



# Installation & Maintenance Guide

**PLEASE READ COMPLETELY BEFORE INSTALLATION**

**WARRANTY INFORMATION:**

Refer to InStride Surfaces *Stride4Life* Warranty Guidelines.



## General Information

Thoroughly examine the flooring prior to installation for grade, color, finish and quality. Ensure adequate lighting for proper inspection. If flooring is not acceptable, do not install the floor. Please contact your Authorized InStride Surfaces Flooring Dealer Partner immediately and arrange for replacement.

Please note our products contain a higher standard of color and pattern variation and installers should be working from multiple open boxes (3–4) to ensure boards are blended throughout the installation area. In the event of visible defects, immediately stop installation and contact your Authorized InStride Surfaces Flooring Dealer Partner. Installation of this product warrants the acceptance by the installer or owner for the quality of the material, as well as job site conditions in which the material is being installed.

Prior to installation of any flooring, it is the responsibility of the installer to ensure that the job site and subfloor

meet the standards of these installation instructions. All necessary accessories, including trim, must be present at the job site prior to beginning installation.

**The manufacturer is not responsible for flooring failure resulting from unsatisfactory job site and/or subfloor conditions.**

When purchasing flooring, we recommend adding 10%–15% to actual square footage needed for cutting waste allowance.

It shall be the responsibility of the Installer to document installation date, product SKU and Lot information, subfloor moisture content, site relative humidity and site temperature. This information must be documented by the installer and a copy provided to the property owner to ensure product warranty coverage.

**Failure to follow all of InStride Surfaces recommended installation guidelines will void warranty coverage.**

### QUICK REFERENCE (RESIDENTIAL USE)

Concrete Moisture Requirement	Install a 6mil, PE sheet vapor retarder (not included)
Moisture and PH Testing	Not required
Flatness Tolerance	≤ 1/8-inch over 6-foot and 3/32-inch over 1-foot in all directions
Acclimation Temperature	Between 8 hours at 65° F to 85° F
Installation Temperature	Between 65° F to 85° F
Optimal Service Temperature	Between 50° F to 100° F
Acoustic Underlayment	Use <b>QuietStride™</b> (already attached)
Doorway Transition Requirements	Not required (except radiant heated areas)
Expansion Gap	Yes, 5/16-inch (8 mm) minimum
Expansion Joints (Large Areas)	Not required
3-Season Rooms	Recommended up to 500-foot <sup>2</sup>
Pet Stain Warranty	Yes, but clean when discovered

Revised: 03.31.2026

## Job Site & Pre-Installation Guidelines

InStride Surfaces Rigid Core Flooring should be one of the last items installed for any new construction or remodel project. All InStride Surfaces products must be installed per the manufacturer's guidelines. For any questions or specifications not specifically outlined herein, please contact [technical@instridesurfaces.com](mailto:technical@instridesurfaces.com).

- All "wet" work such as paint, drywall, concrete, masonry, plumbing must be complete and dry prior to the delivery of SPC flooring. Gutters and downspouts should be in place and the exterior grade complete to allow for proper drainage of water away from the building's exterior perimeter.
- HVAC should be on, operational and maintained between 65°–85° F with a relative humidity of 35%–55% range a minimum of 5 days prior to delivery, during and after installation of the flooring.
- If HVAC is not possible at time of installation the environmental conditions must be at or near normal living conditions between 65°–85° F and at the average yearly relative humidity for questions on Commercial applications please contact [technical@instridesurfaces.com](mailto:technical@instridesurfaces.com).
- We recommend using a Hydrometer to monitor interior climate.
- Test approved wood grade sub floors for moisture content using a moisture meter recommended for wood flooring. Take readings of the subfloor in different areas or rooms and average the results. Subfloor is ready when moisture readings are of 14% or less. If readings are higher let subfloor remain open with HVAC on until readings come down to the acceptable range.
- Concrete Moisture testing must follow ASTM F-2170 using a meter and probe method following meter manufacturer's instructions.

**Use of a moisture barrier such as InStride Surfaces HydroGuard™ 6mil PE is required throughout the entire installation.**

If laying the Rigid Core Flooring over a tile floor, it is the installer's responsibility to ensure the floor is in proper form, grout lines are skim coated, and there are not any moisture issues present. After ensuring all of these conditions, a moisture barrier is not to be used when installing Rigid Core Flooring over a tile floor.

