

MOVING BACK IN – DOMESTIC

“When can we move back in?” is a common question. Whether living in other parts of the house or having moved out, people want to reoccupy their home and bring back their furniture, etc. as soon as possible.

In general terms the situation for Bona polyurethane finishes is as follows: the floor will take light foot traffic after approximately 8 hours and will reach ultimate hardness in 7 - 14 days. If possible, walking on the floor with shoes should be avoided for at least the first 48 hours. This assumes that the drying / curing period occurs under reasonable conditions. Low temperatures, poor ventilation and high humidity will slow down the curing and thus site conditions must be considered when planning reoccupation.

With the Bona Traffic HD range and Traffic GO the curing process is faster and floors can often be put back almost into full use after 24 hours with the full cure being achieved after 3 days or so. However, it is still greatly dependent upon site conditions and care must still be taken. There is one exception to this; Bona Traffic HD Raw. To achieve the ultra matt appearance of HD Raw requires a different formulation which takes longer to cure than other HD variants and so should be treated the same as a standard finish.

Bona oil systems take longer to dry and cure and should not be trafficked for 12 hours after application. With Bona Hard Wax oil a period of 18 hours should be allowed. Over the next few days the floor area can be reoccupied as with a normal finish system

Moving furniture on to the floor, with care, can usually take place 48 hours after the final coat has dried. In poor drying conditions this period should be extended as the finish may more easily be damaged and indentations from heavy furniture may be seen where there is a surface coating. All furniture must be lifted and put in place rather than being dragged or pushed.

Special care should be taken with moving back refrigerators, dishwashers, etc. Often, they are moved carefully to the kitchen, in front of their final location, and then pushed into place – leaving long scratches and indentations. The best way to replace the unit is to move it on a trolley to in front of the space where it will sit. Then place it on a piece of hardboard, or similar, wrapped in a soft blanket / cloth. It can then be easily moved into place without leaving dents and scratches in the newly finished floor. If any minor damage does occur it will be under the machine and not visible.

Hard plastic feet can cause physical damage to timber flooring and should be either replaced or felt placed beneath them. Some plastic & rubber feet may also leach chemicals into the floor that cause discolouration. Similar issues can also be seen with materials on the backs of matting, anti-slip nets for mats and other similar items. Anti-ozonants are added to rubber and plastic for age stability and protection against ozone degradation. These chemicals by design must migrate to the surface of the rubber to provide protection but can also migrate into other materials. This effect can be seen on any coated timber surface but can also affect vinyl, marble, terracotta, hybrid and other similar materials. Factors that affect the likelihood of this effect being seen include how fresh the rubber is, the type of anti-ozonant being used, temperature, weight/pressure from the object and UV-exposure.

All furniture should have protective felt ‘feet’ fitted so as to prevent scratching / marking. Remember though, if grit gets ‘caught’ under the felt the floor can still be scratched so it is important that the felt is both cleaned and replaced occasionally, particularly with items such as chairs and stools.

Repainting of skirtings and other decoration often occurs soon after moving back in. Care must be taken during this time. Impermeable sheeting, such as plastic etc, must be avoided until the finish system has cured as this can affect the curing process. Potentially it can cause an uneven sheen level, poor resistance to scuffs and, in extreme cases, it may affect the adhesion of the finishes to the wooden floor. Painter’s drop sheets can be used so long as they are moved frequently and aren’t dragged across the floor to cause scuffing.

If masking tape is used on the floor alongside skirtings it must be professional quality low tack tape and should not be applied during the curing period. Poor quality tape, tape left on the floor for days at a time and tape with a high level of adhesion may lead to the finish being pulled from the floor when the tape is removed. It is recommended that good quality masking tape is applied shortly before painting commences and removed immediately the paint has been applied. This process is used on sports floors for the line marking and no issues are seen from tape damaging the newly coated flooring, despite the fact that thousands of lineal metres of tape is applied and removed during the application process.

As can be seen, with a modicum of common sense it is possible to put floors back into use and reoccupy recently renovated areas relatively soon after the process is completed. After moving back in, a maintenance programme using the Bona Floor Care range of products will keep floors clean and in a good condition.

Full details of the Bona Floor Care range together with the Bona residential Floor Care Guide can be found here <https://www.bona.com.au/homeowners/floor-care-guides/residential-floor-care-guides>