



# The Professional Installer's Choice "Engineered Underlayment" Instructions On Installation

## Storage and handling:

For remodeling and new construction applications it is extremely important that Argo Fine plywood underlayment & FLORCORE panels be allowed to acclimate to room conditions. Store panels flat over supports in a dry enclosed area (heated preferably), protected from moisture extremes and temperature before, during and after installation. Use 5 supports for 4' x 8' panels and 3 supports for 4' x 4' panels. No panels should not be installed until all wood sub floors, concrete; plaster and lumber framing are dried to the approximate conditions that will exist during occupancy.

**Proper timing of installation and treatment of flooring products by the Builder is highly critical. It is the Installer's responsibility to inspect all panels for visible defects prior to cutting and installing. If you think that there is a manufacturing defect in a panel, do not install. Contact your supplier.**

## Pre-Installation Surface Preparation:

Leave panels in the location where they are to be installed and allowed to acclimate to average temperature and humidity for 24 hrs. and up to 48 hrs. in extreme conditions, whether you are installing directly over new sub floors, in new construction or over existing floors in renovation. To allow proper air flow, lay panels flat with supports between each sheet for up to 48 hrs. depending upon local conditions, maintaining a temperature of 21C/70F. before, during and after the installation. This may take as long as 48 hrs. depending on local conditions. Ensure that the moisture content of the subfloor is not above 12%. If the differential between the sub floor and the Argo Fine plywood underlayment & FLORCORE panels are within 5% of each other, the panels may be installed. 12% or less is acceptable, 13% -15% are conditions that may cause seam telegraphing. At 15% moisture content in the wood or over, the installation is NOT recommended and more drying time is needed. (A moisture meter is recommended.) Ensure the sub floor free of all foreign matter, projections, securely fastened, structurally sound, dry and level. Sand or grind the joints of the sub floor if necessary. Vacuum and sweep all dust and debris from the subfloor.

**NOTE: Seam telegraphing problems are not the result of defective underlayment panels but can usually be the result of these causes:**

- Improper installation including failure to sand all seams level
- Using excessive patching compound
- Not allowing patch to dry 100% prior to installing vinyl.
- Improper spread of adhesive over seams.
- Changing site conditions including expansion from moisture penetration or movement in sub floor.

## Crawl spaces and Vapor Barrier:

Crawl spaces in a home, mobile modular home or building are susceptible to temperature and humidity variations that may cause the underlayment panels and the sub floor structure to expand or contract. These situations may cause unexplainable seam telegraphing with the finished floor. There should be proper cross floor ventilation and well vented under the wood sub floor. A clearance of at least 18" between ground level and the joists is necessary. A vapor barrier ground cover is essential in such areas, completely covering the ground.

## Remodeling and Renovations:

Underlayment panels may be installed over most existing flooring that is free of defects and structurally sound - Vinyl is one layer only. Cushioned floors (100+mils) thick, foam backed vinyl or perimeter fastened vinyl is NOT RECOMMENDED. If the old vinyl floor does not meet these criteria, a professional Flooring Installer must strip off the old flooring.

**Note: To Prevent the possibility of seam telegraphing, punch holes or cut slits approximately (12" - 16" O.C.) in the existing vinyl prior to installing panels.**

Where board subfloors are used in new construction, over concrete, to bridge gaps or applications below grade, 1/4" panels are not advisable. These are additional sources of moisture and there is excessive shrinkage when dried out. A 3/8" or greater thickness of Argo Fine underlayment & FLORCORE panels are recommended to bridge gaps and irregularities in the floor.



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## Adhesive Use

If gluing for the best results, we recommend gluing the Argo Fine plywood underlayment & FiberCORE panels to the subfloor. This may prevent squeaks in the subfloor and reduce the possibility of joint telegraphing and other fastening problems. Use a latex based adhesive conforming to AFG.01 standards and is a type of construction or subfloor adhesive. Apply the adhesive in accordance with the adhesive manufacturer's instructions, trowel size etc... Another procedure and less expensive is the use of a PVA (poly vinyl acetate) type 2 high solid content, white carpenters glue or other non-staining wood adhesive. For this application use a paint roller with a short nap. Glue the panels by covering 100% of the subfloor panel's surface and then fasten the underlayment panels.

**NOTE:** Using adhesive helps panels from movement with the subfloor, and also helps prevent the induction of moisture from traveling up a seam edge and possibly releasing the bond of the vinyl adhesive, creating seam telegraphing after completion. Gluing also helps prevent fastener movement and squeaks in the finished floor.

## Positioning and Layout of the Panels

Lay panels at 90 degrees or at right angles to the sub floor panels. Offset the underlayment panels to the subfloor panels by at least 12" where joints run at right angles to the joists. Begin laying panels in corner of room. Leave a minimum 1/4" gap at all vertical surfaces, walls and fixtures to allow for any expansion. Place cut edge to the wall and factory edge to factory edge. Butt panel edges to a light contact. Stagger panel joints in each row (Ashlar fashion) so that the four corners of adjacent panels do not meet. Do not leave gaps or force panels together. Position full and custom cut panels on the subfloor to dry-fit the room, without any fasteners applied. Avoid pieces less than 12" except where allowing for floor fixtures. Do not tack any panel during layout or tack four corners of any panel.

## Fasteners:

**Staples** - (recommended) Use 1/4" chisel point staples, with not less than an 18-gauge shank. Staples must be galvanized clear resin coated (also known as 'coated' thermal-coated, or polymer-coated'.) DO NOT USE DIVERGENT STAPLES. Staples must be flush or slightly below the surface so that they are visible. The staple length should not penetrate through the bottom of subfloor.

