The benefits of reducing impact sound within commercial and residential interiors has been well researched and documented over recent years. Acoustics has fast become one of the primary focuses of builders, contractors and architects, as new standards are introduced to improve the overall acoustic performance of new and refurbished installations.

Polyflor now offers an Acoustix collection of floorcoverings that has been specifically developed to reduce impact sound within interiors. The collection incorporates a contemporary selection of stylish mineral designs and authentic wood patterns to suit any installation, whilst offering durability and high performance in a practical vinyl sheet format.

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INTRODUCTION TO ACOUSTICS

It is a growing understanding that noise can have an extremely detrimental effect in the workplace, in schools, hospitals and multi-dwelling residential properties, which can significantly affect an individual's well-being and also hinder respective teaching, learning, working and recuperation.

Polyflor acoustic vinyl floorcoverings have been designed and developed to assist in improving the acoustic properties within residential, commercial and public locations as well as providing the additional benefits of aesthetics, performance, hygiene and durability.

General points to consider
Planning and room layout can be used to avoid impact noise sources on floors above noise-sensitive rooms. In addition to Polyflor's acoustic floor coverings, floating floor constructions and independent ceilings can be effective means of isolation.

Other sources of noise to consider when planning your interior are:
- Traffic
- Weather
- Plumbing
- Ductborne noise
- Noise via open windows

Acoustic flooring is only part of the action that can be taken to reduce noise levels. Acoustic ceiling and wall panels, fabrics, textiles and plants may also be considered early in the design process to ensure compatibility. Unnecessary indentation from chairs, for example, can be avoided by choosing suitable leg detail to spread the load and pads to protect the floor and assist in deadening the sound.

Smooth acoustic floor coverings are designed to reduce impact sound at source, not to reduce background or reverberation sound within a room.

It is advisable from the outset of a project to seek advice from a specialist acoustician as the subject requires considerable expertise. For more information visit the Association of Noise Consultants website at www.theANC.co.uk.
Sound is usually generated by the vibrations of a surface, which increases the pressure fluctuations in the air or some other medium. Sound is transmitted through sound waves and may be described in terms of sound pressure, sound energy or sound power. Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound.

Impact Sound
Noise is created when the sound energy transmitted either by impact or by air. Impact sound is energy produced by the collision of solid objects transmitted through the structure of a building such as footsteps, slamming of doors or dragging of furniture.

Noise levels transmitted through floors by impact sound can be reduced by acoustic planning at the outset of a project and by correctly installing a Polyflor acoustic floorcovering.

Walking Noise
Walking Noise unlike Impact Sound is where the sound of a person’s footstep when walking in a room is reverberated back into the room through the air. Though Walking Noise is not currently regulated by a standard, it is still an important factor to consider when trying to reduce sound levels.
The Impact Test

The impact test measures the sound level downstairs when a standard tapping machine is operating upstairs. This is intended to replicate noise such as footsteps and the moving of furniture which travels through the separating floor. The result is shown as the weighted standardised Impact Sound Pressure Level, or L’nT,w and the lower the sound pressure level downstairs the better the insulation.

Impact sound insulation is measured in terms of an absolute sound level so that a lower number indicates that the standard of impact sound insulation is better. Sound levels and sound insulation values are expressed in decibels (dB).

Exceeding the Standard

Throughout many countries, legislation has been introduced to address resistance to the passage of sound. In the UK for example, Building Regulations stipulates that a suitable floorcovering should have a weighted reduction in impact sound pressure level of not less than 17dB when measured in accordance with EN ISO 140-8 and calculated in accordance with EN ISO 717-2.

All Polyflor acoustic floorcoverings meet and exceed these standards with a minimum reduction level of at least 18dB.

Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix, Acoustix Forest fx and Acoustix Gallery fx further exceed this with reduction levels of 19dB.

* Building Regulations Part E in England & Wales, Section 5 for Scotland, Part G for Northern Ireland

ACOUSTIC PERFORMANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20dB</td>
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<tr>
<td>19dB</td>
<td>AcoustiFoam +</td>
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<td>18dB</td>
<td>Acoustix Gallery fx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17dB</td>
<td>Acoustix Forest fx</td>
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<tr>
<td>16dB</td>
<td>Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix</td>
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<tr>
<td>15dB</td>
<td>Building Regulations Standard 1</td>
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Stop moving feet...
With the growing understanding that noise can have an extremely detrimental effect on an individual’s well-being, a wider range of commercial and residential buildings are now being identified as benefiting from an acoustic floorcovering.