- Test the concrete subfloors moisture content by using an appropriate moisture meter. The moisture content for concrete subfloors must not exceed 85% Relative Humidity per ASTM F-2170. **DO NOT** install the flooring. Before moisture testing begins, the slab must be cured for a minimum of 60 days or less. If readings are acceptable. When using a moisture meter, please refer to the recommended guidelines dictated by the moisture meters' manufacturer instructions.
- Basements and crawl spaces must be dry. Use of a 6mil black polyethylene, like InStride Surfaces HydroGuard™ moisture barrier, is **required to cover 100% of the crawl space earth**. Crawl space clearance from ground to underside of joist to be no less than 18" and perimeter vent spacing should be equal to 1.5% of the total square footage of the crawl space area to provide cross ventilation in accordance with local regulations.
- **It is required to use a moisture barrier when installing over a on grade and below grade concrete slab.** A 6mil polyethylene like InStride Surfaces HydroGuard™ moisture barrier must be used under the entire flooring installation area. Overlap polyethylene seams 6" and use waterproof tape on seams. Remember to roll the 6mil PE moisture barrier out perpendicular to the direction you are installing your floor.

## Preparing and Leveling the Subfloors

Floor Prep is the key to an amazing installation.

1. The subfloor needs to be structurally
2. The subfloor should be free of any surface defect. If it is not, fill any cracks/gaps/grout lines that exceed 3/16" with a Portland cement-based leveling patch, grind and sand down any high areas and fill low areas.
3. The subfloor must be level and flat to 3/16" (5mm) per 10' radius or 1/8" (3.2mm) per 6-foot radius.
4. Any gaps in the subfloor should not exceed 3/16" (5mm).
5. Use flooring screws into floor joists if necessary to minimize noise in an approved wood grade subfloor.
6. The surface must be clean and free of any contaminants such as wax, paint, grease, dust, oil, nails, staples, old adhesive. The surface of the floor shall be cleaned of all loose material by scraping, brushing, vacuuming, or other methods, or a combination thereof immediately before commencing installation.
7. For light weight concrete installation, ensure that the concrete is not low-density (below 3000 psi). Plywood subfloor for Rigid Core Flooring installation must be Exposure 1 plywood minimum 19/32" thick or Exposure1 must be minimum 23/32", both must be 4' x 8' panels tongue and groove. Subfloor must not have more than 1/16" deflection movement.

## Installation Over Existing Floors

Installation over existing floors requires the installer to consider potential issues related to moisture damage, adhesive failure and fastener failure. Acceptable floor coverings include Solid wood, linoleum (1 layer only),

terrazzo, ceramic, and stone tile. Tiled floors with grout lines will require a cementitious leveling compound to fill any grout lines over 3/16", and also voids, or cracks 3/16".

Unacceptable floor coverings include Carpet (any type), foam underlayment, cushioned-back vinyl, rubber, cork, laminates, free-floating floors, and wooden floors over concrete. If the installer chooses to use an underlayment listed above, they must refer to the manufacturer of the underlayment to receive in writing they will warrant their product against the Rigid Core Flooring's deflection when installed under InStride Surfaces Rigid Core Flooring.

## Warranted Area of Installation

This product is not suitable for any outside use, sunrooms/solariums, showers, saunas, seasonal porches (three season rooms), camping trailers, boats, RV's or rooms that have a potential of flooding.

- » **DO NOT** install in rooms or homes that are not temperature controlled. Exposure to direct sunlight may cause damage to your floor in a facility with single pane windows. **Failure to properly shade or UV tint windows can discolor, fade, or buckle vinyl planks.** Use window treatments or UV tinting on windows.
- » SPC is not intended for use on vertical walls.
- » **DO NOT** glue, nail, screw or fasten to substrate.
- » **DO NOT** install cabinetry, an island or peninsula counters, vanities, tubs, and showers on top of installed rigid core flooring. Install Rigid Core Flooring around these items leaving the dictated expansion relief within the installation instructions.

