

## HowTO

## Re-Coating Wood Floors

### FA-8 The Floor Abrader

#### INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of reasons that wood floor owners have for re-coating and re-finishing their floors. They can range from floor damage or wear, a desire to change the color of the stain, or to increase (or decrease) the sheen of the floor. Re-finishing hardwood floors is not as hard as it may look. The more understanding you have of the process of re-coating and re-finishing, the better you will do and the better your floors will look.

The information below will take you through the steps of re-coating your floors with the Clarke® Floor Abrader (FA-8). Don't worry if you still don't have the confidence to re-coat your floor by yourself. There are plenty of contractors who specialize in wood flooring who will be able to help you.

#### RE-COATING VS. RE-FINISHING

The first thing to decide is if you need to re-coat your floor or if you need to completely re-finish it.

**Re-Coating** – Recoating is the process of lightly screening or abrading the top (protective) layer of your floor and adding a new coat of polyurethane or water base finish. This process is the simplest and most cost effective way to make your floors look like new. We recommend that wood floor owners use the re-coating process before their floors get worn or damaged too bad. This will prolong the more costly and tedious task of completely sanding and re-finishing the floor. Re-coating with the FA-8 works on both flat and non-flat flooring. Non-flat floors are floors that may hand-scraped, have bevels, or are distressed on some other way.

**Sanding & Re-Finishing** – Re-finishing is the process of completely sanding your wood floor down to the bare wood, then re-staining and then coating your floor. This may be needed if you have deep scratches or wear patterns that have affected the actual color of the floor. This process is more detailed and more costly but can be done by a novice who is patient and has the right tools. *Note: This process is only recommended on solid wood floors (see below).*

Now let's take a good look at your floor and determine which path you need to take. If your floor has just slight damage, but is mostly intact, you may want to give the re-coating process a try first. You can always go back and do the complete re-finishing if the results do not turn out the way you want.

#### Is Your Floor A Candidate?

There are three basic types of wood flooring. You need to know which type you have. If you do not already know, you can usually find out by removing a floor mounted heater vent so you can see the side profile of the wood floor. If you do not have vents in your wood floor, you can try other techniques, like removing your floor molding and feeling around the floor's edge.

## TYPES OF WOOD FLOORING

**Solid Wood Floor:** The solid wood floor has been around for generations, so if you have an older home (pre 1980) you probably have solid wood flooring. Solid wood flooring is just as it sounds -solid wood planks that were installed, stained and coated. This is the only type of flooring that is easily designed for a complete sand and refinish process. Solid wood that is installed on location is called site-finished. This type of wood is commonly coated with a clear protective coat of polyurethane or water base finish, although some very old homes may have a varnish coating.



**Engineered Wood Floor:** - An engineered wood floor has several thin layers of wood that are glued together and has a thin layer (3/16 in. or so) of premium wood on the top layer. Most engineered wood is finished (stained and coated) in a factory, so we call this factory-finished. The protective coating on most engineered wood is aluminum oxide. Aluminum oxide is an extremely tough finish that will give you great wear but is also very hard to sand. We do not recommend sanding and re-finishing on engineered wood.

**Laminated Floor:** A laminated wood floor is not a real wood floor. Laminate is a thin plastic “picture” of wood that is attached to a board. This looks like wood and is durable, but this product can not be sanded and refinished or recoated. If you have a laminate floor that is damaged, you will likely need to pull it up and replace the floor.



Hopefully now you now know if you want to do a simple re-coat or a complete re-finish.

## USING THE PROPER MACHINE FOR THE JOB

Now let's decide what Clarke® machine(s) you will need for your job. The table below outlines your choices, based on the type of flooring you have. In some cases you have choices of more than one machine. These machines can be rented at many rental centers across the U.S. and Canada.

### CLARKE MACHINES FOR RE-COATING A WOOD FLOOR

Floor Type	Solid Wood		Engineered Wood		Laminate	
	Flat	Non-Flat	Flat	Non-Flat	Flat	Non-Flat
Recommended Machine	FA-8 or OBS 18DC	FA-8	FA-8	FA-8	N/A	N/A

### CLARKE MACHINES FOR SANDING & RE-FINISHING A WOOD FLOOR

Floor Type	Solid Wood		Engineered Wood**		Laminate	
	Flat	Non-Flat*	Flat	Non-Flat	Flat	Non-Flat
Recommended Machine	OBS 18DC (Non-Aggressive) EZ-Sand (Med. Aggressive) EZ-8 + Super 7R (Aggressive)	EZ-Sand or EZ-8 + Super 7R	EZ-Sand or EZ-8 + Super 7R	EZ-Sand or EZ-8 + Super 7R	N/A	N/A

\* Sanding is a flat process. Sanding any non-flat surface will make it flat.

