

GUIDELINES | INSTALLATION.

ALWAYS CHECK WWW.COBALTSURFACES.COM FOR THE LATEST INSTALLATION, WARRANTY AND MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INSTALLER TO ENSURE THAT THE MOST CURRENT DOCUMENTS ARE USED DURING INSTALLATION OF COBALT SURFACES® LUXURY VINYL FLOORING.

PRODUCT OVERVIEW

Cobalt Surfaces Hushcore is a click-and-lock High Performance Core (HPC) product that features a full line of popular wood looks that provide a wide range of beautiful flooring options for many applications. Hushcore includes an attached cork backing, which greatly improves its sound reduction characteristics without the use of a separate sound control product. Hushcore's unique drop-lock mechanism allows for quick and easy installation. Hushcore is constructed with a waterproof core, a durable wear layer and our proprietary Cobalt Guard polyurethane coating, making it an ideal flooring product for multi-family units, condominiums, corporate offices and a variety of other residential and light commercial environments.

PRE-INSTALLATION

- Consult all associated product literature concerning adhesive installation, maintenance and warranty prior to installation flooring.
- Allow all trades to complete work prior to installation.
- Deliver all materials to the installation location in its original packaging with labels intact.
- Do not stack pallets to avoid damage.
- Remove all plastic and strapping from product after delivery.
- Do not remove material from packaging or store outside of packaging until ready for installation.
- Ensure that all adhesives intended for installation are approved for use with flooring material.
- Ensure HVAC system is operational and fully functioning at normal operating conditions.
- Ensure installation area and material storage conditions are between 65° F (19° C) and 85° F (30° C) and 45% and 55% RH for at least 72 hours before, during and continuously after installation.
- Protect installation area from extreme climate changes, such as heat, freezing and humidity, as well as direct sunlight for at least 72 hours before, during and after installation.
- Ensure all substrate preparation and moisture testing requirements have been performed, read and/or understood by all interested parties.
- Do not proceed with installation until all conditions have been met.

PRODUCT LIMITATIONS

Do not install materials directly over cushioned vinyl, hardwood flooring, cork flooring, rubber flooring or asphaltic materials. Do not install in areas that may be subjected to sharp, pointed objects, such as stiletto heels, cleats or spikes. Do not allow product to be directly exposed to extreme heat sources, such as radiators, ovens or other high-heat equipment. Do not install outdoors or in areas that may be exposed to repeated and sustained UV light, as product may fade, discolor or experience excessive movement.

Do not install in heavy commercial areas, especially around or adjacent to main entrances or exits. Do not install in wet areas, such as bathrooms with a shower or bath, as liquids that work their way beneath the floor could sponsor organic growth. Material may be susceptible to natural shrinkage and expansion due to environmental changes - avoid extreme changes in temperature to prevent excessive movement. Material may be susceptible to staining from rubber tires, casters or rubber-backed walk-off mats, as well as harsh disinfectants, cleaning agents, dyes or other harsh chemicals – ensure all chemicals and materials that may come in contact with flooring surface will not stain, mar or otherwise damage the flooring material prior to use. Do not install nails, screws, bolts, moldings, accessories or heavy fixed furniture, such as cabinets, counter tops, islands or commercial equipment, directly on, into or through the flooring material, as this may restrict the natural movement of the floor and cause gapping/buckling.

SUBSTRATE PREPARATION

All substrates must be prepared according to ASTM F710, as well as all other applicable ASTM, ACI and RFCI guidelines. Substrates must be clean, smooth, permanently dry, flat, and structurally sound. Substrates must be free of visible water or moisture, dust, sealers, paint, sweeping compounds, curing compounds, residual adhesives and adhesive removers, concrete hardeners or densifiers, solvents, wax, oil, grease, asphalt, visible alkaline salts or excessive efflorescence, mold, mildew and all other extraneous coating, film, material or foreign matter.

All substrates must have all existing adhesives, incompatible materials, contaminants or bond-breakers mechanically removed via scraping, sanding or grinding prior to adhesive installation. In some situations, shotblasting may be required. Mechanical preparation must expose at least 90% of the original substrate. When mechanically preparing concrete and silica containing materials, follow all applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

Do not use solvent/citrus based adhesive removers. Follow The Resilient Floor Covering Institute's (RFCI) "Recommended Work Practice for Removal of Existing Floor Covering and Adhesive", and all applicable local, state, federal and industry regulations and guidelines. When removing asbestos and asbestos containing materials, follow all applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

Following the removal of existing materials, mechanical preparation and/or cleaning, all substrates must be vacuumed with a flat vacuum attachment or damp mopped with clean, potable water to remove all surface dust. Sweeping without vacuuming or damp mopping will not be acceptable.

