



| Product      |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Supplier     | Flooring2         |
| Product Type | Laminate Flooring |
| Number       | MC                |
| Name         | Timber MC         |

# Laminate Flooring Care and Maintenance Guide

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## Important Notice

### READ BEFORE USE

This guide provides comprehensive care and maintenance information for laminate flooring. Following these guidelines will help preserve your floor's appearance, extend its lifespan, and maintain warranty coverage. Always refer to your specific product's care instructions, as requirements may vary by manufacturer and product line.

**Understanding Laminate Flooring:** Laminate is a multi-layer synthetic flooring product. The top layer is a clear wear layer (melamine), followed by a high-resolution image layer (photographic paper), then a core layer (high-density fiberboard/HDF), and a backing layer. Unlike hardwood, laminate cannot be refinished—the image layer is only surface-deep.

**Disclaimer:** This guide contains general recommendations based on industry best practices. We are not responsible for damage resulting from improper care, use of unapproved products, or failure to follow manufacturer-specific guidelines.

## Quick Reference Card

### Daily Care

| Task                       | Frequency | Tools/Products                  |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Sweep or dust mop          | Daily     | Microfiber dust mop, soft broom |
| Wipe up spills immediately | As needed | Dry or barely damp cloth        |
| Entry mat maintenance      | Daily     | Shake out mats                  |

### Weekly Care

| Task                        | Frequency        | Tools/Products                                 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Vacuum (hard-floor setting) | 2-3 times weekly | Vacuum with no beater bar                      |
| Damp mop (minimal moisture) | Weekly           | Slightly damp microfiber mop, approved cleaner |
| Inspect for damage          | Weekly           | Visual inspection                              |

### Periodic Care

| Task                          | Frequency | Tools/Products            |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Deep clean                    | Monthly   | Laminate-approved cleaner |
| Check expansion gaps          | Quarterly | Visual inspection         |
| Comprehensive condition check | Annually  | Full inspection           |

# Routine Maintenance

## Daily Care

### Dust Mopping and Sweeping:

Daily dust removal is essential for laminate flooring. Grit, sand, and debris act as abrasives that scratch the wear layer with every step.

### Proper Technique:

- Use a microfiber dust mop (traps and holds dust)
- Sweep in overlapping strokes
- Work toward a collection point
- Clean mop heads regularly (wash weekly)
- Can also use soft-bristle broom

### Why Daily Sweeping Matters:

- Prevents scratching of wear layer
- Maintains floor's appearance
- Reduces need for wet cleaning
- Protects your flooring investment

### Frequency Guidelines by Traffic Level:

| Traffic Level  | Examples                      | Recommended Frequency |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| High Traffic   | Entryways, kitchens, hallways | Daily                 |
| Medium Traffic | Living rooms, family rooms    | Every 2-3 days        |
| Low Traffic    | Bedrooms, guest rooms         | 2-3 times weekly      |

## Weekly Care

### Dry-to-Damp Cleaning (Minimal Moisture!):

**Critical:** Laminate flooring must never be wet mopped. Water is laminate's biggest enemy—it can penetrate seams and cause swelling.

### Proper Damp Mopping Technique:

- Sweep or vacuum thoroughly first
- Use a flat mop with microfiber pad
- Spray laminate cleaner onto mop pad (NOT directly on floor)
- Mop in sections, working with plank direction
- The mop should be barely damp—almost dry
- Floor should dry within 1-2 minutes
- If it takes longer to dry, you're using too much moisture

### Key Rules:

- Never pour water or cleaner directly on floor
- Never use a soaking wet mop
- Never let water pool or stand—especially at seams
- Dry any wet areas immediately

### Vacuuming:

- ☐ Use hard-floor setting (beater bar/rotating brush OFF)
- ☐ Or use soft brush attachment
- ☐ Pay special attention to edges and corners
- ☐ Clean along seams where debris collects

### Recommended Cleaning Solution:

- Laminate-specific floor cleaner (spray type)
- pH-neutral, no-residue formula
- Manufacturer-approved products preferred
- Never use all-purpose household cleaners

## Monthly Care

### Deep Cleaning (Still Minimal Moisture!):

Even monthly deep cleaning must avoid excess moisture.

