



## PREFINISHED VS. SITE-FINISHED FLOORS

As you shop for wood floors you will undoubtedly have a discussion on the difference between prefinished and site-finished flooring, and which is better for your project. While it is usually not a very difficult decision for most homeowners, it is an important one.

Site-finished (also known as “unfinished”) is the traditional method of installing wood floors – unfinished planks of wood are installed, then sanded and finished on-site. This allows you to pick every detail of your floor, from the species and grade of wood, to the stain color and finish system. It also results in a completely smooth surface. This method is more labor-intensive, and takes the longest to complete. For a job of 1,000 SF Higgins would need a minimum of 8-10 work days for a site-finished install, and then (depending on the finish system you choose) you have a waiting period before you can begin to use the floors (3-24 hours before walking on them, 48-72 hours before furniture can be placed on them).

Prefinished floors are a newer option - they come from the manufacturer with the finish already applied, so the only on-site labor required is installation. Prefinished floors are available in many stain colors and textures, so you still have a wide range of choices. Prefinished floors are just as durable as site-finished, the only visible difference is that prefinished floors have a beveled edge around them to account for imperfections in the subfloor. Some homeowners barely notice a difference, while others notice it a lot. For a job of 1,000 SF Higgins would need approximately 3-4 days to complete a standard prefinished install (and there is no waiting time to use the floors).

***Which option is right for you? See below for the benefits of each:***

### **Site-Finished:**

- Fully **customizable** (you can pick absolutely every detail of your floor including the species, grade, stain, texture, and finish)
- Completely **smooth** surface
- Great for **new homes and major remodels** when no one will be living in the house (it allows the floors to be installed before other work is done, but we can wait to sand and finish until all other work is completed so there is less risk of damaging your new floors)
- Usually preferred when **matching existing flooring** (old and new floors can be sanded and finished at the same time, resulting in a consistent color)

### **Prefinished:**

- **Fast and easy** - site-finished requires at least four more days of work, and then you have to wait several days before you can put furniture down. Prefinished floors are move-on ready
- **Guaranteed color matching** - working with natural products always results in some variation, but the prefinished mills check their products to ensure consistent output (so the stain sample you see in our showroom is exactly what will end up on your floor)
- Often **more cost-effective** than Site-Finished (especially if you're interested in stain colors and alternative finish systems as the optional upgrades with Site-Finished floors quickly add up)

*PRO TIP – many homeowners confuse the terms “site-finished” and “prefinished,” with “solid” and “engineered.” Site-finished and prefinished refer only to the method of finishing the boards (whether it’s done in a factory or in your home). Solid and engineered refer to the actual construction of the boards, whether they are made entirely of one piece of wood, or out of multiple pieces (see the Engineered page on our website for more information: [www.higginswoodfloors.com/engineered](http://www.higginswoodfloors.com/engineered)).*