

Intermediate Expansion Spaces



Intermediate Expansion Spaces, also referred to as Washer Rows, are sometimes included to address future flooring growth related to increased wood moisture content when flooring boards are exposed to anticipated increases in humidity. This can occur when installing flooring during the dry heating season when humidity levels are too low to effectively acclimate materials to higher wood moisture content prior to installation.

Intermediate expansion spaces were initially provided through the inclusion of steel washers set on edge between designated board rows to create spaces ranging from 1/16" to 1/8" wide. In recent years, the method of providing intermediate expansion spaces has changed from the use of washers to instead now being provided by using nylon line. A thickness of 0.095" (3/32") is common and can pinch down closer to 1/16" depending on the force and number of board rows installed prior to removing the line. The line should be positioned as close to the flooring surface as possible to allow best possible removal without breakage.

Wood flooring typically does not experience adverse issues such as compression or buckling issues when gaining somewhat over 1% wood moisture content. The table below provides recommended spacing based on anticipated wood moisture content gain after installation.

NOTE: It is important to correctly identify existing wood moisture content using an accurate wood moisture meter, and to correctly forecast expected peak wood moisture.

MOISTURE CONTENT GAIN	1/16" SPACES	3/32" SPACES
1%	-	-
2%	16 rows / 36.00"	-
3%	11 rows / 24.75"	16 rows / 36.00"
4%	-	11 rows / 24.75"

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