**ALWAYS CHECK MOISTURE LEVELS BEFORE INSTALLATION.**

## Inspect the Flooring

Inspect material for color, finish, milling, texture and grade. Set aside pieces that may not be acceptable once installed. A maximum of two boxes may be opened for inspection prior to installation and can be replaced free of charge from InStride Surfaces to your Authorized Flooring Dealer. InStride Surfaces conducts a Quality Control inspection before and after receiving our products. The floors have been thoroughly inspected during the manufacturing process and after being received at our warehouse, but it is the responsibility of the installer/homeowner to do final inspection and cull-out boards that are not acceptable before installation because of manufacturer defects.

## Blending of cartons to achieve a uniform appearance across the entire floor

We require that you open and work from a minimum of four cartons at a time and lay out the flooring ahead of time. Be sure to mix the planks for the best design results. Be certain the room is well lit to ensure color is consistent and that any visual defects can be seen and removed prior to installation. “Racking the Floor” is essential to achieve a random appearance and avoid a “Stair Stepped look”. Start by cutting several boards in random lengths, differing the lengths by at least six inches. As you continue working across the floor remember to maintain a six-inch minimum space between the end joints. Randomly install different lengths as starter planks to avoid a patterned appearance. Never waste materials; the end cuts from starter rows should be used at the opposite side of the room to complete rows or may be used to start the next row.

## EXPANSION SPACE

### Undercut Door Casings

Undercut all door casings 1/16” higher than where the flooring sits when installed. To do this, use a scrap piece of flooring as a guide. Lay it on the substrate and cut the casing with a handsaw or use a power jamb saw set at the correct height. Making sure you have 1/16” space where the flooring

is placed under casing. **Failure to undercut casings will result in automatic void in warranty coverage.** No T-molding is required when the SPC flooring continues through a doorway. Though, the door casing must be cut allowing the proper expansion space under casing. Make sure to follow total distance of continual run of flooring.

### Matching Transition Moldings

Always have all necessary transition moldings on site prior to beginning installation. Make sure all transitions and moldings have been matched with planks that have similar color and graining. Set them aside for use when a transition is necessary. For the most beautiful finished installation, installers should carefully coordinate trim pieces with the surrounding planks. Because InStride Surfaces designs are derived from natural wood film prints, authentic variation in color and grain is inherent to the product. We require any installation of this floor that is installed in the floating method to use a T-molding once the installation has gone more than 100 feet in any single direction. Installations of the flooring beyond this distance must use a T-molding to release stress from the floor and allow the floating installation to properly expand and contract.

### Floor Protection During Construction

Always protect the surface of the installed flooring during construction. While working, cover the floor with heavy duty Ram Board or rosin paper that will allow the floor to breathe and be sure to secure the floor protection paper to the baseboards; never tape the protection paper directly to flooring to avoid transfer of the tapes adhesive which will require clean up after removal. **DO NOT** use plastic or polyethylene sheeting to cover the floor. The flooring must be cleaned and completely free of any debris to minimize damage. If you have any questions regarding installation of flooring not addressed in the InStride Surfaces Rigid Core Installation guidelines, please contact our technical department at [technical@instridesurfaces.com](mailto:technical@instridesurfaces.com).

## Radiant Heated Subfloors

**Must be warranted by manufacturer for installation and use under resilient flooring and never exceed 85° F.**

The following guidelines must be followed to maintain warranty coverage.

- Concrete must be allowed to properly cure and dry a minimum of 6 weeks prior to operation of radiant heat system.
- Over concrete, moisture vapor emission rate for concrete subfloors must not exceed 85% RH using ASTM 2170k and documented for warranty coverage.
- Wood subfloors must not exceed 14% moisture content.
- Subfloor must be flat to 3/16" over a 10' radius or 1/8" over a 6' radius.
- T-moldings must be used to separate heating zones.
- Operation of radiant heat system should be set to run at 2/3 of the maximum output for a minimum of 2 weeks prior to installation of flooring to further allow moisture from concrete to dissipate and reach a final moisture content. This must be done in both heating AND non-heating seasons.
- Using a separate thermostat for each individual zone is required. An outdoor temperature sensor is highly recommended to adjust temperature according to anticipated heat loss.
- Reduce heat to a temperature between 65°–85° 4 days prior to installation.
- After installation is fully completed, we recommend to slowly raise or decrease temperature of the HVAC system to its preferred operating level. Please exercise caution and expect to achieve peak after a period of 3 days.
- Do not allow the surface temperature to exceed 85°F with no more than a 5°F variance in surface temperature over a 24-hour period.
- Seasonal expansion and contraction are expected and does not mean a defect is present within 4 the product and will not be noticeable or harm the floor if these guidelines are followed.