Procedure:

- Vacuum or sweep thoroughly
- Use laminate-specific cleaner
- Apply to microfiber mop (not floor)
- Clean in manageable sections
- Work with the plank direction
- Floor should dry within minutes
- Never leave standing moisture

## Spill and Stain Management

### Immediate Response Protocol

**Golden Rule:** Address ALL spills immediately. Laminate's HDF core can swell when moisture penetrates seams, causing permanent damage.

Step 1: Wipe Up Immediately

- Use a clean, dry, absorbent cloth
- Blot up all liquid completely
- Work quickly—don't let liquid spread to seams

Step 2: Dry the Area

- Wipe dry with clean cloth
- Ensure no moisture remains at seams
- Use fan to accelerate drying if needed

Step 3: Clean if Needed

- If residue remains, use approved cleaner
- Apply to cloth, not floor
- Wipe clean, then dry immediately

Step 4: Inspect

- Check area after 24 hours
- Watch for any swelling, bubbling, or damage
- Address issues promptly

### Common Stain Removal Guide

| Stain Type      | Treatment Method                      | Products to Use                             | Notes                         |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Water spots     | Wipe immediately, dry thoroughly      | Clean cloth                                 | Prevention is key             |
| Food spills     | Wipe up, clean with approved cleaner  | Laminate cleaner                            | Don't let food dry on surface |
| Grease/Oil      | Wipe up, clean carefully              | Laminate cleaner, may need multiple passes  | Avoid spreading               |
| Coffee/Tea/Wine | Blot immediately, clean               | Laminate cleaner                            | Can stain if left             |
| Pet accidents   | Blot immediately, enzyme then cleaner | Enzyme cleaner, then laminate cleaner       | Never let sit                 |
| Ink             | Dab carefully with cleaner            | Laminate cleaner, or rubbing alcohol (test) | Don't spread                  |
| Nail polish     | Use acetone-free remover              | Nail polish remover (test first)            | Work quickly                  |
| Candle wax      | Freeze, scrape gently                 | Ice to harden, plastic scraper              | Don't scratch surface         |
| Gum             | Freeze, scrape                        | Ice, plastic scraper                        | Be careful with wear layer    |
| Heel marks      | Rub with soft cloth                   | Laminate cleaner                            | Usually come off easily       |
| Scuff marks     | Erase gently                          | Soft cloth, or magic eraser (test)          | Don't scrub aggressively      |
| Adhesive        | Use appropriate remover               | Manufacturer-approved (test first)          | Avoid harsh solvents          |

### Stain Removal Best Practices

DO:

- ☐ Respond to spills immediately (seconds count)

- ☐ Blot—don't wipe (prevents spreading)
- ☐ Use laminate-approved products
- ☐ Test cleaners in hidden area first
- ☐ Dry area completely after cleaning
- ☐ Work with the plank direction

**DON'T:**

- ☐ Never let liquids sit—even briefly
- ☐ Never use excessive water or wet mops
- ☐ Never use abrasive cleaners or pads
- ☐ Never use vinegar, ammonia, or bleach
- ☐ Never use polish, wax, or shine products
- ☐ Never use steam cleaners

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## Deep Cleaning

### DIY Deep Cleaning

**Frequency:** Monthly for high-traffic areas, quarterly for general areas

**Important Understanding:**

"Deep cleaning" for laminate still means minimal moisture. Never wet mop or flood the floor.

**Materials Needed:**

- ☐ Microfiber dust mop
- ☐ Vacuum with hard-floor setting
- ☐ Laminate-specific floor cleaner (spray)
- ☐ Microfiber mop pads
- ☐ Clean, dry cloths

**Procedure:**

**1. Preparation**

- Remove furniture and rugs
- Sweep or vacuum entire floor thoroughly
- Pre-treat any stubborn spots

**2. Cleaning Process**

- Spray cleaner onto mop pad (NOT on floor)
- Clean in sections, working with plank direction
- Use overlapping strokes
- Floor should dry within 1-2 minutes
- If you see moisture sitting, you're using too much

