

COMPLIANCE & INSTALLATION

Wet areas & the install.

ATS Laminate is our water-resistant laminate line, brought in specifically to answer the Building Code's wet area rules after the 2021 changes. This document covers the rule, the pathway, the independent test evidence behind our installs, and the installation method itself, floating and glue-free, in dry rooms and wet areas alike.

The rule that changed

Under E3/AS1, the Acceptable Solution for the Building Code's internal moisture clause, there were six flooring options deemed acceptable in wet areas. With Amendment 7, in force from **4 November 2021**, that list dropped to three, and timber and timber-based products came off it. Kitchens, laundries, toilet rooms and powder rooms are now counted among the spaces with sanitary fixtures and appliances.

The code's underlying requirement, E3.3.3, says flooring surfaces in any space containing sanitary fixtures or appliances must be **impervious and easily cleaned**.

Projects consented before 4 November 2021 are exempt: both Amendment 6 and 7 were a means of compliance during the transition, and a consent authority cannot reject a floor consented under the old rules retrospectively.

The common misconception

Because timber-based flooring is no longer an Acceptable Solution in these spaces, it is often assumed it can no longer be used there. Not so: the route is the code's **Alternative Solution** pathway, agreed with the Building Consent Authority case by case, on evidence the floor meets E3's performance requirements.

What ATS Laminate is

A 12mm laminate board built for exactly this job: a high-density coreboard that resists moisture absorption, a waxed water-resistant construction, an embossed wood grain surface, and click joints that assemble tight enough to test as impervious (page 2).

Where standard laminate is best kept to dry rooms, ATS Laminate is made for kitchens, bathrooms and laundries too. It offers up to **48 hours of water resistance: water resistant, not waterproof**, and no laminate is.

We prepare the Alternative Solution documentation for your building consent ourselves, drawing on the evidence in this document. Ask, and it is part of the job.

ATS DESIGN · CONSENT DOCUMENTATION
PREPARED PER PROJECT

The test evidence

The water performance behind our wet area installs was verified by the **NZ Wool Testing Authority**, an independent, IANZ accredited New Zealand laboratory, in **Report 1623081.5** (15 July 2026), to ISO 4760:2022, the laminate flooring standard for topical moisture resistance at the assembled joint, run in a modified form.

How the test was run

- 12mm laminate planks were cut and clicked into assembled floating **T-joint** specimens, in triplicate, with Titebond III Ultimate adhesive applied to the joins before assembly, as noted in the report.
- A 100mm cylinder was sealed to the surface over the centre of each T-joint and **100ml of dyed water** was ponded inside it.
- Specimens sat on white paper so any dye passing through would show, weighted flat, for **24 hours** at 20°C and 65% relative humidity (a noted variation from the method's 23°C, 50%).
- After examination the specimens were pulled apart and inspected again from the inside.

What the laboratory found

Observation, all three specimens	Result
Water migration along the upper surface	None
Water migration to the underside	None
Migration found on disassembly	None
Wet swell and recovered swell	Grade 1 · no change

"The result of this test verified that this product's assembled joint over a 24 hour period did not allow water penetration through to the substrate."

NZ WOOL TESTING AUTHORITY · REPORT 1623081.5
· 15 JULY 2026

What this means under E3

E3 defines **impervious** as "that which does not allow the passage of moisture", and requires impervious, easily cleaned surfaces around sanitary fixtures and appliances. The code adopts no single method for verifying that performance, which is exactly what the Alternative Solution pathway is for: this internationally used ISO test, performed independently in New Zealand, is the verification we put in front of the consent authority.

The tested performance belongs to the **assembled floor**: fully seated joints and a sealed perimeter. That is why the wet area installation steps on page 5 are part of the compliance story, not just good practice.

Before anything is laid

Inspect every plank before installation: colour, finish and quality. Once a plank is installed it is considered accepted. Hold out or cut around pieces with visible defects, and if a plank is doubtful as to grade or finish, do not use it.

Order with an allowance of **5 to 10%** over the measured area, depending on layout, to cover cutting and wastage, and keep a few spare planks from the batch, properly stored, for future repairs.

Acclimatisation

- Store planks **flat, in the room they will be installed in, for at least 48 hours** before installation, so the boards settle to the room's temperature and humidity.
- In new construction, flooring is one of the last trades: all wet work (plumbing, plastering, painting) should be complete and fully dry first.
- Handle and store planks flat, dry, off the ground, and away from direct sun and heat.

ATS Laminate is suitable at, below or above ground level, including wet areas installed to the method on page 5.