All potentially porous substrates must be tested per ASTM F3191 to confirm porosity. All substrates that do not meet porosity requirements are considered non-porous. Ensure that all non-porous substrates are not contaminated with aforementioned contaminants and that all installation guidelines for non-porous substrates are followed.

All substrates must have a floor flatness of FF32 and/or a flatness tolerance of 1/8" in 6' or 3/16" in 10'. Substrates that do not meet this requirement should have a compatible repair product, patch or self-leveling underlayment installed to prevent telegraphing and installation issues.

CEMENTITIOUS SUBSTRATES

All cementitious substrates, including self-leveling underlayments, must have a minimum compressive strength of 3000 PSI and be prepared in accordance with ASTM F710 and ACI 302.2R. On or below grade concrete must have a permanent, effective moisture vapor retarder installed below the slab. New or existing concrete substrates on all grade levels must be tested in accordance with ASTM F2170, using in situ Probes, to quantitatively determine relative humidity no more than one week prior to the installation.

In addition to ASTM F2170 Relative Humidity Testing, existing concrete that has previously had floor covering installed on all grade levels must be tested in accordance with ASTM F1869, using Calcium Chloride test kits, to quantitatively determine the Moisture Vapor Emissions Rate (MVER) of the concrete.

If ASTM F2170 or ASTM F1869 test results exceed the prescribed limits, a moisture mitigation product must be installed prior

to proceeding with installation. Do not install flooring until moisture testing has been conducted per the appropriate standard and/or moisture mitigation has been installed and is dry to the touch. Do not install flooring in below grade areas when hydrostatic pressure is visible or suspected.

LIGHT WEIGHT/GYPSUM SUBSTRATES

Lightweight or gypsum substrates must have a minimum compressive strength of 2000 PSI when installed over a wood substrate or 3000 PSI when installed over a concrete substrate. Lightweight or gypsum substrates must be installed and prepared in accordance with ASTM F2419 or ASTM F2471, respectively. Lightweight or gypsum substrates that do not meet these requirements should be strengthened with a compatible repair product to improve the compressive strength of the substrate. Substrate must be structurally sound and firmly bonded to subfloor. All cracked or fractured areas must be removed and repaired with a compatible repair product. New or existing substrates may require a sealant or primer be installed prior to resilient floor installation. Follow the substrate manufacturer's recommendations regarding preparation for resilient flooring

WOOD SUBSTRATES

Wood substrates must be compliant with and prepared in accordance with ASTM F1482. Wood substrates should be of double layer construction with a recommended total thickness of 1" or more (depending on federal, state and local building codes). For standard installations, the top layer must be an APA Underlayment Grade plywood or equivalent with a minimum

thickness of 1/4". Plywood must be smooth, free of knots or voids and fully sanded. When floors may be subjected to moisture, use an APA approved exterior grade plywood.

Other wood subfloor materials, such as CDX, OSB, luan, particleboard, chipboard, fiberboard or cementitious tile backer boards, are not acceptable substrates. Do not use preservative-treated and fire-retardant plywood, as some may be manufactured with resins or adhesives that may cause discoloration or staining of the flooring. Do not install flooring directly over solid or engineered hardwood flooring without first installing plywood or a suitable cementitious repair product at a minimum thickness of 1/4" over the hardwood flooring.

Wood subfloor deflection, movement, or instability may cause the flooring installations to release, buckle or deform. As such, do not use a plastic or resin filler to patch cracks. Do not use cement or rosin coated nails and staples or solvent-based construction adhesives to adhere the plywood. Do not install resilient flooring directly over a sleeper system (wood subfloor over concrete) or Sturd-I-Floor panels.

RESINOUS SUBSTRATES

When installing directly over a resinous products, such as an epoxy coating, ensure the coating is dry to the touch and has cured for the prescribed length of time. Substrate must be clean, dry, sound and free of contaminates. This may require abrasion of the resinous coating.

METAL SUBSTRATES

Metal substrates must be thoroughly sanded/ground to remove all residue, oil, rust and/or oxidation. Substrate must be smooth, flat and sound prior to installation. When installing in areas that may be subject to topical water, moisture and/or high humidity, an anti-corrosive coating should be applied to protect metal substrate. Contact a local paint or coating supplier for coating recommendations. Install flooring material within 12 hours after sanding/grinding to prevent re-oxidation. Deflection in the metal floor can cause a bond failure between the adhesive and the metal substrate. Be sure to follow installation procedures and trowel sizes for non-porous substrates.

