



**Erickson's**

*Flooring & Supply Company*

Warranty Claims  
&  
Self Inspection Program

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# Introduction

The professional handling of consumer complaints in a timely fashion is integral to the success and profitability of your business and Erickson's. Erickson's recognizes the need for the expedient resolution of warranty claims and; therefore, has assembled this package of materials to assist you, our valued customers, to better service the consumer and mutually benefit all parties involved.

Erickson's believes that claims should be a positive experience that will gain the consumer's confidence, respect, and loyalty. The ultimate goal of complaint management is not to "point fingers", but rather determine if the complaint is a manufacturing defect or the result of external conditions (moisture, installation, etc.), providing a clearly defined resolution and closure for the consumer and all parties involved. Statistics verify that the quicker a product complaint is addressed and resolved, the cost is less and the customer will maintain a positive attitude toward their purchase.

The proper method to follow is to first perform a thorough jobsite inspection using all of the necessary tools as soon as possible, and to document all findings and related information properly. The following guidelines cover some FAQ's, what forms to fill out, who should be involved in the claims process, and how to submit your claim properly to Erickson's. Adherence to these guidelines will ensure the most expedient processing of your claim and the most positive outcome possible for all parties involved; additionally, it will bring an equitable settlement of any legitimate manufacturing issues.

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# **General Guidelines to Effective Claims Management**

## ***Pre Sale Guidelines***

1. Establish a written claims policy, similar in content to Erickson's policy that all employees understand and follow.
2. Track and record all complaints in writing, regardless of the problem, status, or outcome.
3. Establish a specified timeline for resolution on all customer complaints.

## ***Sale Guidelines***

1. Provide the customer with accurate and comprehensive product information at the point of sale. Establishing realistic customer expectations at the point of sale will eliminate many potential complaints.
2. Know the products you sell. Know their limitations and how they perform under different scenarios. The better you know your products, the better sales person you will be and the fewer complaints you will have.
3. Provide your customer with all warranty and maintenance information at the point of sale. Have the customer sign indicating they received this information. Good record keeping emphasizes your professionalism to your customer. Additionally, a large percentage of complaints are generated from customers not understanding the warranty and / or improper maintenance procedures.

## ***Post Sale Guidelines***

1. Respond immediately to a customer complaint, and when possible, respond in person. The consumer must feel confident that this aspect of the sale is just as important.
2. Respond to complaints without bias. Customers want you to hear and see their complaints. A negative attitude, real or perceived, will result in an unhappy customer and potentially more problems. If the customer feels that you have reviewed their complaint with a pre-conceived bias, or that you are not hearing or seeing their problem, they will lose objectivity and view anything you do or say as negative or biased.
3. Have a system to follow up on all complaints (should be a part of your written claims policy).
4. Respond immediately, verbally or in writing, after your initial jobsite inspection. Procrastination will only upset the customer and worsen the situation.

## ***Resources***

The National Wood Flooring Association has extensive documentation available to assist you in managing claim related issues. This information is available in printed form or available online via their website at [www.nwfa.org](http://www.nwfa.org). Publications include Water & Wood, Wood Species, and Jobsite Evaluation, Estimating, and Preparation.

**Erickson's Flooring & Supply**  
ILLINOIS INDIANA MICHIGAN OHIO WISCONSIN  
Phone 800.225.9663  
Fax 888.543.9663

## Procedure for Handling Complaints

### ***Consumer's Initial Call***

Upon receiving a call from a consumer with a complaint, the first thing to do is **listen** and let the consumer explain their frustrations. This initial interaction will often set the tone of the entire complaint process. After the consumer has had an opportunity to explain their concerns and needs, in a non-threatening manner, ask the consumer the following questions:

- 1) What exactly is the problem? Describe the problem in detail.
- 2) When was the problem noticed – before, during, or after installation?
- 3) Is the problem getting worse or has it stabilized?
- 4) How do they maintain their floor?
- 5) What type of resolution do they expect – in many cases their proposal will cost a lot less than what you were going to suggest.

### ***Jobsite Inspections***

If the complaint requires an inspection, schedule an inspection to occur with the following parties present:

- **The Consumer (required)**
- **The Seller (required)**
- The Installer (if applicable)
- The Builder (if applicable)



It is the responsibility of the seller to inspect all complaints before contacting Erickson's. The seller must determine that the product is still under warranty and the problem is **NOT** due to external factors – i.e. improper installation, moisture issues, and/or incorrect maintenance, etc.

