



NORTH AMERICAN LAMINATE
FLOORING ASSOCIATION

LAMINATE ACCESSORIES TOOLKIT

A Resource for Retail Sales Associates

Supporting Complete, High-Performance Laminate Installations

Important:

Accessory and installation requirements can vary by flooring product, manufacturer, subfloor, room configuration, and installation conditions. Always refer to the flooring manufacturer's installation instructions and applicable NALFA standards when recommending components.

Key Takeaways for RSAs

Laminate flooring is more than the flooring planks themselves. A complete installation may also include mouldings, transitions, stair components, underlayment, and moisture-control products.

The right components help:

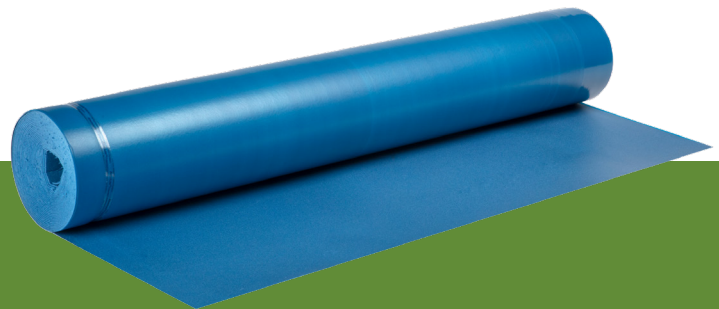
- Support proper installation and flooring-system performance
- Accommodate normal flooring movement
- Create appropriate transitions between rooms and flooring surfaces
- Improve the finished appearance
- Address sound, comfort, and moisture considerations
- Give customers a clearer understanding of their complete project

Accessory needs vary by installation, so the RSA's role is to help customers identify the questions and components they should consider, not assume the same solution applies to every floor.

Why Accessories Matter

Laminate flooring is typically designed to perform as a complete flooring system, not simply as individual planks. Mouldings, transitions, stair components, underlayment, and moisture-control products can all play important roles in helping the installation:

- Accommodate normal movement
- Protect exposed flooring edges
- Transition between different surfaces and heights
- Support acoustic comfort
- Address moisture conditions where appropriate
- Create a polished, professional appearance
- Meet the requirements of the selected flooring system



This toolkit gives RSAs the explanations, talking points, and practical questions they need to help customers understand the complete laminate flooring system.

Why This Matters at the Point of Sale

Discussing accessory needs early can help RSAs:

- Give customers a more complete picture of the installation
- Identify potential project needs before installation begins
- Set expectations around transitions, stairs, sound, moisture, and finishing
- Reduce last-minute surprises or missing components
- Help customers budget for the complete project
- Build confidence by explaining how the flooring system works together

The goal is not simply to add products to the sale. It is to help the customer understand and plan for the complete flooring project.

Understanding the Full Installation System

Accessories at a Glance

Quarter Round / Baseboard

Helps finish the perimeter and conceal required expansion space.

T-Moulding

Creates a transition between flooring areas of similar height.

Reducer

Creates a transition between flooring surfaces of different heights.

End Cap

Provides a finished termination where flooring meets certain fixed surfaces or conditions.

Stair Nose

Creates the finished edge at stair treads and step-downs.

Underlayment

Depending on the system, may support comfort, acoustics, moisture control, and overall flooring performance.

Moisture-Control Products

May be required depending on the flooring product, subfloor, installation environment, and manufacturer instructions.

Accessories Support Three Parts of a Successful Installation

1. Performance

Appropriate accessories can help:

- Maintain required expansion space
- Protect exposed plank edges
- Create proper transitions
- Accommodate movement between flooring areas
- Support acoustic performance
- Address moisture conditions when appropriate

2. Appearance

Accessories can:

- Conceal expansion space
- Coordinate with the flooring design
- Finish exposed edges
- Create cleaner transitions
- Make the installation feel complete and intentional

3. Customer Experience

Discussing the full flooring system can:

- Clarify project needs earlier
- Reduce unexpected installation requirements
- Help customers understand the complete project budget
- Improve confidence in the finished result

Key Message for RSAs

"Accessories aren't simply decorative add-ons. They help complete the flooring system and support proper installation."

