

# SAND A FLOOR

## Guidance Notes



**The construction methods described in this booklet are suggestions and are provided purely as a guide. All work carried out on the construction of a deck will be done at the risk of the builder and shall in no way impinge upon Hire Shop Birmingham Ltd**

***Please read the important Health and Safety notes at the end of this booklet***

## HOW TO

# SAND A TIMBER FLOOR

Re-finishing a floor may seem like a difficult and time consuming job, but the work is largely done by machine. A floor sander can strip an old finish from a floor and create a completely smooth, fresh surface in a matter of two or three hours depending on size.

Considerable dust is created when sanding, so wear a dust mask. You also should wear goggles or safety glasses. Although large sanders have a vacuum bag and should control much of the dust, small sanders may not have this feature.

### 1. REMOVING THE OLD FLOOR FINISH

Before beginning to sand the floor, check the entire surface for exposed nail heads or raised corners of boards. Either of these can rip a rapidly moving sand-paper belt to shreds. Clean the floor of sticky material which will clog your sandpaper quickly. If the floor has holes, nicks or dents, fill these with timber mate natural (Fig 1). Mix the saw dust with it to colour it. The surface of the floor must be cleared before sanding. Remove any hardware attached to the floor. All furnishings should be removed.

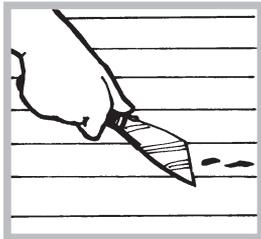


Fig. 1

### 2. OBTAINING PROPER EQUIPMENT

Floor sanding equipment can be hired. You will also need a portable edge sander for working on the perimeter of the room. These will sand right up to the skirtings. Have your hire shop team member demonstrate how to install the sanding belts and how to operate the machines. When in use, the floor sanding machine is pushed in one direction rather like a lawnmower (Fig 2). You also will require a hand scraper for removing the finish in the deepest corners and a vacuum for taking up sanding dust that the sander's vacuum bag misses.

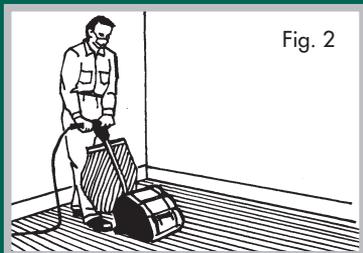


Fig. 2

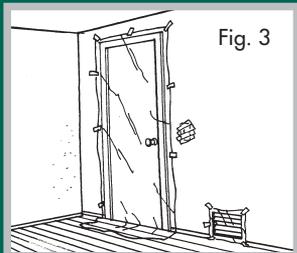


Fig. 3

#### TOOLS

- Scraper
- Putty knife
- Vacuum cleaner
- Drop sheets
- Screwdriver
- Belt sander
- Nail punch
- Sanding block
- Masking tape
- Hammer
- Chisel
- Disc or orbital sander

#### SAFETY

- Always keep tools and materials away from children.
- Read the instructions before beginning your project.
- You may need permission from your local council, and/or water and power authorities before this work is carried out. They should be contacted before you start.
- Wear an approved dust mask when cutting, planing or sanding timber.

### 3. CLEARING THE ROOM

Before beginning the sanding process, seal all electrical outlets and switches and all heating ducts and cold air returns. Use duct tape and heavy plastic sheets to cover the openings (Fig 3). As an additional precaution, hang heavy drop sheets on either side of any door leading into the area in which you will be sanding. This will help retain the dust within that area. Remove everything from the room in which you will work. Take out all furniture, rugs, carpeting, draperies, curtains, window shades. Remove anything that hangs on the walls or is stored in built-in bookcases or cupboards. Not only will it be easier to work in a completely empty room, but anything left in the room would be exposed to damage from the dust and grit produced during the sanding. As you work you will have to remove the dust between sandings and scrupulously clean all surfaces before re-finishing.