Within the range of commercial buildings, the Education and Healthcare sections feature the most common areas where noise is considered a nuisance. Due to the number of high-traffic areas each can be expected to have throughout the building, both can benefit greatly from acoustic flooring to aid peaceful learning and patient recovery.

The use of acoustic flooring within the Residential section is also a major consideration during new-build and refurbishments, often being installed as part of further acoustic improvement projects.
The learning environment is forever evolving. The creation of pleasant and comfortable surroundings facilitating various patterns of group working is bringing a new focus to school design and build.

School buildings are often subject to detailed design checks and on-site inspections by building control officers. Acoustic flooring can be a necessary part of a school building specification from the outset, working alongside building regulations and end user requirements to prevent expensive remedial work after completion of the project.

As the floor of any room represents a significant proportion of the surface area defining the space, its acoustic qualities play a role in establishing the acoustic environment of the room. For larger spaces, this proportion is particularly high. Good acoustic standards in teaching areas are crucial as acoustic conditions can have a profound impact on pupils learning and staff performance.

Recommended areas for acoustic floorcovering:

- Corridors
- Classrooms
- Reception / meeting areas
- Rooms over noise-sensitive areas

Noise reduction benefits:

- Reduce disruption from neighbouring classrooms
- Allow louder teaching areas i.e. music rooms, to neighbour quiet study areas
- Aids children’s education by reducing distracting background noise
- Provide better learning environment for children with hearing difficulties
Alongside the Building Regulations’ legislation in the UK, which specifies the impact sound reduction level that must be achieved in all new buildings and refurbishments, the Building Bulletin 93 standard was introduced specifically for the school and education market.

The aim of this standard was to:
- Provide a regulatory framework for the acoustic design of schools in support of the building regulations
- Give supporting advice and recommendations for planning and design of schools
- Provide a comprehensive guide for architects, acousticians, building control officers, clients and others involved in the design of new school buildings
- Satisfy the School Premises Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act

When planning a new acoustic project, the relevant regulations to the country of use should be studied to ensure the correct recommendations are adhered to. For more information on Building Bulletins 93 visit www.bb93.co.uk.

Polyflor’s Acoustix range is suitable for use in corridors, classrooms and dining halls.
21st century healthcare design is about achieving a homely, relaxed and professional environment for patients, staff and visitors. The choice of building materials and floorcoverings can have a major impact on the feel and performance of a hospital. When part of a complete design concept, floors can even aid the healing process and product choice can be key to achieving a positive contribution to patient care.

Put simply, hospital floors must perform. Criteria such as hygiene, maintenance, durability, slip resistance and aesthetics are vitally important, as are budget, availability, acoustics and environmental issues. Polyflor can advise on product suitability for any area within a healthcare facility to ensure all these points are covered.

Due to these maintenance and hygiene concerns, Polyflor’s acoustic vinyl floorcoverings are specifically designed for practical spaces as alternative soft floorcovering such as carpet may not be functional because of their effect on indoor air quality and resultant health implications.

Recommended areas for acoustic floorcovering:
- Corridors
- Wards
- Reception / waiting areas
- Retail areas

Noise reduction benefits to patients and staff:
- Lowered readmission rates
- Improved patient satisfaction with services provided
- Reduced blood pressure and lowered stress levels
- Improved team spirit and work satisfaction
- Less sleep deprivation
- Reduced need for pain medication

Acoustic benefits
Research shows noise levels in hospitals worldwide are perceived to be very high. At the same time, the awareness of the negative effects of noise on patients and healthcare staff has grown. It is likely that impact sound reduction will become a strong focus in all future developments to help reduce these effects.

The negative effects of high sound levels on staff include burnout and depression, increased number of medical errors and increased chances of hearing loss. A well planned acoustic environment enhances the feeling of privacy, safety and comfort.
Acoustic regulations have been introduced in many countries to help increase the positive impact on the well-being of those occupying the building and the quality of care provided. Most standards are addressing the importance of room acoustics for a variety of healthcare building types.

For example, in the UK, HTM 08-01 looks at the acoustic performance of healthcare facilities, addressing acoustic issues including the provision of temporary facilities, refurbishments, and construction. It works through important acoustic information including impact sound insulation and dealing with noisy footfall above noise-sensitive rooms.

