



13 Sebago St.
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**HARDWOOD FLOOR
INSTALLATION & REFINISHING**

While specific finish types may require different maintenance, some guidelines apply to the care of all wood floors. First, before furniture is placed onto the wood floor, floor protector pads should be installed on the bottom of all furniture legs. Also, rugs should be placed at all entrances to the area (check with the finish manufacturer for when these can be placed. Most should not go down on the floor for at least seven days, and sometimes more than 21 days after the finish is applied). These rugs help trap grit and also absorb moisture before either one has a chance to damage the finish. Rugs should be shaken out, cleaned and thoroughly dried when they get wet. Take special precautions with non-skid pads that are frequently placed under area rugs. These pads may imprint their pattern onto the finish and/or wood floor. (Natural fibers may not transfer as much as synthetic pads.) Also, be aware that area rugs may cause color differences in the floor due to differences in light exposure.

You should expect that your floors will shrink and expand with changes in humidity, sometimes leaving small cracks between boards. To minimize the changes, it is recommended that you use some kind of humidity control in your home.

Routine basic maintenance includes sweeping, vacuuming and/or dust-mopping to remove dirt and grit. (Use only vacuums that have a special hard-surface setting.) The more that dirt and grit are allowed to accumulate, the more they will be tracked over the floor, leaving scratches. Some manufacturers recommend lightly damp-mopping a floor, while others do not. Regardless, household dust treatments should never be used. All shoes, especially high heels, should be kept in good repair - if they lose their protective cap, they will dent the surface of any floor.

Pet nails need to be trimmed regularly to prevent finish and wood damage.

Be especially attentive to potential spill areas, such as dishwashers, sinks, icemakers and stove tops. Other potential problem spots include household plants and Christmas tree stands.

You'll see the best results if you develop a cleaning schedule and stick to it. In addition to your regular schedule, you should be aware that not only should you clean the floor immediately after a major event, you should clean immediately before it. (The increased traffic on the floor will result in more damage from any dirt or grit present on the floor.)

Those are some of the basics. For information specific to finish types, read the following sections.

WHAT TO USE?

It is important to understand exactly which directions to follow and which products to use in caring for your wood floors. Although Mr. Smith may use cleaning product X, his floor may have a finish totally different from Mrs. Brown's finish next door.

For prefinished wood floors, you should follow the directions of the flooring manufacturer as to which cleaning products to use. This is extremely important, because not following those directions may void the manufacturer's warranty of the wood floor.

If you have floors that were finished at the job site you should follow the maintenance directions of the floor finish manufacturer.

In either case, using a non-recommended product to clean the floor may ruin the appearance of the finish, and also may cause problems down the road when it is time for the floor to be recoated.

If it is unknown who the manufacturer is, the customer should follow the general guidelines detailed on the next page.



DO use floor protectors



DON'T use wet mops



DO vacuum often



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SURFACE FINISHES

Maintenance tips specific to surface-type finishes (water-based urethane, oil-modified polyurethane, conversion varnish and moisture-cured urethane) include:

- As with any wood floor, follow a program of cleaning, sweeping and vacuuming to eliminate as much dirt and grit as possible, and remember that moisture should not come in contact with the floor. If it does, it should be wiped up immediately.
- Always use manufacturers' recommended cleaning products, which won't leave a contaminating residue on the floor. If the manufacturer is not known, use a generic hardwood floor cleaner available at local retail wood flooring stores.
- Most warranties from finish manufacturers and factory-finished wood flooring manufacturers are voided by use of oil soap cleaners.
- Wipe up spills immediately with a lightly dampened cloth, then follow up with a recommended cleaning product.
- For stubborn stains, lightly dampen a soft cloth with a manufacturer's recommended cleaner or a generic hardwood floor cleaner. Apply directly to the stain and repeat as necessary.
- Never use a wax finish on top of a surface finish.
- When the floor loses its luster, the floor needs help. There are options available to revive the floor. A topcoat dressing may revive the floor's appearance. Or, the floor may need to be screened/padded and recoated.

WAX FINISH

Maintenance tips specific to wax-type finishes include:

- Wipe up spills immediately with a dry cloth.

Buffing may be required.

- To remove white spots caused by water spills, use a fine steel wool and a small amount of mineral spirits. Rub gently in a circular motion until the spot is gone, then re wax the area and re buff.
- When the floor loses its luster in heavy traffic areas, buff those areas with a polishing brush or pad. If that does not restore luster, re wax only those areas and buff. Note that too much wax causes the floor to scuff easily.
- Conditioners and cleaners are available on the market to be applied to wax floors, which can then be coated over with another coat of wax. Pay careful attention to manufacturer's directions as to how long such cleaners should remain on the floor.
- Eventually (after many years), the floor will need to be stripped and re waxed. Even if waxed floors are completely sanded down, they may be very difficult to coat over with a surface finish.

ACRYLIC-IMPREGNATED

Acrylic-impregnated floors are generally available in two types: those with a urethane coating and those without, and their care varies accordingly.

Non-urethane-coated acrylic impregnated floors take a regular maintenance routine of sweeping, vacuuming or dust-mopping. Beyond that, however, their care differs significantly from most other floor finishes:

- Use a low-speed buffing machine with the appropriate pad and recommended cleaning product as necessary. Depending on the manufacturer, different pads may be recommended for different steps in the cleaning process.





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- Use recommended dust mop treatments to enhance dust mopping.
- For white/bleached products, always use an untreated mop - never any water or petroleum-based products. The floor should be buffed with a low-speed buffer and a recommended product specifically for white/bleached floors. (More maintenance will be required of white/bleached floors than other colors.)
- Some manufacturers recommend that floors that have become dull be lightly screened, to be followed up with a recommended cleaner and recommended conditioning product.
- Follow manufacturers' directions for spot-cleaning stubborn stains. Methods include spot sanding or screening and then applying the recommended cleaner and conditioner. Other methods include using mineral spirits or hydrogen peroxide and a hand-sized piece of pad to remove the stain.

Note that recoating such floors with urethane will void the manufacturer's warranty.

Urethane-coated acrylic-impregnated floors also require routine maintenance of sweeping, vacuuming or dust-mopping, but they do not need the commercial-type equipment recommended for non-urethane products.

Recommendations include:

- Damp-mop using a cleaner recommended by urethane finish manufacturers. Damp-mopping with water should not be part of routine maintenance.
- For light scratches, apply a light wax coat to the scratched area. Deeper scratches or damage may require spot sanding, refinishing and resealing by a hardwood floor professional. Some manufacturers also have touch-up kits available.

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