

# FLOORING GUIDELINES FOR REALTORS

## INTRODUCTION

The following flooring guidelines are based upon more than 20 years of experience dealing with almost all types of floor covering materials. The practical suggestions shown are primarily based upon interactions with middle-class property owners and their realtors. For example, plush (cut pile carpets) are recommended for residences being sold because many potential buyers have had bad experiences with snags and runs occurring in looped carpets.

When a facility that is being prepared to be listed for sale is scheduled to have multiple upgrades made to flooring, painted surfaces, kitchens, bathrooms, etc., then both the realtor and a professional interior designer should be consulted regarding current trends. The realtor can identify trends in the area and the interior designer can provide guidance on selecting colors and textures that work well together.

## Common Features of Carpets for Residences Being Sold

1. Plush Style (Avoid loops or patterns)
2. Low Tracking (Does not show many footprints or vacuum cleaner tracks)
3. Solid Color (Taupe type color—goes well with either brown or gray furniture)
4. Speckled Colors are best for rental properties. (Hide pet hairs and cookie crumbs)
5. Density: At least FHA-Approved. Soft feel carpet for houses where young children are expected to live. Firm feels in senior housing (Short dense carpet and padding)

## Solving Common Flooring Problems

1. Furniture-caused dimples in carpet can often be reduced or eliminated by placing a small amount of warm water in the dimple, letting it stay overnight, and brushing it by hand the next day.
2. Small spots caused by spills of common household liquids can often be reduced or eliminated by following the recommendations listed in a carpet care guide that usually available to Burt Milburn's clients and some affiliated realtors. Note that when cleaning off a spot on a carpet, apply the cleaning solution and soak it up by patting on the area using paper towels. Do not rub the spot in a circular motion. With carpet tufts being spun in the manufacturing process, scrubbing in a circular motion may change the texture of that area in the carpet.
3. Waves in carpets can usually be eliminated or reduced by restretching the carpets.
4. Wood Floor Squeaks can often be reduced by installing screws or barbed nails when a carpet is being replaced. In some cases, the subfloor plywood may need to be replaced.
5. Small damaged areas in plush carpets can often be repaired using carpet removed from a closet. (Note many patterned carpets cannot be repaired)
6. Matted down carpets can be fluffed up using a carpet rake or sometimes by using a carpet vacuum or a broom.
7. Individual strands of carpet can often be trimmed off using small scissors or tucked back down using a spot of glue.
8. Clean water damaged carpets can often be saved when quick action pulls the carpet back, the padding is discarded, and fans are used to dry the subfloor.
9. Water damaged laminate floors usually warp at the joints and have to be removed.
10. Most damaged sheet vinyl floors cannot be repaired. To be able to fix the repairable types, some of the original production run must be available to create a patch.
11. Most hard floors can only be repaired if enough of the original material is available.

12. Damaged wood floor finishes: Solid woods can often be sanded, stained, and refinished. Some engineered wood floors can be sanded—if the top layer is sufficiently thick.
13. Dull finishes on wood floors: If the finish on a wood floor seems dull but not worn through to the wood grains, then it can sometimes be saved by doing a very light screening type sanding and, then, applying a coat of finish over the old finish material.
14. Grout erosion and/or staining: Often these problems can be resolved by using a tool to remove a thin layer of the grout followed by installing a new layer on top of the remaining old grout.
15. Stone and porcelain tiles: They can often be made to look better by honing or polishing the surface.
16. Minor wood imperfections: They can often be hidden by applying a touch of an applicable color wood finish.

### **Some Preventive Actions**

1. Carpet cleaners: Only hire carpet cleaners who use a hot water extraction system. (Dry chemicals may change the color of a carpet). The best carpet cleaners are usually ones that have gone through the certification program of the International Institute of Carpet Restoration and Cleaning.
2. Cleanout Services: Tell them to always leave any spare flooring materials for future owners.
3. When ordering flooring materials: Always order enough to have extra pieces for future repairs.
4. Vacuum Cleaners: Thick carpets need to be cleaned using vacuum cleaners that have relatively large wheels—so that the pressure is uniform on the carpet surface.
5. Wood Floors: Apply a new coating of floor finish to high foot traffic areas every 3 or 4 years.
6. Furniture: Be sure to place felt pads on the bottoms of all pieces of furniture that are located on hard surfaces.
7. Grout: Test the sealing of grout annually by placing a few drops of water on the grout along the high foot traffic areas. If the drops soak into the grout, then a new layer of a water seal material should be applied to the grout.
8. Flooring warranties: Be sure to read the manufacturer's warranty information and take whatever actions are being required in order to maintain a warranty.
9. Protect carpet warranties: In order for carpet warranties to remain in effect, most carpet mills require that the carpet be cleaned using a hot water extraction technique and that the carpet be vacuumed regularly (typically at least once every two weeks).
10. Install luxury vinyl planks (LVP) instead of laminates: LVP are tougher than laminates and waterproof.
11. Install luxury vinyl tiles (LVT) instead of hard tiles: When the installed cost of hard tiles is beyond the available budget or the subfloor is likely to have movements in the future. LVT click together and reside on a thin cushion.
12. When planning to change a type of flooring: Make sure that any new type of flooring is compatible with features such as doorways: For example, new flooring materials that are much thinner or thicker than the old floors may cause problems when installed by an outside door or adjacent to a different type of flooring material.

**Got a flooring problem? We can help you solve it!**

**Burt Milburn**

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