EXISTING FLOORING SUBSTRATES

Existing rubber or cork flooring, as well as the adhesives used to install them, must be completely removed from the substrate prior to installation. Existing hardwood flooring, asphaltic materials and existing adhesives or adhesive residue must have a compatible cementitious

patch or underlayment installed over the substrate prior to installation. Existing hardwood flooring may also have suitable underlayment grade plywood installed over the substrate.

Hushcore may be installed over existing resilient vinyl flooring substrates, including VCT, VAT, quartz tile, solid vinyl tile, sheet vinyl or linoleum, as well as existing hard surface flooring substrates, such as terrazzo, porcelain or ceramic tile. Ensure existing flooring is a single layer of material and that all materials are clean, dry, sound, solid, well adhered and free of site-applied finishes, waxes and/or contaminants. Any and all loose material must be removed and repaired or replaced. When handling asbestos containing materials, ensure all OSHA regulations are followed and all procedures are compliant with local, state, federal and industry regulations and guidelines. All grout lines and wide seams greater than 1/4" in width and/or depth, as well as any substrate imperfections, must be filled and troweled flush with a suitable cementitious patch. All existing flooring substrates that are outside of flatness tolerances should be repaired with a cementitious patch or self-leveling underlayment (minimum compressive strength of 3000 PSI after 28 days) to avoid compromising the locking mechanism.

Do not install flooring until any moisture on, between or below existing flooring has completely dried. Ensure all dust, dirt and debris are removed prior to flooring installation.

RADIANT HEAT SUBSTRATES

When installing flooring over a substrate that contains a radiant heating system, ensure the floor does not make direct contact with pipes or heating mats. Radiant heating systems should be set at 70° F (21° C) 48 hours prior to and during the entire installation. 48 hours after installation, radiant heat may be gradually increased over the course of 24 hours. When installing flooring over a substrate that contains a radiant heating system, ensure the floor does not make direct contact with pipes or heating mats. Radiant heating systems should be set at 70° F (21° C) 48 hours prior to and during the entire installation. 48 hours after installation, radiant heat may be gradually increased over the course of 24 hours, until normal operating temperature is reached. Ensure the temperature of the radiant heating system does not exceed 85° F (29.5° C) and avoid making abrupt changes in radiant heating temperature.

SOUND CONTROL SUBSTRATES

Hushcore may be installed over AcoustiCork Endurance, but may not be installed with any other sound control products, such as cork, foam or rubber underlayments.

CONSTRUCTION JOINTS & CRACKS

All cracks, construction joints and other voids, as well as the areas surrounding them, must be clean and free of dust, dirt, debris and contaminants. All minor cracks 3/64" wide or less must be repaired with a compatible cementitious patch.

Due to the dynamic nature of concrete, manufacturer cannot warranty installations directly over construction joints (such as control cuts or saw joints), expansion joints, cracks or other voids wider than 1/4". Construction joints, expansion joints or cracks wider than 1/4" must have a suitable crack repair or joint repair system installed per the below recommendations.

All expansion joints should have a suitable expansion joint covering system installed to allow for expansion and contraction of the joint. To treat expansion joints where an expansion joint covering system can't be installed or to treat through cracks (depth at least 75% of the thickness of the concrete), chase joint or crack with a suitable saw or grinder and open to a minimum width of 1/4". Be sure to clean all dust, dirt and debris from crack. Joints and cracks should then be sealed with a suitable, elastomeric caulk designed for use in expansion joints. Install a closed-cell backer rod at prescribed depth and follow all caulk manufacturer's instructions for installation. Ensure surface is troweled flush with surface of concrete.

To treat construction joints and surface cracks over 1/4", chase joint or void with a suitable saw or grinder and clean all dust, dirt and debris from crack. Fill entire crack with a rigid crack treatment designed for use in construction joints or cracks. Follow material manufacturer's instructions for installation. Ensure surface is troweled flush with surface of concrete.

Consult a project engineer or architect prior to treating cracks or joints, especially those that may affect structural integrity (such as expansion joints). Review all manufacturer installation instructions and/or consult manufacturer technical staff for all crack or joint filling products prior to treating construction joints and cracks.