**3. Completion**

- Floor should be dry almost immediately
- Buff with dry cloth if any residue
- Replace furniture using felt pads

## Professional Deep Cleaning

**When to Call a Professional:**

- Heavy buildup from wrong cleaning products
- Stubborn spots not responding to DIY cleaning
- Large commercial spaces
- Pre-sale cleaning and preparation

**Important Notes:**

- Professionals should use laminate-appropriate methods
- No wet mopping or steam cleaning
- Ensure professional understands laminate limitations
- Laminate cannot be refinished or restored like hardwood

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## Approved and Prohibited Products

## Approved Products

| Category             | Approved Products                       | Notes                          |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Daily/Weekly Cleaner | Laminate-specific spray cleaner         | pH-neutral, no-residue formula |
| Deep Cleaner         | Manufacturer-approved intensive cleaner | Still use minimally            |
| Spot Cleaner         | Laminate-approved spot treatment        | For specific stains            |

## Prohibited Products

**WARNING:** Using prohibited products will damage laminate and void your warranty. Damage is often permanent because laminate cannot be refinished.

| Product Type             | Why It's Prohibited       | Potential Damage                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Water/wet mops           | Water penetrates seams    | Swelling, bubbling, permanent damage |
| Steam cleaners           | Heat and moisture         | Warping, delamination, core damage   |
| Vinegar                  | Acidic—attacks wear layer | Dulling, surface damage              |
| Ammonia                  | Damages surface           | Clouding, wear layer breakdown       |
| Bleach                   | Harsh chemical            | Discoloration, surface damage        |
| Abrasive cleaners        | Scratches wear layer      | Permanent scratching                 |
| Wax or polish            | Creates buildup           | Slippery, cloudy appearance          |
| Oil-based products       | Leaves residue            | Sticky residue, attracts dirt        |
| "Mop and shine" products | Buildup, wrong chemistry  | Hazy film, sticky surface            |
| All-purpose cleaners     | Wrong pH, leave residue   | Streaking, residue buildup           |

## Cleaning Equipment Guidelines

### Approved Equipment:

- ☐ Microfiber dust mops
- ☐ Soft-bristle brooms
- ☐ Vacuums with hard-floor setting (no beater bar)
- ☐ Spray mops with microfiber pads
- ☐ Soft, clean cloths

### Prohibited Equipment:

- ☐ **Steam mops** - Causes swelling, warping, delamination
- ☐ **Wet mops** - Excess moisture damages core
- ☐ **String mops** - Hold too much water
- ☐ **Beater bar vacuums** - Can scratch surface
- ☐ **Abrasive scrub pads** - Scratches wear layer
- ☐ **Sponge mops** - Hold too much water

## Climate and Environmental Control

### Temperature Requirements

| Condition        | Recommended Range         | Acceptable Range          | Risk if Exceeded                |
|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Room Temperature | 60°F - 80°F (15°C - 27°C) | 55°F - 85°F (13°C - 29°C) | Expansion, contraction, gapping |

### Humidity Requirements

| Condition         | Recommended Range | Acceptable Range | Risk if Exceeded                               |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Relative Humidity | 35% - 55% RH      | 30% - 65% RH     | Too low: gapping; Too high: swelling, buckling |

### Why Humidity Control Matters:

Laminate's HDF core responds to moisture in the air:

- **High humidity (>55%):** Core absorbs moisture, can expand and buckle
- **Low humidity (<35%):** Core dries out, gaps can appear between planks

#### **Humidity Management Tips:**

- Use a hygrometer to monitor humidity
- Use dehumidifier in humid seasons or basements
- Use humidifier in dry winter months
- Maintain consistent conditions year-round
- Respond to humidity changes before damage occurs

## **Seasonal Considerations**

#### **Winter:**

- Heating systems dry air significantly
- Use humidifier to maintain 35-55% RH
- Minor gapping may be normal—should close when humidity rises
- Keep entry mats clean (salt and snow are damaging)

#### **Summer:**

- High humidity can cause swelling
- Use air conditioning and/or dehumidifier
- Watch for any buckling or peaking
- Ensure adequate ventilation