Polyflor’s Acoustix collection is an ideal solution for the Healthcare sector as all ranges within the collection exceed the current Building Regulations’ standard of 17dB.
Unwanted noise within multi-dwelling properties can play a huge part in contributing to an unhealthy, uncomfortable and unwelcome environment for those living there. Many of the noise issues faced by residents including furniture scraping across the floor and footsteps, can cause heightened stress levels, discomfort and lack of sleep.

To tackle the important issue of noise, and increase the well-being of all residents, the Building Regulations standard was introduced in the UK to address the noise level suffered by occupants, leading to separating floors having to be constructed to achieve certain sound insulation levels. The documents are clear in separating out ‘dwelling houses’ verses ‘room for residential purpose’ to which the impact sound reduction level of 17dB does not apply. ‘Room for residential purpose’ is defined as a room or a suite of rooms which is not a dwelling-house or flat and is used by one or more persons to live and sleep.

This includes rooms in a:
- Hostel
- Hotel
- Boarding House
- Hall of Residence
- Residential Home

But this building regulation does NOT include a room in a hospital i.e. patient accommodation (see Hospitals and Healthcare Sector).

In the case of ‘dwelling houses’, the documents state ‘dwelling-houses, flats and rooms for residential purposes shall be designed and constructed in such a way that they provide reasonable resistance to sound from other parts of the same building and from adjoining buildings and that internal floors also provide reasonable resistance to sound’.

Polyflor’s range of acoustic floorcoverings has been designed to meet the demands of today’s residential market, combining contemporary mineral and wood designs with durability, slip resistance and easy-clean polish-free technology, all in an easy to install vinyl sheet format.
Acoustix Gallery fx has been developed to meet demands for alternative aesthetic flooring within residential and commercial interiors. The collection incorporates clean natural stone effects and mottled granite designs in 9 stimulating colourways plus 5 highly specified wood replications. The earthy and fiery tones of natural rock, the subtlety and freshness of water and the greenery of our surrounding environment were the direct inspirations for the collection.

As with other Polyflor acoustic products, Acoustix Gallery fx is targeted at the education, healthcare and general commercial market although the primary aim is for the important residential acoustic market.

Featuring a closed-cell foam backing, Acoustix Gallery fx provides an impact sound reduction level of at least 19dB, exceeding the UK Building Regulation requirements.

The collection also importantly features a polyurethane reinforcement (PUR) which provides enhanced protection and an easier life-long, polish-free maintenance regime leading to overall maintenance cost savings.

Where can it be used?

Acoustix Gallery fx is ideal for residential areas where impact sound reduction is paramount, including:

- Residential areas such as aged-care, social housing and student accommodation. Specific locations include communal entrances and meeting areas, stairs, corridors and general living spaces
- Heavy commercial areas within education and healthcare facilities and general commercial public spaces. Specific areas include corridors, classrooms, reception and waiting areas, wards and general locations where impact sound reduction is a key requirement
- Ergonomically, the flooring is suitable for ‘workstations’ and serving points within retail and other areas due to its underfoot comfort and anti-fatigue benefits, where users stand for long periods
Acoustix Gallery: Onyx 6842

Shown: Acoustix Gallery: Onyx 6842
The natural environment is the primary inspiration for Acoustix Forest fx. Sophisticated and highly realistic designs are the elements which form the collection.

With a varied tonal palette of 8 designs, including popular Oak, Beech and Walnut effects, the collection of heterogeneous vinyl sheet floorcoverings has excellent durability and is highly suited to high traffic commercial interiors. Targeted primarily at the education, healthcare, retail, leisure and office sectors, the outstanding appearance and performance characteristics are as appealing to the broad commercial market.

Featuring a closed-cell foam backing, Acoustix Forest fx provides an impact sound reduction level of at least 19dB, exceeding UK Building Regulation requirements.

The collection also importantly features a polyurethane reinforcement (PUR) which provides enhanced protection and an easier life-long, polish-free maintenance regime leading to overall maintenance cost savings.

**Where can it be used?**

Acoustix Forest fx is suitable for general heavy footfall areas, including:

- Very heavy commercial areas within schools and educational buildings, hospitals and healthcare facilities and general commercial spaces. Specific areas include corridors, classrooms, reception and waiting areas, wards and general locations where impact sound reduction is a key requirement.

