

## 1. General Advice

Whilst it is technically possible to fully adhere a floor covering directly to a particle board (chipboard) subfloor, grin through (telegraphing) of panel joints, particularly after trafficking, is one of the most common problems encountered with directly adhered (or loose laid) resilient or thin textile floor coverings. Grin through of panel joints can lead to complaints from dissatisfied end users and, in some cases, premature failure of the installed floor covering. BS8203:2017 therefore recommends that when installing resilient floor coverings that particleboard floors (either fixed or floating) are overlaid with a fabricated underlay – see section 3 below.

With suspended timber floors at ground floor level it is essential that through ventilation exists beneath the floor together with unobstructed air vents in both the sleeper and outer walls.

## 2. Particle board subfloor general requirements

All boards should meet the requirements of BS8203:2017

Boards coated with wax, polyurethane or any other impervious seal that may impair adhesion must not be used for floors which are to be covered with a bonded floor covering. A grade appropriate for the construction of the floor, nature of the building and the expected design life should be selected.

Particle board should conform to BSEN312 type P4, P5, P6, or P7 or selected from BS8103-3 for domestic use.

Oriented Strand Board (OSB) should conform to BS EN300, Type OSB/2 (dry), Type OSB/3 (humid) or Type OSB/4 (heavy duty humid) and be overlaid with a suitable fabricated underlay – see section 4.

Boards should be at the equilibrium moisture content it will have in service at the time it is covered. Advice is available in the CFA Guide to Contract Flooring in relation to the recommended moisture content of the particle board, which should be checked prior to commencement of any work.

Further information and guidance on the installation and fixing of wood panel subfloors can be found in the Panel Guide V4 - <http://wpif.org.uk/panelguide>

## 3. Fabricated Underlays

Fabricated underlays should be either 5.5mm plywood (minimal nominal thickness) and conform to BS8203:2017 Annex A or 4.8mm hardboard, grade HB.H (oil tempered) conforming to BS EN622- and installed and fixed in accordance with BS8203:2017.

Note: Hardboard is recommended for residential use only.

Fabricated underlays should be fixed using screw nails, ring shank nails or screws which should be finished flush with the surface. Each panel should be fixed at 100 mm centres around the perimeter of the panel and at 150 mm centres elsewhere. The length of the fixings should be at least 2.5 times the thickness of the fabricated underlay, but no longer than would allow the fixing to protrude below the timber or wood-based panel base

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### **Additional Reference documents**

BS8203:2017

The CFA Guide to Contract Flooring (Tel: 01159 411126)

WIPF Panel guide 2014 Annex 3: [http://www.wpif.org.uk/uploads/PanelGuide/PanelGuide\\_2014\\_Annex3.pdf](http://www.wpif.org.uk/uploads/PanelGuide/PanelGuide_2014_Annex3.pdf)