**Failure to follow ALL of InStride Surfaces guidelines will result in termination of warranty coverage.**

## GENERAL INSTALLATION TOOLS

- Moisture Meter
- Tape Measure
- Pencil
- Chalk Line
- Hand Saw or Power Saw
- Utility Knife
- Tapping block
- Crowbar or Pry Bar
- Wood or Plastic Spacers (1/4")
- Rubber Mallet

## Floating Installation Instructions

### 1 Establish a Starting Point

1. Remove any existing wall base, shoe molding, quarter round or doorway threshold.
2. If installation is above or at grade, poly-film is recommended but not necessary.
3. Determine the longest, straightest wall to begin installation; this is usually an exterior wall. Measure the total width of the flooring (including the tongue), plus 1/4" for expansion.
4. Measure out this distance in at least 2 places from the starting wall and 12" from the corners. Then, snap a chalk line parallel to the starting wall.

### 2 Plank Lay Out

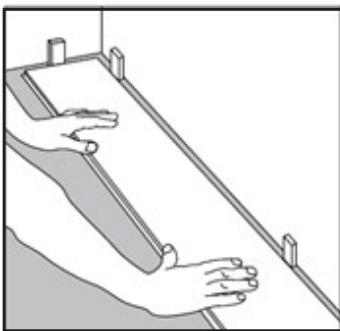


FIGURE 1

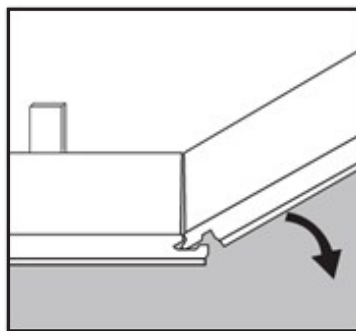


FIGURE 2

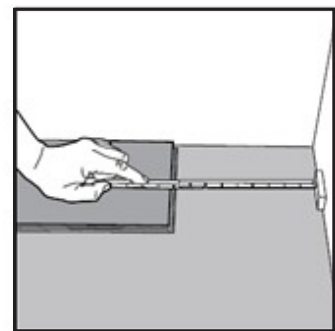
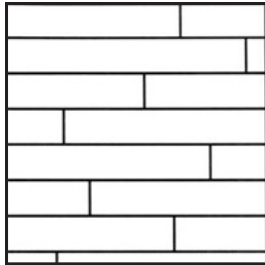


FIGURE 3

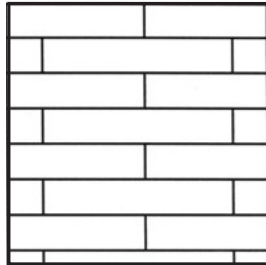
Start with a full plank and align the planks tongue with the working line, cut the last plank to the proper length leaving a 1/4" from the end wall. Repeat this step for the second row, making sure to stagger the joints. The minimum end stagger is 6 inches (Figure 1–3).

## Floating Installation Instructions (cont'd.)

3



**Stagger End Joints**  
FIGURE 4



**Avoid "H" Joints**  
FIGURE 5

### Rack the Floor

Once the first row is in place, continue to lay out the planks. Be sure to blend the planks and stagger the end joints a minimum of 6" apart to ensure a favorable appearance (Figure 4–5).

4

### Installation of Flooring

1. Once enough of the planks have been racked out, begin installing the planks by fitting the short side of the click system into the long side of the click system. Make sure that the click system is engaged evenly; any gapping can compromise the integrity of the installation (Figure 6–7).

If gapping occurs use a tapping block and rubber mallet on the long seams and gently tap down the roll to close gaps. Continue installing planks across the room ending at the far wall.