Installer accountability must also be maintained. Per manufacturer installation instructions, NOFMA\*, and NWFAs guidelines, the installer is responsible to examine the material before installation. This is to ensure the correct product was ordered, as well as determine if there are any visible manufacturing defects. If there is any question or doubt, the installer must stop the job immediately and contact the seller with all issues and questions.

\* NOFMA is the National Oak Flooring Manufacturers Association. NOFMA sets grading, milling, and other manufacturing standards.

**Note: Industry standard, as set forth by NOFMA and NWFA, allows for a 5% waste and/or defect factor during installation for all flooring, prefinished or unfinished. This includes, but is not limited to, finish imperfections, grading discrepancies, milling defects, color, and general cutting waste. Flooring should be evaluated by the installer before installation and discarded, or ‘culled’, if it does not meet the specified grading criteria published by NOFMA.**

It is imperative that an inspection be conducted as soon as possible to ensure timely resolution. It is recommended to perform the inspection immediately after receiving the call from the consumer.

**When conducting the inspection it is important to listen, remain objective, and not to make any promises or implications regarding any alleged problems, or supposed resolution by the manufacturer.**

### **Inspection & Processing Procedures**

Upon performing a jobsite inspection, it is important to have all of the necessary tools. Here is a list of tools Erickson’s recommends for a claim inspection. Erickson’s has moisture meters you can purchase for both concrete and wood (price list attached); all other tools can be purchased at your local hardware store.

- Hygrometer (measures relative humidity)
- Moisture Meter (both concrete and wood)
- Gauges (measure over-wood)
- Kite String (floor level)
- Sample Bottles (finish samples)
- Tape Measure (board width and gapping)
- Note pad (to register all pertinent information and note)
- Calipers (board width and milling)
- Razor Blades (taking samples of urethane)
- Phenolphthalein or Calcium Chloride (indicates concrete moisture)
- Stud Finder (magnetic)

The Inspection Analysis Report must be completed, in it’s entirety, at the time of the inspection if any warranty claim is to be made.

After reviewing the provided documentation on common claim problems and their cures, the manufacturer's warranty installation documentation, and NOFMA and NWFA guidelines, and it is still determined the claim is a result of a manufacturing defect and is under warranty, take the following action:

- **Submit the Claim in Process Form:** This form summarizes all pertinent information, including consumer name, invoice number, product installed, etc.
- **Submit the Inspection Analysis Report:** This should be completed at the time of inspection and ALL information must be filled out, as appropriate.
- **Attach the Carton Label:** This will be on the box and is used for tracking purposes.
- **Submit Samples:** Samples must be submitted for every claim that is determined to be a manufacturing defect; also, samples must show the alleged defect. Samples should be submitted directly to Erickson's claims department, never to the manufacturer. Please do not submit more material than is necessary to adequately show the defect.
- **Repairs: Do not perform any claim related repairs before receiving approval from Erickson's and/or the manufacturer.** Erickson's and/or the manufacturer are not liable for payment on any repairs or work done to the floor without prior written approval.

**Note: Labor rates must be within acceptable industry guidelines. For example, the average rate to replace a prefinished floor is \$1 per square foot to tear the old flooring out and \$2 per square foot to install new flooring. There are many different repair options and scenarios, so please contact Erickson's claims department for additional information on acceptable labor rates specific to your warranty claim.**

The Claim in Process Form, the Inspection Analysis Report, and all associated documentation should be either:

- Faxed to 888.543.9663 Attn: Claims Dept.
- Mailed to 1013 Orchard St., Ferndale, MI, 48220 Attn: Claims Dept.

All information must be submitted at the same time – incomplete or missing paperwork will delay your warranty claim and may cause your claim to be closed. Samples must be received within 3-5 business days upon receipt of paperwork.

## The Next Step

Upon receipt of your completed paperwork indicating a manufacturing defect, Erickson's claims department will enter your warranty claim into our claims database. An Erickson's claim department representative will contact you and provide a tracking number for your warranty claim within 48 hours\*. This tracking number can be used to check on the status of your claim Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm, by calling 800.225.9663 ext. 1128, or 248.246.5013 direct.

### ***No Inspection Necessary***

If your warranty claim does not require a jobsite inspection, your warranty claim will be submitted to the manufacturer within 48 hours. Erickson's claims department will notify you if an inspection is required unless you have already requested an inspection. There are different factors that determine if a jobsite inspection is necessary, and each claim is handled on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Erickson's Inspection***

If your warranty claim requires an inspection, you will be contacted within 24 hours by an Erickson's Account Manager to schedule a jobsite inspection. The necessary paperwork will be submitted to the manufacturer within seven business days of the jobsite inspection, if the claim is determined to be a manufacturing defect.