The subfloor

- **Clean:** free of wax, grease, paint, oil and debris.
- **Flat:** within 3mm over a 2m run, or 5mm over 3m. Sand or fill high and low spots before laying.
- **Dry:** concrete slabs checked with a calibrated moisture meter before installing, regardless of the existing covering.

Approved subfloors, floating

Subfloor	Suitable
Exterior plywood, 16mm (5/8") or thicker	Yes
Strandboard / OSB, 18mm (23/32") or thicker	Yes
Concrete	Yes
Ceramic tile, terrazzo, slate, marble	Yes
Existing resilient flooring, well bonded	Yes, subject to a flatness check

ATS Laminate is a floating floor. It is never glued, nailed or stapled to the subfloor: the boards click together over a dedicated high density IXPE underlay and move as one surface.

SEE THE UNDERLAY SPECIFICATION · INCLUDED ON EVERY LAMINATE QUOTE

The kit

Hand tools: broom or vacuum, tape measure, moisture meter, chalk line, tapping block, pull bar, rubber mallet, spacers for the expansion gaps, and a fine-tooth hand saw.

Power tools: a table saw, mitre saw or jigsaw for cutting planks to size.

For wet areas: a sealant appropriate for perimeter and fixture junctions (page 5).

Laying the floor

Step 1: the starting line. Install parallel to the longest, straightest wall for the best visual effect, and mark the starting row with a chalk line.

Step 2: the starter row. Measure the room across the direction of lay. If the final row would come out narrower than **50mm**, rip the starter row down instead, so the first and last rows are an even, reasonable width.

Step 3: the planks. Select planks with care, placing the more heavily patterned boards where they draw less attention. Click each joint fully home along its whole length: never force a partially seated joint, because a gap here costs both looks and, in wet areas, water resistance. Start each new row at least **300mm** longer or shorter than the row before, so the end joints stagger. Hold an expansion gap of **8 to 12mm** at every wall, fixed cabinet and vertical obstruction, kept even with spacers.

Step 4: the finish. Rip the final row to fit, keeping the gap. Fit transition pieces before skirtings go back on, and nail mouldings **to the wall, never the floor**, so the floor keeps floating. Remove any temporary tape within 24 hours.

Handing it over

- Clean with an appropriate laminate floor cleaner and remove any sealant residue before leaving site.
- Inspect for gaps or lifted joints and put them right before handover.
- Give the floor 24 hours before furniture and appliances come back; lift rather than drag, over plywood or hardboard for the heavy pieces.
- Note the product and batch for warranty purposes.

Underfloor heating

ATS Laminate is compatible with underfloor heating. Surface temperature limits and start-up procedure are set by the heating system, not the floor: confirm the operating parameters with the heating supplier before installation.

Wet areas: keeping the floor compliant

The Alternative Solution rests on the assembled floor staying impervious. In bathrooms, laundries, toilet rooms and around kitchen sanitary outlets, three things are critical:

- **Every joint fully seated.** Click joints must be engaged along their entire length. A partially engaged joint can let water track beneath the surface, undermining the tested performance this document is built on.
- **The perimeter sealed.** Seal the floor's edge against walls, cabinetry and fixture penetrations: around toilet pans, vanity legs and shower thresholds, so water cannot track under the floor at the edges.
- **Direct water junctions detailed properly.** Where the floor meets a shower, bath or any area with direct water flow, that junction belongs to the wider waterproofing design, detailed by the installer or builder, not treated as a standard dry-area skirting junction.

Living with it: the short version

- Sweep with a soft broom, or vacuum on the bare-floor setting; damp mop for everyday care with a gentle, non-abrasive laminate cleaner.
- No steam mops, wax, oils, ammonia, bleach, abrasive pads or "mop and shine" products.
- Wipe spills promptly; do not let water sit.
- Smooth felt protectors under furniture; lift rather than drag, always.
- Stubborn marks: laminate cleaner and a white non-abrasive pad first; isopropyl alcohol only for ink, marker, polish and dye.

ATS Laminate offers up to 48 hours of water resistance under normal conditions. It is not waterproof: standing water should be removed promptly, and flooding, plumbing leaks and excessive moisture exposure sit outside the warranty.

ATS LAMINATE WARRANTY · 15 YEARS · FULL TERMS IN THE WARRANTY DOCUMENT

The papers beside this one

This guide travels with the **ATS Laminate warranty** (15 years: structural, wear and install), the **underlay specification**, and the **certification overview** that summarises the test evidence in plain words. All four are on every ATS Laminate colour page, and consent documentation is prepared per project on request.