plate of finishing trims to neatly finish off in all doorways, against fixed objects, kitchens, sliding doors.
- Colour matching trims are available so that they can be installed to blend in with the floor for a pleasing appearance.

29 FITTING STAIRS & SLIP RESISTANT TAPE

- When installing your flooring to stairs, it is recommended to use an approved flexible flooring glue to stick the stairnoses and boards to the solidly constructed staircase.
- When fitting boards to each step, it is recommended to leave a minimum 5mm gap under the riser, that is fitted on top of the tread.
- Where the stairnoses are installed to a top landing leading into a room of flooring, remember to make allowances for natural movement. An expansion trim could be installed between the top stairnose and floorboards.
- Slip resistant tape, complying with Australian standards, is available to be applied to the stairnoses of the finished staircase.

30 CHECKING DOOR HEIGHTS

- Check door and doorframe clearances to ensure that doors will move freely without contacting the flooring surface causing damage.

31 CLEAN UP & GO THROUGH CHECKLIST

- Sweep the floor and clean up any mess.
- Go through this guide to ensure all steps have been followed and completed.

32 FURNITURE PROTECTORS & REPLACING FURNITURE & APPLIANCES

- Correctly fit appropriate protectors on the feet of chairs, tables and other furniture to avoid damaging your floor.
- Failing to do this could result in scratches or damage to your new floor.
- Carefully move furniture and other items back into the room(s), ensuring not to scratch or damage your new floor.
- Ensure appliances are professionally re-installed.

33 USE OF RUGS & FURNITURE PROTECTORS

- Ensure felt pads are attached to the feet of furniture like tables, chairs, lounges etc, to prevent scratching and damage to your flooring.
- Ensure that castors are felt-based and not plastic-based to prevent scratching.
- Protective pads on furniture legs should be checked periodically to ensure that they are clean of grit and/or not in need of replacement.
- In areas of excessive traffic and wear, make use of runners or area rugs.
- Use of protective mats at all exterior entrances will help stop sand and grit coming onto your floor.
- Rubber-based furniture or rugs should not be used, as these may leach into the floor and stain the coatings.
- Move your rugs and mats regularly, to clean under them and to allow the boards to be evenly exposed to UV light to naturally age evenly.
- Any areas of the flooring covered for extended periods of time will change colour.

34 REGULAR CLEANING

- Spills should be wiped up when they occur, and scuff marks or stubborn stains may be removed with light rubbing with a slightly damp rag or mop.
- As some floor cleaners, oil soaps, wax and liquids can attack and affect your coating, these should be avoided. Use, where possible, the cleaning regime specified by coating experts. Contact your retailer or visit our website www.cleverchoice.com.au for recommended products.

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- Enemies to your floor finishes are sand and grit that can be brought into the house with footwear. These small particles act like sandpaper, resulting in scratches in the floor.
- For regular cleaning of domestic floors, an antistatic mop provides an effective means of collecting dust and grit.
- If a vacuum cleaner is used, the condition of the brushes should be regularly checked. If the brushes have worn thin, contact of the metal head on the floor can result in scratching.
- For best performance and appearance, immediately wipe up spills, foreign substances or water from wet feet.
- Floors can become slippery when wet.
- Wipe any excess moisture off the floor immediately using a dry mop or clean towel.

35 CLEANING UP AFTER YOUR PETS

- A small part of owning a pet is coming to grips with the messes they make. It's quite likely that you'll have to deal with urine on the floor at some point. Because pet urine can quickly damage oak floors, cleaning the floor immediately and properly can assist in preventing permanent stains.
- Get to the mess your pet has created very quickly. You wouldn't want their urine to soak in and dry out on the floor.
- Aside from cleaning, you may need to try deodorising the spot thoroughly. Make sure your pet can't smell their urine in that same area, as they may return to it again.
- Because ammonia tends to smell like pet urine, avoid using it or any product that contains it.
- The use of vinegar/water solution is also not a good cleaning agent, as it encourages re-marking among pets.
- Because liquids tend to seep down and outward, clean a few more inches around the stain to ensure that you have deodorised the spot thoroughly.
- Keeping your pets' claws trimmed will assist in preventing scratches to your coating.

36 SLIGHTLY DAMP MOP ONLY

- Ensure the mop is only slightly damp to provide an effective deep clean.
- After wetting the mop, wring it out and gently mop the floor.
- Wipe any excess moisture off the floor immediately after cleaning, using a dry mop or clean towel.
- **Never use steam mops or abrasive cleaners, steel wool, scouring powder, wax or polish on your floor. Steam mops are not recommended as they can cause damage to the coating.** They may also cause damage to the floor.

37 REPAIRING SCRATCHES

- Your Flooring is coated with a strong UV protective wear Layer.
- The sliding or movement of unprotected furniture, grit or sharp objects across the surface could cause scratches.
- When scratched, this hardness layer reflects light and appears white.
- Contact your retailer or visit our website www.cleverchoice.com.au for recommended products for surface repairs which helps to prevent the light from reflecting off the coating scratches.

38 REPLACING BOARDS

- If any major damage occurs, boards can be replaced subject to availability.
- Boards can be unclicked or cut out, and new boards can be re-laid.
- Modification of boards and glue may be used during the repair of your flooring.
- Please note that some colour variation can be expected due to the natural aging process and natural variation in replacement boards.

39 RE-COATING

- **European Oak, Australian Timbers and Bamboo flooring** have the option to be professionally or DIY recoated after a number of years to restore its original finish with many available coatings on the market. Contact your retailer or visit our website www.cleverchoice.com.au for recommended products

40 AGING PROCESS

- Your flooring is a natural product and board colour becomes richer and darker as the boards age.
- Your flooring that arrives in cartons may be lighter or darker than the sample in store, depending on the age and position of the display sample.

41 MAINTAINING RELATIVE HUMIDITY & TEMPERATURE CONTROL

- The area should be consistent with the normal, year-round living conditions and these conditions should be maintained by the homeowner to avoid excessive movement of the floor through the use of permanently fitted humidifiers, dehumidifiers, air-conditioning and/or heating systems, you can control your living conditions.

42 HOT DRY TIMES

- There are a few simple things that can be done, which can reduce your floor losing moisture during hot dry times: bowls of water, water left in the sinks, fish tanks and/or pot plants will all add moisture into the air, keep blinds and curtains closed, where possible and use a humidifier or atomizer (mist spray).
- If boards lose too much moisture some gaps may appear from under the skirtings or in doorways during natural movement.

43 WET MOIST TIMES

- There are a few simple things that can be done, which can reduce your floor gaining moisture during wet and humid times: the use of evaporative air-conditioning, heating systems and dehumidifiers can all be used to control temperature and humidity.
- If an excessive amount of moisture gets into the boards, they will start showing signs of knots getting darker, rippling in the coating and cupping in the boards.

44 EXTREME WEATHER CHANGES

- Change of seasons, bush fires, floods and droughts all cause a change to the installed environment and oak flooring (being a natural product) will be influenced by these changing conditions, as above.

45 LOCKING UP YOUR HOUSE FOR LONG PERIODS

- If your house is locked up over Christmas or hot months for extended periods, ensure there are some coverings on the windows and that the house is ventilated during this time.
- Oven-like conditions can be created when houses are closed up for extended periods of time in warm weather and your floor will react to this changed environment.

46 LEAKS OR MOIST AREAS

- Any leaks must be attended to and rectified immediately.
- Failure to attend to leaking pipes or moisture entering from outside your house could result in problems with your floor.