FLOORING EXPANSION GAPS

When installing floating flooring materials, expansion gaps and joints will need to be installed to prevent buckling along the perimeter and gapping in the field of the installation. Hushcore must have a 5/16" expansion gap installed around the entire perimeter of the flooring installation, as well as between the flooring and all vertical surfaces, such as adjacent flooring, walls, thresholds, fixtures, door jambs, and other protrusions - this allows the flooring area to freely expand naturally and prevents buckling along the perimeter. When covering perimeter gaps with an accessory, accessories must cover flooring material by at least 1/8" and must be glued directly to the vertical surface or to the substrate. Do not adhere accessories directly to the flooring material, as this could restrict natural movement or cause accessory installation issues. If possible or necessary, existing walls, moldings and door jambs can be undercut to allow flooring to continue underneath while still allowing an expansion gap. Ensure flooring material continues under the undercut surface by at least 1/8". Ensure undercut surfaces do not apply force to the flooring material or restrict flooring movement in any way.

When the total flooring area exceeds 4,225 sq. ft. or when installation lengths exceed 65 lin. ft., an expansion joint must be installed to allow the flooring area to freely expand and contract naturally and prevent gapping in the installation area.

Expansion joints must be at least 5/8" in total width (5/16" on either side of the accessory) and must have a suitable accessory installed. Accessories must cover the flooring material by at least 1/8" on each side and must be glued directly to the substrate. Do not adhere accessories directly to the flooring material, as this could restrict natural movement or cause accessory installation issues.

Alternately, installation lengths that are 65 - 85 lin. ft. may be installed without an expansion joint if the perimeter expansion gap of the entire installation is increased to 1/2".

To ease installation and prevent potential issues with buckling, it is recommended that expansion joints be installed in all doorways or to separate rooms. Rooms that are not separated with a transition from other installation areas must be factored into the total flooring area when determining whether to install an expansion joint, per the area and length requirements.

INSTALLATION PREPARATION

Ensure substrate is clean, dry, flat, sound and suitably prepared prior to installation, as manufacturer is not responsible for substrates that have not been properly prepared and tested for moisture.

Prior to installation, confirm material installation pattern and direction per design specifications or work order. Inspect all planks prior to and during installation to verify that there are no visible defects, damages or excessive shading variations. Blend planks from several cartons and pallets to ensure consistent appearance and shade variation. Some flooring products, colors and textures have latent and acceptable color and shade variations. If there are concerns regarding shade or color variation, do not install material and consult a sales representative and manufacturer's technical staff. **Material installed with obvious visual defects will not be covered under warranty.**

Square the room using the 3-4-5 squaring rule or similar method to establish and mark initial installation center line. Dry-lay several planks to establish an ideal installation layout, ensuring perimeter tiles are as equal in size as possible. Planks should be at least 9" in length and at least half the width of the plank, while tiles should be at least 6" in length and width. Adjust center line and/or starting line to accommodate these restrictions as much as possible.

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Starting at one corner of the room, install the first plank with tongue end toward the starting corner and the groove end towards the opposite corner - installation should proceed from left to right. Ensure locking mechanism are free from all dust, dirt and debris, as this could disrupt or damage the locking mechanism. Install the next plank adjacent to the first plank by holding the plank at a 30° angle and dropping the tongue of the plank into the groove of the first plank, ensuring edges are aligned. Use a thumb, finger or hand to set the locking mechanism and ensure that planks are aligned - if necessary, use a straight edge, level or equivalent to ensure top edges are flush. Use a 16 oz. rubber or poly-based dead blow hammer or a #2 rubber mallet to lightly tap and lock planks completely into place. **Do not use a hammer or tap directly on the seam/locking mechanism, as this could cause permanent damage to the locking mechanism.**

For end cuts, use a utility knife to cut/score planks and snap planks at score line by hand. Alternately, a tile cutter with a new blade can be used to cut material. For rip cuts or intricate perimeter cuts, a jig saw with a PVC blade or a skill saw / table saw with a fine tooth blade (at least 40T) should be used in order to create a clean edge. Complete the entire first row of the installation, ensuring that all planks are aligned and fully locked. Ensure that all planks at the beginning or end of rows are at least 9" in length. Use tile spacers, shims or equivalent to ensure that perimeter gaps are installed along all vertical surfaces per Section 5.

To remove installed planks, carefully disengage the tongue of the long end of the installed planks by lifting planks at a 30° angle. Once disengaged, separate the affected row from all installed rows. Once separated, **slide** the short end of the plank to be removed out of the adjacent plank or planks (if installed). If the plank does not slide easily, ensure it is fully engaged by setting the material with a 16 oz. rubber or poly-based dead blow hammer or a #2 rubber mallet. **Do not lift or angle the short end to disengage, as this could cause permanent damage to the locking mechanism.**

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When starting a new row, stagger planks and seams in a random or pre-determined pattern to ensure that all seams are no less than 6" apart. To install the second row, first align the tongue on the long side of the new plank with the groove of the plank from the row above. Proceed with installation, periodically inspecting the material to ensure that all seams are tight and all locking mechanisms are fully engaged.