Start With the Space

Before recommending individual components, understand the installation.

Ask: “Where is this flooring going?”

Then consider:

- **Multiple Rooms or Large Connected Areas**
Are transitions or expansion breaks required by the flooring manufacturer?
- **Concrete Subfloor**
Does the installation require a moisture-control product or specific underlayment?
- **Different Flooring Heights**
Is a reducer or another transition profile appropriate?
- **Doorways or Fixed Objects**
Will a T-moulding, end cap, or another transition component be needed?
- **Stairs or Step-Downs**
Which manufacturer-approved stair components are appropriate?
- **Sound-Sensitive Spaces**
Would acoustic underlayment be beneficial?
- **Attached-Pad Flooring**
Does the manufacturer permit additional underlayment?

This conversation helps move accessory selection from an afterthought to part of the overall project plan.

Mouldings & Transitions

Quarter Round / Baseboard

- **What it does:** Covers the expansion space where the flooring meets the wall or baseboard.
- **Why it matters:** Allows the required perimeter space to remain concealed while creating a finished appearance.
- **RSA Talking Point:** “This covers the expansion space your floor needs while giving the installation a clean, finished appearance.”

T-Moulding

- **What it does:** Creates a transition between flooring areas of similar height.
- **Why it matters:** Depending on the flooring system and room configuration, a transition may be needed to accommodate movement between flooring areas.
- **RSA Talking Point:** “This creates a finished transition between flooring areas while allowing the installation to perform as designed.”

Mouldings & Transitions

Reducer

- **What it does:** Creates a transition between flooring surfaces of different heights.
- **Why it matters:** Helps create a smoother height transition while protecting exposed flooring edges.
- **RSA Talking Point:** “This creates a smoother transition between flooring surfaces of different heights while helping protect the edge of the floor.”

End Cap

- **What it does:** Provides a finished termination where laminate meets certain fixed objects or flooring conditions, such as sliding doors or fireplaces.
- **Why it matters:** Helps protect and finish exposed flooring edges.
- **RSA Talking Point:** “This creates a clean, finished edge where the flooring meets a fixed surface or structure.”

Stair Systems

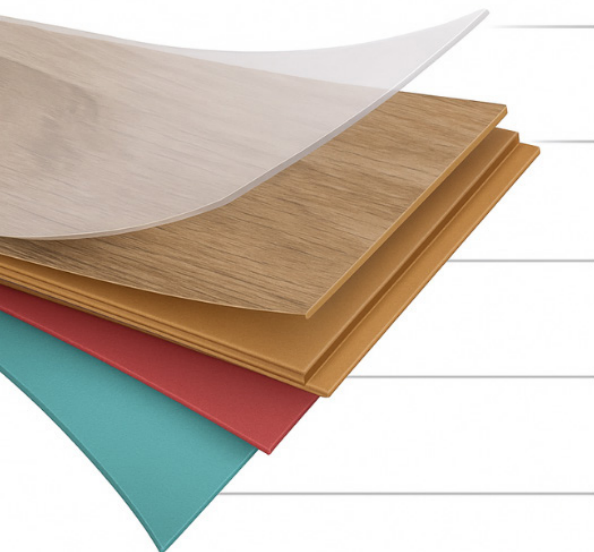
Laminate stair installations require additional planning because stairs experience concentrated traffic and repeated impact. Depending on the flooring system and manufacturer requirements, an installation may include:

- Flooring designed or approved for stair applications
- Stair nose
- Adhesive
- Coordinating trims
- Other manufacturer-specified stair components

Discussing stairs early helps customers understand that these areas may require different components than the rest of the flooring installation.

Stair Nose

- **What it does:** Creates a finished edge at stair treads and step-downs.
- **Why it matters:** Stair areas require components designed for the demands of that application.
- **RSA Talking Point:** “Stairs are a high-use area, so it’s important to use the stair components specified for the flooring system. The correct stair nose helps protect the exposed edge and creates a durable, finished transition.”