- Residential areas such as aged-care, social housing and student accommodation. Also see the Acoustix Gallery fx collection (page 24-25) as it is specifically designed for residential interiors.

- Ergonomically, the flooring is suitable for ‘workstations’ and serving points within retail and other areas due to its underfoot comfort and anti-fatigue benefits, where users stand for long periods.

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*Wide plank design*
Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix brings together the key attributes of safety, aesthetics and acoustic performance for complete peace of mind across a commercial or residential facility.

Available in 8 popular wood effects, each design incorporates clear aluminium oxide particles throughout the wear layer to provide sustainable slip resistance for the product’s guaranteed life. Fully compliant with Health and Safety Executive Guidelines, the range achieves a result of 36+ on the Pendulum wet test with a surface roughness of >20 µm.

Complete with an integrated foam backing that gives an impact sound reduction level between rooms of at least 19dB, Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix exceeds UK Building Regulation requirements. The product is an ideal specification for quieter working and living environments which require additional slip resistance.

With a polyurethane reinforcement giving improved maintenance, the range is equally at home in heavily trafficked commercial areas at the front of house or traditional safety locations with risks of water spillage.

Where can it be used?
Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix is suitable for use in areas which have risks of water spillage at front or back of house, including:

- Residential areas within aged-care, social housing and student accommodation. Typical use areas include corridors, circulation areas, hallways, living quarters, bathrooms and kitchens
- Heavy commercial areas within education and healthcare facilities. Typical use areas include bathrooms, washrooms, toilets, changing rooms, wards, corridors, circulation areas, classrooms and receptions
- Ergonomically, the flooring is suitable for ‘workstations’ and serving points within retail and other areas due to its underfoot comfort and anti-fatigue benefits, where users stand for long periods

EUROPEAN OAK

- 3292 Warm Beech
- 3302 Cherry

RUSTIC OAK

- 3332 Rustic Oak
- 3342 European Oak

SILVER OAK

- 3352 Silver Oak
- 3382 American Oak

Mophobic

- 3362 Mahogany
- 3992 Brazilian Walnut
With a high footfall of students moving across the floor at regular periods throughout the day, the choice of Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix is ideal to dampen impact sound transfer between rooms and promote a quiet working environment that fosters learning. For students and teachers standing on the floor for prolonged periods, the range offers underfoot comfort and anti-fatigue benefits, whilst giving the slip resistance demanded in areas where spillages can occur.

“Our state-of-the-art premises, designed by award winning architects demand the specification of the best possible products. As well as being extremely attractive, Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix minimises noise transfer in our busy corridors and also ensures enhanced under foot safety for students, staff and visitors. Cleanability and the facility to maintain regularly were other deciding factors. All in all, the ideal choice.”

Geoff Gilbert
Academy Site Manager, Lambeth Academy
ACOUSTIFOAM

To further extend the choice of decoration and product type of acoustic floorcoverings, Polyflor offer Acoustifoam.

The product is a closed-cell foam backing sheet, incorporating glass-polyester reinforcement, which is simply installed beneath standard Polyflor vinyl and rubber sheet floorcoverings (with a minimum of 2mm gauge). When used in this underlay combination system, the gained advantages are to provide standard collections with the added acoustic properties, providing an impact sound reduction level of at least 18dB.
OFFERING EVEN MORE CHOICE

Utilising Polyflor Acoustifoam allows for a broader choice of colours, styles and performance characteristics with an unrivalled total of 281 top-layer product options².

Listed below are the Polyflor collections that are suitable for use with Acoustifoam. For specific product information and matching welding rods, visit the product pages at www.polyflor.com, view the relevant product brochure or contact the Polyflor Customer Technical Support Department.

### Homogeneous sheet collections:
- Polyflor Pearlazzo PUR
- Polyflor Prestige PUR
- Polyflor Mystique PUR
- Polyflor Classic Mystique PUR
- Polyflor 2000 PUR
- Polyflor XL PU
- Polyflor Standard XL

### Heterogeneous sheet collection:
- Polyflor Forest fx
- Polyflor Mineral fx

### Rubber sheet collection:
- Saarfloor Diamant

### Safety floor sheet collections:
- Polysafe Corona PUR
- Polysafe Astral PUR
- Polysafe Mosaic PUR
- Polysafe Wood fx PUR
- Polysafe Vogue Ultra PUR
- Polysafe Standard PUR
- Polysafe Strata
- Ecomax
- Polysafe Modena PUR
- Polysafe Arena PUR

**Note:** Polyflor vinyl tiles and planks, rubber tiles and ESD ranges should not be used in conjunction with Acoustifoam.

