

What is an expansion gap?

The terminology expansion gap is specifically used during floor installation. They are the absolute necessary gaps that should be left around the boundary, during a variety of timber flooring installations, including engineered timber flooring, laminate flooring, bamboo flooring and solid timber etc.

Timber flooring is a natural wooden product and it will be affected by surrounding temperatures, humidity and sunlight. Timber is made up of a number of tubular cells and when moisture is absorbed back to the tubular cells, swell will occur, however, the tubes will only enlarge in diameter not in length. The seasonal movement of floorboards will always occur around the humid rainy season; due to the floorboards expansion as it absorbs the moisture in the environment, and would shrink during drier seasons.

The expansion and shrink will not act dramatically, due to the modern progress on floorboard manufacture, structure and technology. However, there is still a demand to adequately provide for floor expansion. If there isn't an expansion gap left after installation, when the timber flooring naturally expands, it has nowhere to go and the planks will squeeze into each other, as a result, the floor would make squeaking or cracking noises, the worse situation would be cupping (when the edges of a plank are higher than its center) or bucking (the planks pull up from the subfloor, lifting several millimeters in one or more places). In another situation, when the inappropriate expansion gap is left after installation, it could be hard to finish the installation with quad or skirting, if the expansion gap is too big, or the floorboards rise or if the expansion gap is too small.

The installation of the expansion gap are dependent a lot on floorboard material, structure, join mechanism, plank width, length and thickness, and it's also about local weather and the unique area needed to be installed etc. Even the exact same product in a same house could have different numbers and size of expansion gap required.

At Prance Timber flooring, our professional installers will provide the outstanding installation service to every customer; they will always make the right decision from their up to 15years flooring installation experience, and will always make sure to consistently give the satisfied result to you.