#### **Transition Seasons:**

- Gradually adjust climate control
- Monitor for floor movement
- Spring and fall humidity swings need management

## **Sunlight and UV Protection**

- **Use window treatments** - UV exposure can fade laminate
- **Rotate area rugs** - Prevent uneven color change
- **Move furniture periodically** - Avoid tan lines
- **Consider UV-filtering window film** - Reduces fading
- **Expect some fading** - Normal over time with sun exposure

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## **Preventive Care Strategies**

### **Furniture Protection**

#### **Felt Pads - Essential on Every Furniture Piece:**

- Use felt pads under ALL furniture legs and bases
- Choose quality, thick felt pads
- Replace pads when worn or compressed
- Clean debris from pads regularly
- Check monthly and replace as needed

#### **Heavy Furniture:**

- Use furniture coasters or cups to distribute weight
- Never drag furniture—ALWAYS lift
- Use furniture sliders when moving
- Get help for heavy items
- Check for indentations periodically

#### **Rolling Furniture:**

- Chair mats are essential under rolling chairs
- Use hard-surface chair mats rated for hard floors
- Choose soft rubber casters (not hard plastic)
- Check casters regularly for debris
- Keep chair mat clean

## **Entry Point Protection**

### Walk-Off Mat Strategy:

- Exterior scraper mat to remove debris
- Interior absorbent mat (6+ feet recommended)
- Use non-rubber-backed mats only
- Clean mats regularly (dirty mats redistribute grit)
- Replace mats when worn

**IMPORTANT:** Avoid rubber-backed and latex-backed mats. They can trap moisture and potentially discolor the floor.

### Entry Protocols:

- Remove shoes when possible (best protection)
- Wipe feet thoroughly when entering
- Keep mats effective and clean

## Pet Care

### Nail Maintenance:

- Keep pet nails trimmed and smooth
- Use nail grinders for smoothest edges
- Consider nail caps if needed
- Regular trimming prevents scratches

### Accident Management:

- Clean up immediately—moisture is critical threat
- Blot thoroughly with dry cloth first
- Clean with enzyme cleaner, then laminate cleaner
- Dry completely—check seams for moisture
- Monitor for any swelling

### Food and Water:

- Use waterproof mats under bowls
- Clean up splashes immediately
- Consider raised bowl stands
- Wipe area around bowls daily

## Damage Prevention

### Protect Against:

- **Grit and sand** - Daily sweeping essential
- **Standing water** - Wipe up immediately
- **Dragging furniture** - Always lift
- **High heels** - Can dent
- **Heavy dropped objects** - Can chip or dent

### In Kitchens:

- Clean spills immediately
- Use mats at sink and work areas
- Protect floor during appliance moves
- Monitor for any moisture sources

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## Room-Specific Guidelines

### Kitchens

- Clean all spills immediately (common water exposure)
- Use mats at sink, stove, and dishwasher areas
- Protect floor when moving appliances
- Check under dishwasher for leaks periodically
- Consider waterproof laminate for kitchens

### Bathrooms

**Caution:** Standard laminate is generally not recommended for bathrooms

If installed in bathroom:

- Use waterproof laminate only
- Ensure excellent ventilation
- Wipe up all water immediately after use
- Use bath mats (non-rubber backing)
- Check around fixtures for moisture
- Consider alternative flooring for high-moisture bathrooms

## Basements

- Monitor humidity continuously (below 60% RH)
- Use dehumidifier as needed
- Ensure proper installation with moisture barrier
- Watch for any water intrusion
- May require waterproof laminate
- Check perimeter for moisture regularly

## High-Traffic Areas

- Sweep or vacuum daily
- Use area rugs (non-rubber backing)
- Rotate rugs to even exposure
- Monitor for wear patterns
- Clean more frequently

## Entryways

- Highest risk for tracked-in grit and moisture
- Comprehensive mat system essential
- Clean mats frequently
- Inspect regularly for wear
- Consider heavy-duty commercial mats

## Areas with Radiant Heat

- Verify laminate is rated for radiant heat
- Maximum floor surface temperature: 85°F (29°C)
- Gradual temperature changes
- Never exceed temperature limits
- Monitor for any expansion issues