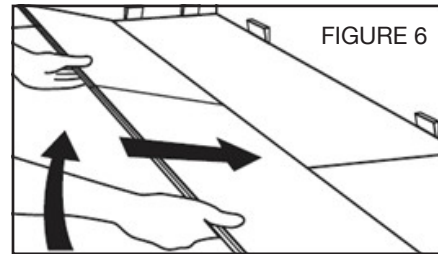


FIGURE 6

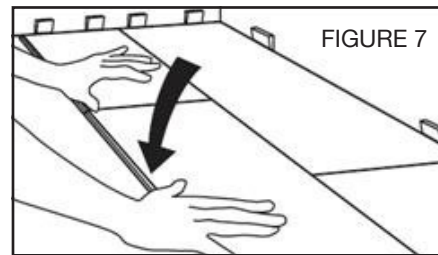


FIGURE 7

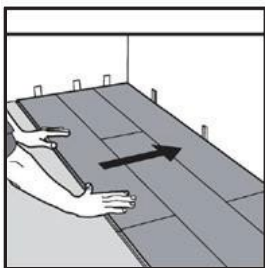


FIGURE 8

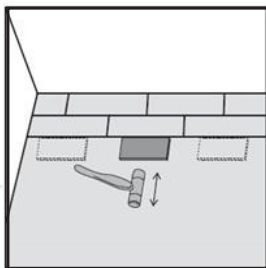


FIGURE 9

2. It may be necessary to rip the last row to allow for the minimum 1/4" expansion. If the last row is 2" or less click the pieces to the last full uninstalled row and install them together. If needed use a light rubber mallet to make the remaining rows tight to the installed planks (Figure 8–9).

## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR INSTALLATION ON STAIRS

### Preparation

Remove existing floor covering if necessary and thoroughly clean the surface of all treads and risers. Remove all residue of old glue and underlay, sand the surfaces clean and vacuum to remove all dust and debris. Make sure the existing stair treads are free from noise when walked on. Add additional fasteners if necessary. If necessary, cut back the overhang of the existing tread flush to the riser (Figure 10).

### Check Run and Rise

Ensure stair treads conform with local building codes in your area for appropriate tread depth and step height. Most building codes require a rise or run difference of no more than 3/8" (10mm) throughout the entire stair system.

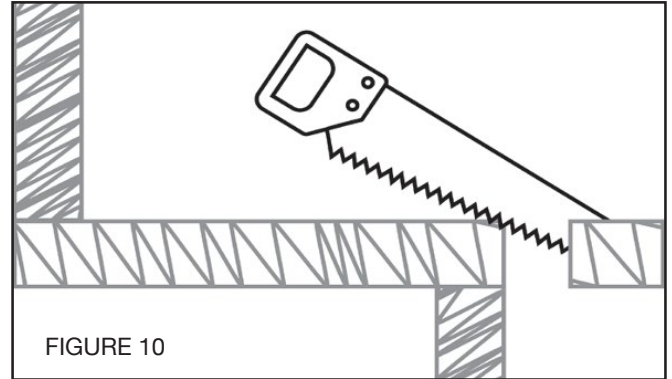
### Adding An Underlayment (If Required)

If there is more than a 3/8" (10mm) variance on some stairs in the run, it may be worthwhile adding a wood underlayment to some treads to minimize the height difference. To add an underlayment, use a plywood type material cut to the size of the tread and affixed with urethane construction adhesive.

**IMPORTANT:** REMOVE ATTACHED PAD FROM THE RIGID CORE FLOORING BEFORE INSTALLING ON STAIRS. SCRAPE OFF PAD AND CLEAN THE SURFACE TO REMOVE ALL UNDERLAYMENT RESIDUE FROM THE BACK OF THE BOARD.

All flooring material should be cut and dry fit prior to applying adhesive.

If a flush mount nosing is being used start by dry fitting the flush mount nosing at the front of the step. Make sure if there is a riser the riser piece is in place so the nosing will fit correctly.



When the nosing is in place use a pencil to mark a line on the back side of the molding onto the top of the step. This line will show you where to start the plank on the step. Using the line measure to determine the size to cut the plank to fit the step.

Make sure the groove side of the plank is facing the front of the step. Start by installing the riser and the step by using a premium urethane construction adhesive. Apply adhesive in a Serpentine Bead "S" pattern on back of the riser piece and press on to the riser.

Next using your marked line on top of the step leaving dry where the flush nose will be attached apply the adhesive in a Serpentine Bead "S" pattern onto the top of the step and press the per cut flooring onto the top of the step. Press down firmly so the adhesive transfers to the back of material for a permanent bond.