Note: This is dependent upon all required paperwork properly submitted to Erickson's in the time frame indicated - all required paperwork must be filled out and submitted to Erickson's before an Erickson's representative will perform a jobsite inspection.

**Note: At no time during the warranty claim process will Erickson's or the manufacturer honor any *verbal* commitments made by any party to the consumer, seller, builder or any other entities involved. All commitments, promises, and inferences as to the status of any warranty claim, the outcome, or resolution must be in writing to be processed. Do not make any verbal commitments.**

\* 24 hours indicates a business day – if the claim is submitted on a Friday or holiday, a response will be returned the following Monday or next business day.

### ***Manufacturer's Inspection***

If an Erickson's representative inspects the warranty claim and determines an additional inspection is needed by the manufacturer, the manufacturer will be contacted within 48 hours and an inspection will be scheduled as soon as possible.

The following parties attendance at all jobsite inspections by Erickson's or the manufacturer are mandatory. **The inspection will not be conducted if not all parties are present:**

- Consumer
- Seller
- Erickson's Representative (if inspection is conducted by the manufacturer)

### **Warranty Claim Resolution**

Erickson's goal is to have a resolution from the manufacturer for all warranty claims within 30 business days after receipt of final inspection paperwork and all required documents. This is predicated on the level of involvement – if the manufacturer is involved then the goal is 30 business days after receipt of inspection paperwork from the manufacturer.

A 30-day turn around time for resolution is a goal Erickson's has set to give you the best customer service possible; due to the dynamic nature of warranty claims, this goal will not always be attainable.

## ***Credits***

If the manufacturer approves your warranty claim, Erickson's will issue a credit for the approved amounts of material and/or reasonable labor, as appropriate, in the form of a credit to your Erickson's account. **This credit will be issued within 24 hours after receiving the credit and approval in writing from the manufacturer.**

An Erickson's claim department representative will contact you to notify you of your credit and the status of your claim.

## ***Returns***

Material returned to Erickson's that is alleged claim material will be processed per standard Erickson's return policies – i.e. the material must be in full, unopened cartons, in saleable condition, etc. Restocking fees will only be credited if the claim is determined to be a manufacturing defect.

Please do not return material that is loose, opened, partially installed, etc. If your warranty claim is determined to be a manufacturing defect, you will receive credit for this material when the manufacturer approves your claim.

## ***Claim Denials***

If it is determined that your warranty claim is not a manufacturing defect, a letter will be provided explaining the reason(s) for denying the claim, along with any recommendation, if applicable. At this time, the claim will be considered closed and no further action will be taken regarding that specific claim.

**If the claim is denied, payment will be due on all unpaid claim related invoices immediately (within the parameters of your payment terms).**

## **Independent Inspection Services**

If it is determined that your warranty claim is not a manufacturing defect and is turned down, it is your option to request an independent third party inspection service to inspect and evaluate your warranty claim.

The following terms apply if an independent inspection is requested:

- The entity requesting the third party inspection must pay the additional inspection fees in advance before Erickson's claims department can schedule the inspection.
- If the third party inspection service determines there is not a legitimate manufacturing defect per the product warranty, the claim status will not change and will remain closed.
- If the third party inspection service determines that there is a legitimate warranty claim due to manufacturing defects per the product warranty, the claim will be re-opened with the manufacturer.
- Inspection fees will vary depending on the service used, location of the job site, travel involved, etc. Fees are generally between \$250 - \$1000 plus any applicable trip charges, etc. Erickson's claims department will quote inspection fees on a case-by-case basis if requested.
- The consumer or dealer may contract a third party inspection service directly if desired; however, the inspector must be endorsed and certified by the appropriate association and manufacturing authorities for Erickson's to process their analysis and recommendation.

## **Erickson's Commitment to You**

Erickson's is committed to providing exceptional customer service. Erickson's believes the professional and expeditious handling of warranty claims is key to successful business practices in our industry.

Erickson's believes this process will mutually benefit all parties by strengthening our business relationships, and creating opportunities that are more profitable for everyone.

Erickson's Flooring & Supply appreciates your support of these processes, and looks forward to minimizing the number of warranty claims through efficient business procedures and the continuing education of the consumer, installer, and seller.

## **Contact Information**

Toll Free: 800.225.9663 ext. 1128

Direct: 248.246.5013

Attn: Claims Department

Fax: 888.543.9663

Mail: 1013 Orchard St.

