

IN THE FIELD

It's That Time of Year – Seasonal Cracks



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A flooring contractor's job is difficult enough without unreasonable customer expectations. Customer education about proper maintenance and normal expectations for their wood flooring should be part of the contractor's early discussions with the customer.

The homeowner should be aware of how wood reacts to changing temperature and humidity conditions and what naturally occurring seasonal expansion and contraction happens.

Almost every wood floor experiences some separation between boards. During the winter, wood floors give up some moisture and shrink when homes are heated and the air is dry. It is normal for thin cracks to appear between the boards, commonly around heat vents and wood stoves, but the homeowner may not be aware of this. If the contractor has forewarned the homeowner that this is normal during the winter months, many service calls can be avoided at the first sign of cracks. These cracks could develop to the thickness of a dime. Once spring rolls around and the heat goes off, the house regains moisture and most of the cracks should close.

The contractor may offer a choice to homeowner, to add humidity to the dry air in their homes by using humidifiers, or they could live with the cracks until spring. A consistent environment will minimize board movement.

The flooring contractor knows that wood is a product of Mother Nature and her rules are inescapable...the successful flooring contractor makes sure that the homeowner also knows what to expect. ■