

# Suction, Sound & Applicators

## Powerful Pick-Up

**How can I make sure I'm getting the most suction from my vacuum?**

*Jacalyn High, director of marketing at Boise, Idaho-based ProTeam Inc., answers:*

Vacuums come in a variety of shapes and sizes, with a range of prices and functions. The only thing they all have in common is they all have a place where the dirt goes. In most of the vacuums on the market, that dirt deposit is located in front of the motor, obstructing the airflow path—and subsequent suction power.

To get the most suction power, you need a vacuum with an unobstructed airflow. Even if your vacuum deposits dirt in front of the motor, there are still ways you can maximize suction. The No. 1 way is to check the filter often. A clean filter allows you to maximize the airflow and lift, two measurements that identify how much “pick-up power” your vacuum has. It's like drinking a milkshake with a straw: it's pretty easy, but as soon as that straw gets clogged, your suction power is gone. The same goes for vacuums. And most vacuum hoses have some bends or elbows where larger debris, like wood chips or carpet shavings, can get stuck. It is important to check the hose and filter frequently so that your suction path is kept clear for maximum efficiency.

## Sound Ratings Translated

**I am going to be installing a floating engineered wood floor in one of the upper floors in a condominium. According to the condo association, the owner needs an IIC and STC sound rat-**

**ing of 50 or more. What is that?**

*Bob Pratt, technical director at Norfolk, Neb.-based MP Global Products, answers:*

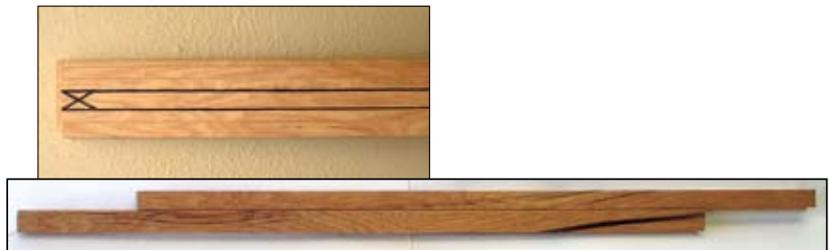
Impact Isolation Class (IIC) and Sound Transmission Class (STC) are both tests for sound traveling through the floor/ceiling assembly from an upper living area to a lower living area. IIC testing is for impact noise, like footfalls, moving furniture, things dropping on the floor, etc. STC is for airborne sound like voices or music. IIC and STC tests are conducted in sound test laboratories. Field tests (FIIC and FSTC) may also be performed by setting up test equipment in a building. The International Build-

ing Code suggests a rating of 50 or more for IIC and STC, but allow 45 or more for FIIC or FIIC field tests.

It is important to understand that IIC and STC tests are not for individual components of a flooring assembly, but for the whole floor/ceiling structure, from the surface of the floor covering material in the upper unit all the way to the ceiling in the unit below. Each IIC or STC test report issued has a detailed description of the floor/ceiling assembly used in that test. For engineered wood flooring installations, the results depend on the type of materials used in the construction of the building, along with the underlayment selected for the application. Most reputable flooring underlayment

## TRICK OF THE TRADE

### Listen to This Story



**T**rying to get accurate measurements for stair parts can be frustrating when using flexible metal measuring tapes. One simple, no-cost and accurate work-around is to create an adjustable, sliding “story stick.” Just select a straight board at least 24 inches long and cut 1 inch off each side, saving the sides and discarding the middle piece. Then fit the tongue and groove together. Now you can quickly and easily get inside dimensions for stairs, even with complicated angles. Rubber bands on each end or mini spring or bar clamps can be used to secure the pieces at a given length.

*Thanks to Bob Middleton, technical & installation manager at Toano, Va.-based Lumber Liquidators, for his tip. Do you have a Trick of the Trade? Send it to editors@hardwoodfloorsmag.com.*