

# Builder's Guide

## Preventing Common Flooring Warranty Claims in Ontario New Homes

Flooring-related claims represent a significant portion of Tarion warranty disputes for Ontario home builders. Most issues are preventable with proper installation practices and material handling. This guide covers the five most common flooring defects and proven prevention strategies.

### 1. Uneven Transitions & Lippage

**The Problem:** Height differences between flooring types (tile-to-hardwood, carpet-to-vinyl) create tripping hazards and aesthetic issues. Tarion defines lippage over 3mm as a defect.

#### Prevention:

- Coordinate subfloor height during framing phase
- Specify transition strip types in advance (T-molding, reducers, thresholds)
- Use self-leveling compound where necessary before installation

### 2. Squeaky & Loose Floors

**The Problem:** Movement between subfloor and joists or between flooring and subfloor causes noise complaints. One of the most frequent 30-day warranty items.

#### Prevention:

- Use construction adhesive + screws (not just nails) on subfloor
- Maintain proper expansion gaps (10-12mm) around perimeter
- Verify joist spacing meets manufacturer specs for flooring type

### 3. Moisture Damage & Cupping

**The Problem:** Hardwood or laminate installed before concrete fully cures or without proper moisture testing leads to warping, cupping, and potential mold issues.

#### Prevention:

- Test concrete moisture:  $\leq 3$  lbs/1000 sq ft for wood flooring
- Allow flooring to acclimate 72+ hours in installation environment
- Install vapor barriers on basement concrete before any wood products

### 4. Visible Grout & Tile Cracks

**The Problem:** Cracked grout lines or tiles indicate movement in the substrate. Tarion covers structural cracks but disputes often arise over cosmetic vs. structural.

#### Prevention:

- Use crack isolation membrane over concrete subfloors
- Specify deflection requirements: L/360 minimum for tile installations
- Allow thinset to fully cure before grouting (follow manufacturer times)

### 5. Poor Pattern Alignment & Seams

**The Problem:** Visible plank misalignment, H-joints, or prominent seams in LVP/laminate create aesthetic complaints. Not always covered by warranty but damages builder reputation.

#### Prevention:

- Stagger end joints minimum 6 inches (avoid H-patterns)
- Orient planks parallel to longest wall for visual flow
- Use quality underlayment to minimize telegraphing of subfloor imperfections

### Tarion Quick Reference

**Year 1:** Defects in materials and workmanship

**Year 2:** Defects in materials and labour of mechanical systems

**Year 7:** Major structural defects (foundation, load-bearing, water penetration)

## **Club Ceramic Cambridge**

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