Apply a thick bead of a premium urethane construction adhesive to the bottom of the nosing to adhere to the front of the step. Install nosing at a slight angle locking into the plank on the step pressing firmly into the adhesive.

Use painters' tape to hold planks and nosing in place for 24 hours until adhesive has set.

» **DO NOT allow traffic on stairs for 24 hours.**

## Protect Your Floor

- Protect your floor with floor protectors that are made of non-staining felt under the legs of furniture to help prevent scuffing and scratching; Larger pads may be required on bigger objects. Scratching due to insufficient protection are not covered under by the warranty.
- Avoid walking on your vinyl floors with metal cleats. An exposed heel nail in a high heel can exert up to 8,000 pounds per square inch. This kind of impact can dent any floor surface.
- When moving heavy furniture, **DO NOT** slide it on the flooring. It is best to pick up the furniture completely to protect the floor from damage.  
Floor

## Repairs

- Very light and small surface scratches can be repaired with a staining “touch up” pen of the appropriate color or by using an almond stick. Please refer to manufacturer’s recommendations on proper application.
- Slightly deeper scratches can be repaired by means of colored putty, acrylic and/or stains. Fill the scratches with the putty, level with putty knife and use terry cloth towel to wipe off excess.
- Very deep scratches or gouges may require the replacement of planks.

## Plank Replacement

1. When replacing a plank make sure the plank that will be used for the replacement is in the room to acclimate for 48 hours to room temperature before the plank replacement
2. When choosing a replacement plank use a plank that is not an identical plank to any of the planks that it will be touching. Choosing a plank that has different characteristics than the ones surrounding it will give the best results.
3. Locate the damaged plank to be replaced. Using a straight edge mark a line down the center of the plank. Next draw a 45° angle from the corners to the center line to form a triangle at each end.
4. Use an extra plank to set your saw depth to avoid cutting the subfloor. Cut along the center line of the plank, sweep or vacuum any debris. Next, carefully cut the diagonals, taking care not to damage adjoining planks, clean up any remaining debris.
5. Remove the two center sections and carefully remove the triangles from each end.
6. Prepare the new plank by cutting off the top tongue and slightly undercutting with a utility knife.
7. Remove the small locking nub from the top of the end and side groove of the plank.
8. Cut off the bottom right grooves at a 45° angle.
9. Apply adhesive to the installed planks on the exposed locking grooves.
10. Apply adhesive to the groove sides of the new plank.
11. Slide the right side at an angle under the adjacent plank while sliding the bottom at the same time.
12. Once the right side is in rotate the plank in place and firmly seat the bottom of the plank.
13. Tap the left side gently with a mallet and clean up any adhesive residue.

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## Care & Maintenance

With today's advances in vinyl flooring stains and finishes, cleaning vinyl has never been easier. There are other steps you can take to minimize maintenance and maintain the beauty of your vinyl floors. Regular maintenance requires little more than sweeping with a soft bristle broom if your floor includes a beveled edge that could collect debris. Or mopping with warm water. Be sure to ring out the mop.

- Clean your floors periodically with a PH Neutral Floor cleaner
- For moderately soiled areas, use the use of mineral spirits is acceptable. Be sure to clean the area with warm water before and after using the mineral spirits so there is not left over residue will form a dull film.
- Always spot test in an inconspicuous area
- Do not use any wood care floor cleaning products on vinyl floors, or any other cleaners that are not PH Neutral vinyl floor cleaners. Self-polishing acrylic waxes can cause the surface to become slippery and appear dull quickly
- Do not use vinegar as a cleaning solution
- We recommend the use of a welcome/door mat in main entry ways to prevent grit, dirt and other debris from being tracked onto your floor
- Place an area rug in front of the kitchen sink
- Do not wet-mop the floor, damp mop only. Standing water can dull the finish, damage the floor and leave a discoloring residue due to the minerals in tap water
- Do not use a steam mop of any kind. Damages associated with steam mop use will void warranty coverage
- Wipe up spills immediately. Protect your floor with floor protectors that are made of non-staining felt under the legs of furniture to help prevent scuffing and scratching; Larger pads may be required on bigger objects

# Instride

SURFACES

For help with installation and maintenance,  
contact our technical department at:  
[technical@instride.com](mailto:technical@instride.com)

Explore more at:  
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