A

B

C

D

E

Underlayment The Hidden Workhorse

Customers may never see the underlayment after installation, but it can affect how the flooring system feels, sounds, and performs.

What Underlayment Can Do

Depending on the product, underlayment may:

- Add cushioning and comfort
- Reduce sound transmission
- Smooths minor subfloor imperfections
- Provide moisture protection
- Supports locking system and joint integrity
- Adds R-Value and energy efficiency.

Common Underlayment Configurations

1. **Attached Underlayment:** Integrated into the flooring product/plank.
2. **Separate Premium Underlayment:** Installed beneath the laminate as a separate component.
3. **Acoustic Underlayment:** May provide enhanced sound reduction and comfort.
4. **Moisture-Barrier Underlayment:** Designed for installations where additional moisture protection is required.
5. **Additional Underlayment Beneath Attached-Pad Flooring:** Should only be used when specifically permitted by the flooring manufacturer.
6. **Questions to Ask When Discussing Underlayment:** Before recommending an underlayment, consider:
 - What flooring product has the customer selected?
 - What type of subfloor is beneath it?
 - Is the installation above, on, or below grade?
 - Are sound reduction or comfort priorities?
 - Are there moisture-control requirements?
 - Does the flooring already include attached underlayment?
 - Does the manufacturer permit additional underlayment?

Underlayment should not be selected based on one feature alone. Consider the flooring product, subfloor, installation environment, and manufacturer requirements together.

RSA Talking Point

"You may never see the underlayment once the floor is installed, but it can make an important difference in how the flooring system feels, sounds, and performs."

Helping Customers Plan the Complete Flooring System

Step 1: Understand the Space

Start with: *"Where is the flooring going?"* Identify room layout, subfloor type, stairs, transitions, moisture conditions, and acoustic needs.

Step 2: Map the Installation Needs

A helpful way to explain the process:

"Every doorway, room edge, height change, stair, or change in flooring type may require a coordinating component. Let's look at your space and identify what your installation needs."



Step 3: Explain Why They Matter

Useful phrases include:

- *"These pieces help the floor accommodate movement and perform as designed."*
- *"They help protect exposed edges and create proper transitions."*
- *"They complete the installation visually and functionally."*

Step 4: Help Complete the Project

Rather than adding accessories at checkout as an afterthought:

"Based on your flooring and where it's being installed, let's identify the mouldings, transitions, underlayment, and other components your project may require."

Step 5: Confirm the Complete Flooring System

Summarize the project:

"Here is the complete system we've identified for your project:"

- Laminate flooring
- Appropriate underlayment
- Transitions
- Perimeter mouldings
- Moisture-control products, when required
- Stair components, when applicable

"This gives you the components needed to help the installation look and perform as intended."

Common Customer Questions

“Do I really need these?”

“Many accessories serve an important installation function, not just a decorative one. The exact components you need will depend on your flooring product, room layout, subfloor, and manufacturer instructions.”

“Why aren’t these included with the flooring?”

“Different rooms and installation conditions require different components, so accessories are typically selected based on the specific project.”

“Can I use the ones I already have?”

“Possibly. Existing mouldings and transitions need to be compatible with the height, profile, finish, and installation requirements of your new floor. We can help determine what will work with your flooring system.”

“Can my installer figure this out later?”

“Your installer should always confirm the final installation requirements, but identifying likely accessory needs now helps you understand the full scope of the project and reduces the chance of missing components later.”

“I’m trying to stay on budget.”

“It’s important to account for the complete installation when planning your flooring budget. The right accessories help protect exposed edges, create proper transitions, and support a finished installation.”



