



Swirl Marks

Swirl marks, in a very moderate form, are fairly common in new maple installations where disc sanders are used in the flooring surface sanding process.

MFMA has no written policy or specification regarding the appearance or frequency of swirl marks in MFMA flooring installations. Generally speaking, minor swirl marks are apparent in some locations on most flooring installations. They are considered excessive if close-up inspection yields noticeable uneven or gouged areas of the flooring.

There can be a number of causes of swirl marks. The most common occurrence in the maple itself results from the use of disc sanders. These are very different from swirl marks between layers of finish, which are typically seen when lighting is reduced and angled reflections are observed.

Between-coat buffing is desirable to ensure proper adhesion of successive coats of finish, and in fact is required under certain finish manufacturer warranties. Flooring appearance in these cases is akin to a fresh wax job on a black automobile -- when viewed at a specific angle under specific lighting conditions, the marks are visible.

Swirl marks of this type are not damaging to the surface, nor will the marks impair the playability or performance of the system. Typically, the marks will soon begin to disappear as the oil-modified finish on the floor ambers with age.

The pace of ambering varies from product to product, but most color changes will take place between six months to fifteen months following the initial application. However, water-based finishes do not amber over time and if you think swirl marks are present, check the severity and contact your flooring installer.

If you have additional questions, please contact MFMA's Technical Director at 888/480-9138.

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