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# Troubleshooting Common Issues

## Gapping Between Planks

### Symptoms:

- Visible gaps between planks
- Usually more noticeable in dry seasons

### Possible Causes:

- Low humidity
- Normal seasonal movement
- Improper acclimation at installation
- Insufficient expansion gaps at walls

### Solutions:

- Check and maintain humidity (35-55% RH)
- Small gaps may close when humidity rises
- Large gaps may require professional assessment

### Prevention:

- Maintain consistent humidity year-round
- Use humidifier in dry seasons
- Proper acclimation before installation

# Swelling or Buckling

## Symptoms:

- Planks raised or lifted
- Bubbling at seams
- Floor feels uneven

## Possible Causes:

- Water damage (most common)
- High humidity
- Insufficient expansion gap
- Moisture from subfloor

## Solutions:

- Identify and eliminate moisture source
- May need to replace damaged planks
- Professional assessment recommended

## Prevention:

- Never wet mop or allow standing water
- Maintain proper humidity
- Ensure proper expansion gaps at installation

# Scratches

## Symptoms:

- Surface scratches in wear layer
- Scuff marks
- Concentrated scratches in traffic areas

## Possible Causes:

- Grit and debris (most common)
- Furniture without pads
- Pet nails
- Dropped objects

## Solutions:

- Light scratches: Try laminate repair kit or touch-up marker
- Deep scratches: Plank replacement may be needed
- Scuffs: Often cleanable with laminate cleaner

## Prevention:

- Sweep daily
- Use felt pads on all furniture
- Keep pet nails trimmed
- Use area rugs in high-traffic zones

# Chipping

## Symptoms:

- Chips in wear layer, especially at edges
- Visible core material

## Possible Causes:

- Impact damage (dropped objects)
- Improper installation
- Manufacturing defect

## Solutions:

- Small chips: May be masked with repair kit
- Large chips: Plank replacement needed
- At seams: Check installation, may need professional

## Prevention:

- Avoid dropping heavy or sharp objects

- Handle during installation carefully
- Use proper tools for cutting

## Peaking at Seams

**Symptoms:**

- Raised points where planks meet
- Peak-like appearance at joints

**Possible Causes:**

- Insufficient expansion gap at walls
- Pinched flooring under molding
- Moisture exposure
- Flooring growing due to humidity

**Solutions:**

- Check and increase expansion gaps
- Ensure molding isn't pinning floor
- Address moisture source if present
- May need professional assessment

**Prevention:**

- Maintain proper expansion gaps
- Don't pin flooring under heavy objects
- Control humidity
- Follow installation guidelines

## When to Seek Professional Help

Contact a flooring professional for:

- Widespread swelling or buckling
- Significant gapping that doesn't resolve
- Water damage assessment
- Multiple plank replacement
- Suspected subfloor moisture
- Warranty claim situations

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## Common Mistakes to Avoid

### Cleaning Mistakes

| Mistake              | Why It's Harmful         | Correct Approach           |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Wet mopping          | Water damages HDF core   | Barely damp mop only       |
| Steam cleaning       | Destroys laminate        | Never use steam            |
| Using vinegar        | Damages wear layer       | Laminate cleaner only      |
| Wax or polish        | Creates buildup          | Never use                  |
| Too much cleaner     | Leaves residue           | Use sparingly, dry quickly |
| All-purpose cleaners | Wrong chemistry, residue | Laminate-specific only     |

### Environmental Mistakes

| Mistake              | Why It's Harmful             | Correct Approach      |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ignoring humidity    | Causes gapping or swelling   | Maintain 35-55% RH    |
| Extreme temperatures | Expansion/contraction issues | Maintain 60-80°F      |
| Standing water       | Swelling, buckling, damage   | Wipe immediately      |
| Excessive sun        | Fading                       | Use window treatments |

### Protection Mistakes

| Mistake              | Why It's Harmful            | Correct Approach            |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| No furniture pads    | Scratches                   | Felt pads on everything     |
| Dragging furniture   | Deep scratches              | Always lift                 |
| Rubber-backed rugs   | Can trap moisture/discolor  | Non-rubber backing only     |
| No entry mats        | Tracks in grit and moisture | Comprehensive mat system    |
| Hard plastic casters | Scratches, wear             | Soft rubber casters or mats |