When installing in a random pattern, ensure all end joints are staggered by at least 6" and that patterns are completely randomized every 3 rows to avoid a "stair stepping" or "T" effect. Ensure color and/or patterns are random and no obvious pattern repeats emerge.

To tighten minor gaps in the installation, use a 6" scrap piece of Hushcore and a 16 oz. rubber or poly-based dead blow hammer or a #2 rubber mallet to tap planks together. **Do not use a hammer, tapping block or a #2 rubber mallet directly on locking mechanisms to tighten minor gaps, as this could permanently damage the locking mechanism.**

Once the installation has reached the center line, finish installing the row along the center line and shift or adjust entire installed flooring section as necessary. If perimeter planks need to be installed after adjusting installation, ensuring perimeter gaps are installed per section 5.

INITIAL MAINTENANCE

Remove all protective coverings prior to cleaning. Sweep, dust mop and/or vacuum flooring to remove all dirt, dust or debris.

Mix a pH neutral, film-free and streak-free cleaner with clean, potable water at an initial cleaning dilution level (~1:20 - 1:40 ratio). Use a clean microfiber mop or equivalent to damp mop flooring installation and allow cleaning solution to stand on material for 10-15 minutes. Avoid wet mopping, puddling or pooling cleaning liquid on material.

For heavily soiled floors, Use a low-speed (180 – 360 RPM) swing single disc scrubber with a 3M 4100 White Polishing Pad or an auto-scrubber with 3M 5100 Red Cleaning pad to scrub the floor while wet.

Use a wet vacuum or clean mop to remove all excess cleaning solution. Rinse area with clean, cool water and ensure that all cleaning residue has been removed (this may require additional rinsing). Allow area to dry completely before allowing foot traffic.

Do not use detergents, abrasive cleaners or "mop and shine" type products, as they will dull the finish and sheen of the flooring material. Do not use vacuums that have a beater bar, electric brooms with hard plastic bottoms or no padding and vacuums which have a rubber bumper, as this may cause discoloration, scratching or loss of sheen.

For further information regarding daily or routine maintenance, please consult the product care & maintenance document or the associated product technical data sheet.

FLOORING PROTECTION

Protect newly installed flooring with construction grade paper or protective boards, such as Masonite or Ram Board, to protect flooring from damage by other trades. Do not slide or drag pallets or heavy equipment across the new flooring. Limit usage and foot traffic according to the adhesive's requirements. When moving appliances or heavy furniture, protect flooring from scuffing and tearing using temporary floor protection.

All furniture casters or glides must be intended for resilient flooring and made of a soft material (such as a felt, rubber or a poly-based material). Casters and glides must have a flat contact point that is at least 1 sq. in. or 1.125 in. in diameter to limit indentation and flooring

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or finish damage. All rolling seating in desk areas must have a resilient flooring chair pad installed over the finished floor to protect floor covering. **Do not use nylon/hard plastic glides or casters.**

All fixed furniture legs or corners must have permanent floor protectors installed on all contact points to reduce indentation, wear, scratching and other flooring or finish damage. Floor protectors must be intended for resilient flooring and made of a soft material (such as a felt, rubber or a poly-based material). Floor protectors must have a flat contact point of at least 1 sq. in. or 1.125 in. diameter and must cover the entire bottom surface of the furniture leg. **Do not use nylon/hard plastic floor protectors or furniture feet.**

Ensure all furniture castors and chair legs are clean and free of all dirt and debris. Routinely clean chair castors and furniture legs to ensure that dirt or debris has not built up or become embedded in castors or floor protectors. Replace chair castors and floor protectors at regular intervals, especially if they become damaged or heavily soiled.

Place walk-off mats at outside entrances. Prevent water and moisture from accumulating underneath walk-off mats. Ensure mats are manufactured with non-staining backs to prevent discoloration.

WARRANTY

Cobalt Surfaces provides a 10 Commercial Warranty and a Lifetime Residential Warranty for all Hushcore flooring products. For additional information, see associated warranty documents.

FOR PROFESSIONAL USE ONLY. PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW ALL ASSOCIATED TECHNICAL DATA SHEETS, SAFETY DATA SHEETS, MAINTENANCE DOCUMENTS AND WARRANTY INFORMATION PRIOR TO INSTALL

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