² Totals calculated to be correct at time of going to print
Installation
For full details on the installation of Acoustix Gallery fx, Acoustix Forest fx, Polysafe Wood fx Acoustix and Acoustifoam with recommended Polyflor products, including recommended adhesives, refer to one of the following contact points:

- Technical section of the Polyflor website www.polyflor.com
- Telephone the Polyflor Customer Technical Support Team +44 (0) 161 767 1111
- Email the Polyflor Customer Technical Support Team tech@polyflor.com

NB. Acoustifoam is not to be installed as a subfloor, isolating underlay or surface DPM.

Maintenance
Appearance, hygiene and cleanliness are key points to consider when establishing a maintenance programme. Poor maintenance can damage aesthetics, impairs performance, shortens floor life and creates hygiene problems in critical areas. In recognition of this Polyflor provides low maintenance options right across our product portfolio enabling the cleaning process to be as cost-effective and straightforward as possible.

The incorporation of a polyurethane reinforcement into the Polyflor Acoustix PUR collection helps protect the floorcoverings by resisting soiling and scuffing. Combined with the superior closed surface finish, this enhanced protection allows the use of a polish-free maintenance regime for the lifetime of the flooring. Fewer cleaning chemicals and greatly reduced power requirements mean reduced environmental impact.

CPD
To reflect today’s demanding marketplace, Polyflor offer contractors and fitters a series of CPD training seminars, offering guidance and advise on a variety of topics including vinyl floorcoverings, safety and acoustic floorcoverings.

With an ever increasing array of vinyl floorings available in the market, each with different decorations, durability, performance characteristics and construction, Polyflor’s CPD seminars aim to explain the many benefits contractors can achieve from using vinyl flooring, highlight environmental credentials and advise on traditional problem areas such as installation and maintenance and how to ensure that these are done correctly. After completion of the seminar, each attendee will receive a RIBA approved certificate.
Environment

Polyflor have demonstrated a high level of commitment over the years to producing high quality floorcovering, whilst minimising our impact on the environment without compromising the performance benefits of our products.

There can be few materials better suited to recycling than vinyl flooring. All Polyflor’s acoustic floorcoverings are 100% recyclable, and can be recycled many times without losing any of their performance properties. Polyflor continually works on developing new products and technologies, and constantly evaluates production methods to further minimise our impact on the environment.

Website

To view all of the Polyflor Acoustix ranges online, visit www.polyflor.com and follow the links to the Acoustic product pages. Here you will find product details, additional technical data and the option to view previous installations.

Samples

With regards to each design, it is only possible to give a provisional representation of the colour. To replicate the natural material, the wood effect products may contain knots or markings as part of their design. For colour selection, an original sample is recommended which we will be happy to supply.

To request individual product samples of any design within the Acoustix collection, visit www.polyflor.com and follow the link to Samples and Literature. Alternatively, call the dedicated Polyflor Samples Hotline on +44 (0) 161 767 2551.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Acoustix Gallery fx</th>
<th>Acoustix Forest fx</th>
<th>Polyflor Wood fx</th>
<th>Acoustifoam</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of floorcovering</td>
<td>EN ISO 11638</td>
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<td>Heterogeneous, PVC</td>
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<td>Surface reinforcement</td>
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<td>PUR</td>
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<td>Acoustic impact sound reduction</td>
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<td>Gauge</td>
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<td>Class D5 (Dry condition)</td>
<td>Class DS (Dry condition)</td>
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<td>Hygiene</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

These products have been independently tested and results demonstrate that they inhibit the growth of MRSA on the flooring. An effective cleaning regime is however, the most important defence against infection.

Electrical behaviour

These products do not accumulate static charges above 2kV and are classified as ‘antistatic’. For specialist applications where there is requirement to dissipate the electrostatic charge, see the Polyflor ESD product range.

Environmentally preferable flooring

Polyflor Acoustix products achieve a BRE Global Environmental Air Rating (Certificate No. ENP 415) in major use areas such as education and healthcare. Polyflor Acoustix products are 100% recyclable. A full Environmental Report detailing Polyflor’s achievements in areas such as recycling, energy reduction and waste avoidance can be found at www.polyflor.com/environment.
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