**Nails** - Underlay flooring nails, ring-grooved, 1 1/4" length and 3/16" head. Drive nails perpendicular to and countersink slightly below the surface of the panel.

**Screws** - For use with 3/8" panels only. Use a flat-head #8 lo-root thread wood screw with reaming nibs, not less than 1" long. Use sufficient pressure on the power driver so that screws are flush or countersunk slightly below the surface of the panel. DO NOT USE DRYWALL SCREWS.

## Fastening:

**Fasten one panel at a time, individually and completely, before fastening the next panel.**

Begin fastening each panel of the first row at center of panel, working up and down to edges in the panel's width, or sides securing entire panel. Do not tack corners first. Lightly butt next panel to first panel, fastening in similar pattern and direction always starting in the center of the panel in the first row only.

Begin second row by fastening at the center of the panel's seam edge adjacent to the first row, working across the panel width repeating the same pattern for each panel and always nailing away from the seam to the outer edge or wall. Space all fasteners at 2" centers on edges and at 4" centers in the field of the panel.

Fasteners should be long enough to reach (but not protrude through the bottom of the subfloor if at all possible.) If applied over existing material, use nails that penetrate subfloor at least 90% but not through subfloor or into the joists. Set fasteners 3/8"- 3/4" from the panels edge. Use sufficient pressure on the staple gun and adjust air pressure so that staples or screws are flush or counter-sunk slightly below the panel's surface. Stand or kneel and apply your weight on the panels to hold panels securely to subfloor to ensure full contact during fastening.

**Important!** It is the installer's responsibility to ensure the equipment is functioning properly. Air guns, pressure and air compressors, correct operation is vital to the success of the fastening operation. You must adjust and maintain a pressure that will seat the fastener flush with the panel's surface or slightly below. NOTE: If you can't see the fastener head, chances are you have over shot the fastener and you need to apply more fasteners and possibly less pressure.

## Finishing Panels:

Sand all panels' joints until level and smooth with a heavy-duty power sander running at a 45-degree angle to the joint. Avoid hand sanding, over sanding or the use of levelers. The same applies if the gap is less than 1/16". Voids or gaps in excess of 1/16" between panels, and any irregularities in the panel surface e.g. gouges, chipped edges, hammer indentations, and recessed nail heads should be filled after sanding with a non-shrinking cementitious patching compound intended for this purpose. Follow patch manufacturer's instructions and make sure patch is completely dry. This may take 24 hrs. or more depending on the temperature and humidity (more drying time is recommended during high humidity periods.) To be safe, use a moisture meter over the patch to ensure correct dryness. Sand the patch level to the face of the panel, when patch is completely dry. Add a liquid acrylic additive whenever possible for greater flexibility.

## Fillers & Patches:

Patch and fillers used unnecessarily, could react with adhesive or pull from the joints, creating tunneling. If not adequately sanded, patch and fillers could cause uneven adhesive soak and affect the bond, which may also create tunneling at the joints. Our experience has been that there are more problems related and associated with the use of patching as opposed to not using a patch at all. Use only as necessary.

- Light edge contact or panel's factory edge to factory edge.
- To level joints, sand with a power sander (do not use patches or fillers.)
- Do not fill normal level joints unless in excess of 1/16" wide.
- Vacuum any debris or dust from the joints.
- If patch is used, once dry, sand patch level, smooth and off the face of the panels if possible.

**NOTE:** Other recommended practices include the use of an acrylic liquid additive in the patch for greater flexibility. When this is done, the patch will take longer to dry. Use only a cementitious polymer modified acrylic patch. Follow the manufacturer's recommendation, mixing instructions and drying times very carefully.

## Installing your new Floor Covering:

Vacuum the panel's surface to ensure that it is free of any debris, dirt or dust. Floor covering should be installed immediately after the installation of panels to avoid damage and environmental influences. As specified by the floor-covering manufacturer, the room must be kept dry and well ventilated at a constant temperature of 70 degrees F (21degrees C) for at least 48 hrs. prior, during and after installation. Follow the floor covering manufacturer's instructions carefully. Use only adhesives recommended by the floor covering manufacturer for use over wood panels. Manufacturers will suggest proper spread rates and trowel size. Do not leave adhesive open too long since the performance could be reduced. In high moisture areas ie: Bathrooms, Kitchens, Entryways and Laundry room, be sure that seams in floor covering are well sealed. Keep traffic and furniture off new floor until sealant is fully cured (min. 24 hrs.) Pay special attention to sealing edges of resilient flooring along doorsills, bathtubs, shower base, toilets, cabinets, vanities and other areas where moisture could be present. Use mildew proof sealant for VCT tile and commercial flooring, follow the manufacturer's suggestions for gluing, maintenance, installation and other procedures.

## Considerations:

Argo Fine plywood underlayment & FLORCORE panels is not a structural panel and will not resolve structural problems or deficiencies in the floor system. They will however contribute to a greater stiffness of the floor, especially older floors. Installation of panels over unstable or irregular floors is not covered by the warranty. Do not install directly over concrete or plank flooring.

Telegraphing is used to describe a mirror image that magnifies imperfections under the vinyl flooring or ridges and joints where the panels meet. This problem may exist almost entirely and only under resilient flooring. The thinner and glossier the flooring product, the more susceptible it is to telegraphing.

Telegraphing is commonly traced to misuse of patching compounds, moisture induction or penetration from below or above the panels and or improper installation and movement of panels atop the subfloor. Proper installation is essential to the cosmetic appearance of the finished floor.

## For Problem Resolutions or Technical Support

Website: [www.argoimport.com](http://www.argoimport.com)

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