## Maintenance Schedule Checklist

### Daily Checklist

- ☐ Sweep or dust mop all traffic areas
- ☐ Wipe up any spills immediately
- ☐ Check entry mats, clean if needed
- ☐ Visual inspection for issues

### Weekly Checklist

- ☐ Vacuum all areas (hard-floor setting)
- ☐ Light damp mop with approved cleaner
- ☐ Clean along walls and edges
- ☐ Check furniture pads
- ☐ Inspect for scratches or damage

### Monthly Checklist

- ☐ Deep clean with approved cleaner
- ☐ Check humidity levels
- ☐ Move lightweight furniture to clean under
- ☐ Inspect and replace worn felt pads
- ☐ Check under area rugs

### Quarterly Checklist

- ☐ Comprehensive cleaning
- ☐ Move furniture for thorough cleaning
- ☐ Check expansion gaps at walls
- ☐ Assess overall floor condition
- ☐ Rotate furniture and rugs slightly

### Annual Checklist

- ☐ Complete condition assessment
- ☐ Check all expansion gaps
- ☐ Assess any wear patterns
- ☐ Review and replace entry mats if worn
- ☐ Review humidity records
- ☐ Consider professional assessment if needed

## Warranty Considerations

### Maintaining Warranty Coverage

To preserve your warranty:

- ☐ Follow manufacturer's care guidelines exactly
- ☐ Use only approved cleaning products
- ☐ Maintain humidity at 35-55% RH
- ☐ Maintain temperature at 60-80°F
- ☐ Use proper furniture protection
- ☐ Use non-rubber-backed mats only

- ☐ Never wet mop or steam clean
- ☐ Keep maintenance records

## Actions That May Void Warranty

- Using steam cleaners or wet mopping
- Using vinegar, ammonia, wax, or prohibited products
- Failure to maintain proper humidity
- Using rubber-backed mats
- Water damage from improper care
- Improper installation or repairs
- Exceeding temperature limits with radiant heat
- Pet damage (typically excluded)

## Documentation Recommendations

Keep records of:

- ☐ Purchase receipt and warranty documents
- ☐ Product specifications (brand, style, AC rating)
- ☐ Installation date and professional information
- ☐ Humidity/temperature records
- ☐ Professional service receipts
- ☐ Photos of any issues
- ☐ Correspondence about problems

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## Understanding Laminate Limitations

### Cannot Be Refinished

Unlike hardwood, laminate flooring cannot be:

- Sanded
- Refinished
- Restained
- Re-coated

**Why?** The wear layer is a thin melamine coating over a photographic image. Once damaged, the only option is replacement.

### Repair Options

| Issue              | Repair Option                      |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Minor scratches    | Touch-up markers, repair kits      |
| Small chips        | Repair putty, color-matched filler |
| Deep scratches     | Plank replacement                  |
| Water damage       | Plank replacement                  |
| Large damaged area | Section replacement                |

### Planning for the Future

- Keep extra planks from installation for repairs
- Store in climate-controlled area
- Document product name and color for future ordering
- Address damage promptly to prevent spreading

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## Additional Resources

### Industry Resources

- **North American Laminate Flooring Association (NALFA)**
  - Care guidelines
  - AC rating standards

- Product testing information
- **European Producers of Laminate Flooring (EPLF)**
  - Technical standards
  - Classification information

## Certification Programs

- **AC Rating System** - Abrasion classification ratings (AC1-AC5)
- **CARB Compliance** - Formaldehyde emissions standards
- **FloorScore** - Indoor air quality certification

## Where to Find Help

- **Product questions:** Contact manufacturer
- **Cleaning products:** Use manufacturer-approved
- **Professional services:** Contact flooring retailer
- **Warranty questions:** Contact retailer or manufacturer
- **Replacement planks:** Original retailer or manufacturer

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*This care and maintenance guide is provided for general reference based on industry best practices for laminate flooring.*