Accessory Selection Guide

Installation Situation	Typical Accessory / Consideration	Why It Matters	RSA Talking Point
Edge of room / along walls	Quarter Round / Baseboard	Covers expansion space and finishes the perimeter	<i>"This covers the expansion space while creating a finished edge."</i>
Flooring areas of similar height	T-Moulding or manufacturer-specified transition	Creates a finished transition and may accommodate movement between areas	<i>"This helps create the proper transition between these spaces."</i>
Transition to a lower flooring surface	Reducer	Creates a smoother height transition and protects the exposed edge	<i>"This creates a smoother transition between the two flooring heights."</i>
Sliding doors, fireplaces, or certain fixed objects	End Cap	Creates a clean, finished edge where the flooring ends or meets a fixed surface	<i>"This finishes the flooring where it meets this fixed surface."</i>
Stair edge or step-down	Manufacturer-approved Stair Nose / Stair Component	Creates a durable, finished stair transition	<i>"Stairs require components designed specifically for that application."</i>
Large or long flooring runs	Transition / expansion break, when required	May be necessary depending on manufacturer installation requirements	<i>"Let's check the installation requirements for the size and layout of this space."</i>
Concrete subfloor	Manufacturer-specified moisture-control system	Helps address moisture conditions beneath the flooring	<i>"Concrete installations may require additional moisture protection, so we'll check the flooring requirements."</i>
Sound-sensitive installation	Acoustic Underlayment	Can improve acoustic performance and comfort	<i>"This option is designed to help reduce sound and improve the feel of the floor."</i>

RSA Quick Talking Points

Perimeter: "This covers the expansion space while creating a finished edge."

Room Transition: "This helps create the proper transition between these spaces."

Different Heights: "This creates a smoother transition between the two flooring heights."

Fixed Surface: "This finishes the flooring where it meets this fixed surface."

Stairs: "Stairs require components designed specifically for that application."

Long Flooring Runs: "Let's check the installation requirements for the size and layout of this space."

Concrete: "Concrete installations may require additional moisture protection, so we'll check the flooring requirements."

Sound: "This option is designed to help reduce sound and improve the feel of the floor."

Underlayment Comparison Guide

Underlayment Type	Best For	Potential Benefits	Important Considerations
Basic	Economy installations	Basic entry-level benefits, including minor sound reduction that meets the minimum requirements for laminate	<i>May not be moisture resistant. Basic underlay offers limited moisture protection and may not meet the flooring manufacturer's entry-level requirements.</i>
Upgraded / Acoustic	Bedrooms, multilevel homes, multifamily, condominiums, and hotel rooms	Significant sound dampening, comfort, with added moisture benefits	<i>Upsell opportunity; may eliminate the need for an additional 6-mil vapor barrier. Verify manufacturer requirements and applicable NALFA LF-03 criteria.</i>
Moisture Barrier Underlayment	Concrete subfloors	Moisture protection, stability	<i>Required for basements/ concrete.</i>
Attached-Pad Planks	Quicker installs, meets bare minimum requirements	Simplifies installation, may add sound control properties	<i>May still need a moisture barrier on the concrete.</i>
Attached-Pad Planks Installed Over Pad	Bedrooms, multilevel homes, basements, concrete floors, multi-family, condominiums, and hotel rooms	Additional sound, moisture, and thermal benefits (refer to manufacturer for specifications)	<i>Never assume additional underlayment can be added. Verify the flooring manufacturer's requirements.</i>

Underlayment Standard Reference

Refer to NALFA LF-03 for applicable underlayment performance criteria and testing requirements. Always follow the flooring manufacturer's installation instructions when selecting an underlayment system.

A Simple RSA Checklist

Before the customer leaves, ask:

Flooring	Which laminate product are they purchasing?
Rooms	Where will it be installed? Is it one room or multiple connected areas?
Subfloor	Wood, concrete, or another surface?
Transitions	Does the laminate meet another flooring type or height?
Perimeter	What moulding will finish the wall edges?
Stairs	Are there stairs or step-downs?
Underlayment	Does the product have attached pad? What does the manufacturer require?
Moisture	Are additional moisture-control measures needed?
Sound	Does the customer have acoustic concerns?
Installer Confirmation	Are there installation-specific requirements the installer or manufacturer should confirm?

FINAL TAKEAWAY FOR RSAS

Every successful laminate project starts with understanding the complete flooring system.

By helping customers identify the appropriate mouldings, transitions, stair components, underlayment, and moisture-control products for their installation, **RSAs can support proper planning, long-term performance, and a finished result that meets customer expectations.**



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