\*\* Caution should be taken if sanding engineered flooring as the top solid wood layer may be thin.

## PROCEDURE FOR RE-COATING / RE-FINISHING USING THE FA-8

The Clarke FA-8 is a floor abrader. Its primary function is to place thousands of very fine surface scratches onto the surface of the floor. These scratches are needed to allow another coat of finish to properly adhere.

### Tools Needed:

- FA-8 Floor Abrader with brushes (80 grit & 120 grit)
- 80 grit and 120 grit sanding sponges or sandpaper
- Trisodium Phosphate or similar cleaning chemical
- Tack rags (any clean cotton cloth will do)
- Flat-blade screwdriver
- Oil or water base finish
- Finish applicator

### Surface Preparation:

Before abrading the floor, you must make sure it is free from dirt and oil base cleaning chemicals. To do this, we recommend cleaning with a mild surface cleaner like Trisodium Phosphate or other similar cleaners. Stronger cleaning chemicals are available if needed to clean really tough floors. Ask your rental center about appropriate cleaners. Note that to this point, we have assumed that your current floor has a coating of polyurethane, water base, or aluminum oxide (factory-installed) finish. Very old floors (pre-1975) may have varnish finishes. If you have a varnish finish, we recommend you remove the varnish completely before abrading your floor. Ask your local rental location or hardware store about chemicals that will help you remove varnish.

### Abrading The Floor:

The floor abrading process is very simple but does require an understanding of what type of finish you currently have. The machine comes with two brushes. One brush is stiffer and is 80 grit. The second brush is softer and is 120 grit. Generally speaking, the stiff (80 grit) brush is used on floors with an aluminum oxide finish, where the softer (120 grit) brush is used on floors that have site (polyurethane or water base) finishes. Don't worry if you don't know what kind of finish you have. You can always start with the 120 grit brush, and change to the harder brush if you are not seeing the desired results. Install the appropriate brush on the FA-8. This is done by pushing the brush on the spring loaded sleeve and turning the brush counter clockwise. Unlike a sander, you do not have to run the machine with the grain of the wood, but we recommend you do just for sake of consistency.

### To Operate The FA-8:

- Make sure the black brush handle ① is in the full upright position
- Make sure the protect lid ② is closed and covering the brush
- Plug in the floor abrader to a 120-volt outlet
- Start the abrader using the switch ③ on the top of the handle.  
You will hear the FA-8 start and the brush start moving
- Start moving the machine in a forward (or backward) motion
- Lower the brush handle while the machine is in motion.  
The brush will engage the floor
- Keep moving the FA-8 in a straight line and lift the brush handle before you come to a stop with the machine. Lowering and lifting the brush during operation will decrease chances of you over-abrading the floor.
- Repeat the process until the desired area is fully abraded/scratched\*



\* Although the degree of powdering you see will vary from floor to floor, you should still be able to see an adequate amount of scratching. Please note the floor on the left is dark and powdering is obvious.

### Finish Abrading:

The FA-8 machine will abrade most of the floor but it will not get all the way to the wall line or under toe kicks. These areas need to be abraded by hand. Using the sanding sponge (1) that matches the grit of the brush you used, hand sand the areas that were not abraded by the machine. You may also use a pole sponger if you would rather stand (2). If you have a non-flat floor (beveled edges or other distresses), make sure to get into the low areas so 100% of the surface is sanded to a similar look as the abraded floor.



Turn the sponge at a 45° angle to get down into the grooves of your floor if you have beveled floors, is to

### Changing The Brush:

Should you ever need to change or reverse the brush on the machine, simply lift up on the front cover lid to view the brush. To change, simply push in on the exposed side and turn counter-clockwise in a swift motion. This will un-latch it from the grooves. To re-apply, push the brush up to the end of the latch, push in and turn clockwise.



### Tack The Floor:

Now that the abrading is completed, take a damp cloth and completely wipe down the floor to remove the dust left behind from the abrading process. You may want to do this a few times to assure you have removed all the dust (even in low areas). Make sure you allow some time for any dampness to dry before you start recoating.



### Recoat:

Recoat your floor with either polyurethane or water base finish following the finish manufacturer's instructions.

### Repeat:

It is suggested that you put at least two coats of finish on your floor to better protect it and extend the timeframe that you need to recoat again. To do this, just wait until the first coat of finish dries and abrade again. Make sure that you use the softer 120 grit brush for this in-between coat.