Ferndale, MI 48220

Email: [claims@efs.bz](mailto:claims@efs.bz)

## **Appendix**

- I. Claim in Process Form
- II. Inspection Analysis Form
- III. Erickson's Certified Moisture Content Policy
- IV. Moisture Meter Price List
- V. NWFA Problems, Causes, Cures
- VI. NWFA Builder's Checklist
- VII. NWFA Jobsite Checklist
- VIII. NWFA Hardness & Stability of Species Chart
- IX. NOFMA Grading Standards

## **Erickson's Flooring & Supply**

ILLINOIS INDIANA MICHIGAN OHIO WISCONSIN

Phone 800.225.9663

Fax 888.543.9663





# Erickson's Inspection Analysis Report

1013 Orchard St., Ferndale, MI 48220

866-541-9663

Report Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Information

Dates:	Purchased	Delivered	Installed	Problem Noticed	Inspection Date

Customer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name/Address

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Installer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name/Address

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Consumer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name/Address

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Product

Product: \_\_\_\_\_ Run date/# (attach carton label): \_\_\_\_\_

Item no: \_\_\_\_\_ SF Purchased: \_\_\_\_\_ Installed: \_\_\_\_\_ Problem: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of problem: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Use

Residential	Yes	No	New construction	Yes	No
Light commercial	Yes	No	Remodel	Yes	No
Heavy commercial	Yes	No	Rooms installed:	_____	

## Installation

Nail Down \_\_\_\_\_ Glue Down \_\_\_\_\_ Floated \_\_\_\_\_

Expansion Space (Note longest spans as well): \_\_\_\_\_

Where is expansion and how was it checked? \_\_\_\_\_

Did installer create expansion space with transition piece? \_\_\_\_\_

### Nail Down

Type of fastener: \_\_\_\_\_

Size of fastener: \_\_\_\_\_

Machine used: \_\_\_\_\_

Spacing: \_\_\_\_\_

How was space checked? \_\_\_\_\_

Glue used: \_\_\_\_\_

How was glue checked? \_\_\_\_\_

### Glue Down

Type of adhesive: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount used: \_\_\_\_\_

Notch type/size/spacing: \_\_\_\_\_

Open time: \_\_\_\_\_

Was floor rolled? Yes No

Roller weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Subfloor

Thickness: \_\_\_\_\_ Filler/Topping used: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: Above On Below

Total subfloor configuration: Plywood OSB Particle Board Concrete

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Construction					
Crawl space	Yes	No	Vapor barrier used	Yes	No
Vented	Yes	No	What kind?	_____	
Joist spacing:	_____		How used/applied?	_____	
Basement	Yes	No	Heating:	_____	
Heated	Yes	No	What type?	_____	

Additional Info at Time of Inspection	Required by Manufacturer for Submission of Claim
Moisture content of finished floor _____	Moisture content at time of install - floor _____
Moisture content of subfloor _____	Moisture content at time of install - subfloor _____
Moisture content in left over flooring _____	Acclimation time _____
Any additional notes _____	

Job Conditions									
Dog/Cat	Yes	No	Maintenance products/cleaning schedule _____						
Direct sunlight	Yes	No	_____						
Heavy furniture	Yes	No	Relative humidity _____						
Humidity	High	Average	Low	Air circulation	Good	Fair	Poor		
Weather	Hot	Warm	Cold	Humidifier? Yes	No	Working?	Yes	No	
	Dry	Damp	Wet	Date last checked?	_____				
Outside Temp	_____			Inside Temp	_____				

Sanding Procedure		
Paper used _____	Screens used _____	Machines used _____

Finishing Procedure									
Bleach	Yes	No	Brand _____	Times bleached	1	2	3		
			Dry time _____						
Stain	Yes	No	Brand _____	Coats applied	1	2	3		
			Application method	Brush	Rag	Other	_____		
Sealer	Yes	No	Brand _____	Coverage _____	sq ft/gal				
			Coats applied	1	2	3	Dry time _____		
			Application method _____	Time catalyzed _____					
Top Coats	Yes	No	Brand _____	Coverage _____	sq ft/gal				
			Coats applied	1	2	3	Gloss	Semi	Stain
			Application method _____						
			Dry time _____	Time catalyzed _____					
Moisture Meter	Used before coats	Yes	No	Used between coats	Yes	No			
	Moisture % before	_____		Moisture % between	_____				

Installer Additional Comments
_____
_____
_____
Name/Date: _____

Retailer Comments and Recommendation
_____
_____
Inspector Name/Date: _____

Claims Dept Use Only (Do not write below this line)				
<b>Credit</b>	Product:	Footage/Other:	Unit Price:	
	Labor:	Delivery:	Restock:	TOTAL: _____