### 4. ROUGH SANDING

Open all windows for ventilation. Use 24 grit sand paper on a very rough floor and follow this with 40 grit. Start in one corner of the room and work diagonally so that you push the sander at an approximately 45 degree angle to the length of the flooring. This will eliminate any irregularities on the edges or joints of the floor planks. Tilt the machine on the roller wheels so the sandpaper belt is NOT in contact with the floor and turn the machine on. Push the machine forward, gradually lowering the machine so that the sandpaper belt makes contact with the floor. CAUTION: Never start the machine with the sandpaper belt touching the floor. Never stop moving the machine when the sandpaper belt is in contact with the floor, otherwise you will gouge the floor. Push the machine to opposite of your starting point. As you reach the other side of the room, tilt the machine back and lift the sandpaper belt off the floor. Move the machine as close to the wall opposite your starting place as you can without touching the wall. Tilt the handle of the machine down to lift the belt off the floor and pull the sander back to your starting point. Re-sand the same strip until all the old finish has been removed. If there are many layers, you may have to re-sand two or three times. When the strip is free of finish, roll the machine to an adjacent area and position it so the belt will overlap the first strip by approximately 75mm. Repeat this procedure until you have sanded the entire floor and have taken off all the old finish. Remember to move the machine slowly but steadily and never stop when the sanding belt is in contact with the floor. When you have finished with this first rough sanding, you will still have a perimeter of unsanded area. Use the portable edge sander to remove the finish in this area (Fig 4). Move the hand sander back and forth from left to right. For this first sanding, use the same grit sandpaper as you did with the drum sander. You will be able to do all of the border of the room with the portable sander, except for the corners. To clear the corners, use the hand scraper to scrape the finish off (Fig 5). A small block of wood with a strip of sandpaper wrapped around it is also useful for working in corners or other places where the disc sander cannot reach. When the first rough sanding has been completed, use a broom and vacuum to clean up as much of the sanding dust as possible. Any dust left will clog the next grade of paper as you work and any grit may scratch the floor surface. It is a good idea to wear soft cotton socks on your feet as you sweep so there is no chance of grinding any of the dust into the floor with shoes.

Fig. 4



Fig. 5



When the first rough sanding has been completed, use a broom and vacuum to clean up as much of the sanding dust as possible. Any dust left will clog the next grade of paper as you work and any grit may scratch the floor surface. It is a good idea to wear soft cotton socks on your feet as you sweep so there is no chance of grinding any of the dust into the floor with shoes.

### 5. MEDIUM SANDING

Load the machine with 80 grit sandpaper and repeat the procedure in exactly the same manner as for rough sanding, however this time sand from one end of the room to the other. When the main area of the floor has been sanded, use the portable sander, loaded with 80 grit paper, to do the borders of the room. Use the scraper and block of wood wrapped in sandpaper to do corners and other places the machines cannot reach, as you did the first time. When you have finished the medium sanding, sweep and vacuum up all the dust again. Be sure to wipe away dust that has settled on the tops of window and door frames and on window sills and the top edges of moulding. The room should be as dust-free as possible when you plan to apply the final finish. Any dust that settles on the wet surface treatment will cause problems.

### 6. FINE SANDING

Finish sanding with 100-120 grit sandpaper. The medium sanding should have made the floor very smooth; fine sanding will produce a surface that is nearly silky smooth. Follow the same sanding procedures used as in rough sanding and medium sanding. Sand in overlapping strips, following the direction of the boards and always keeping the machine moving. Sand the main area first, then the borders and then the corners. Sweep and vacuum up the dust. Wipe down the walls and ceiling and finish by wiping with a rag in corners and under obstructions such as radiators.

### 7. FINISHING THE FLOOR

The floor finish you have chosen should be applied after completion of the fine sanding. Make sure all dust has been vacuumed and the floor is spotless. Floor finishes give off strong vapours so make sure you wear a mask for noxious fumes and the room is well ventilated. Carefully select the floor finish so that it provides the wearing properties, stain, gloss etc that you desire. Remember, above all else with floor finishes, "read the instructions".

For further expert advice consult Hire Shop Birmingham Ltd

Although every care has been taken to ensure that the information and advice given in this guide is authoritative no legal liability is accepted for such information and advice.