

Damage-Free Ceiling Panel Checklist

What to check before, during, and after a thin wood or foam ceiling install

Before You Start

- 1 Mark every joist across the room, not just the first two or three**
A stud finder plus a visual check at an existing opening, like a vent or fixture, confirms the spacing pattern for the whole ceiling.
- 2 Ask which fastening method the specific panel or plank calls for**
Solid wood, foam, and beam products each have their own manufacturer instructions for screws, adhesive, or a combination of both.
- 3 Check the drywall condition before covering any of it**
Sagging, soft, or water-stained drywall should be assessed by a qualified professional first, not covered over.

During Installation

- 1 Fasten into framing or a furring strip, never into drywall alone**
A screw that only bites drywall paper is the single most common cause of panels coming loose later.
- 2 Check level every few rows, not just at the start**
A small gap that goes unnoticed early can become a visible lean by the far wall.
- 3 Leave a small gap at each wall for seasonal movement**
Wood and foam both respond to humidity and temperature changes through the year.

After the Panels Are Up

- 1 Cover the wall gap with trim rather than caulk alone**
Edge filler, border trim, or crown moulding holds up over time better than a bead of caulk on its own.
- 2 Ask what to do if a section feels loose later**
A reputable installer or retailer can talk through whether that means a missed joist or an adhesive that did not cure as expected.

Bring this list with you before you buy materials or book an install.

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