Product	
Supplier	Flooring2
Product Type	Laminate Flooring
Number	KP
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Waterproof Laminate Flooring Care and Maintenance Guide

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Important Notice

> **READ BEFORE USE**

This guide provides comprehensive care and maintenance information for waterproof 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 Waterproof Laminate Flooring: Waterproof laminate is a multi-layer wood-based flooring product. It features a water-resistant wear layer, a high-resolution design layer, an engineered high-density fiberboard (HDF) core treated with water-repellent resins/wax, and a hydrophobic joint locking system. Unlike standard laminate, waterproof laminate is designed to withstand everyday spills, damp mopping, and wet mopping. However, it is not "flood-proof."

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	Within window	Dry or damp cloth (72-96 hours depending on thickness)
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 or wet mop	Weekly	Microfiber mop, approved pH-neutral 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

Mopping and Cleaning (Water-Safe!):

> **Important:** While waterproof laminate is engineered to withstand moisture, steam cleaners and steam mops are strictly prohibited. The extreme heat and pressure of steam can force moisture past the protective seals, warp the HDF core, and delaminate the wear layer.

Proper Mopping Technique:

- Sweep or vacuum thoroughly first.
- Wet mopping or damp mopping with a microfiber mop is safe.
- Spray laminate cleaner onto the mop pad or use a well-wrung mop with a pH-neutral laminate cleaner.
- Do not flood the floor or allow large pools of water to stand indefinitely. Any standing water must be cleaned up within the specified protection window based on core thickness:
  - **8mm Core:** Clean up within **72 hours**.
  - **10mm Core:** Clean up within **84 hours**.
  - **12mm Core:** Clean up within **96 hours**.
- Floor should dry within a few minutes.

Key Rules:

- Never use steam cleaners or steam mops.
- Never let standing water pool on the floor beyond the specified protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours).
- Dry any excess standing water following cleaning.

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:

Monthly deep cleaning helps remove any buildup and keeps the floor looking new.

Procedure:

- Vacuum or sweep thoroughly
- Use laminate-specific cleaner
- Apply using a damp microfiber mop
- Clean in manageable sections
- Work with the plank direction
- Ensure no large pools of water remain on the surface for extended periods
- Never leave standing moisture beyond the specified protection window for your product's thickness

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Spill and Stain Management

Core-Thickness Spill Protection Windows

Waterproof Protection: Waterproof laminate flooring features a water-repellent locking system and moisture-resistant core designed to resist topical liquid penetration. The protection window depends on the core thickness of your product:

- **8mm Core Products:** Up to **72 hours** of standing spill protection.
- **10mm Core Products:** Up to **84 hours** of standing spill protection.
- **12mm Core Products:** Up to **96 hours** of standing spill protection.

While the floor is protected against everyday spills and pet accidents, liquids should still be cleaned up within the designated window for your product's thickness to prevent seepage and protect your warranty.

Step 1: Wipe Up Spills

- Use a clean, dry, or damp absorbent cloth.
- Blot or wipe up the liquid.
- Clean up any standing spills within the protection window specified for your product's core thickness (72, 84, or 96 hours).

Step 2: Clean and Dry

- Wipe clean with a damp cloth if necessary.
- Ensure no standing water pools remain after cleaning.

Step 3: Inspect

- Watch for any joint swelling or bubbling.
- Address issues promptly.

Common Stain Removal Guide

Stain Type	Treatment Method	Products to Use	Notes
Water spots	Wipe up, clean if needed	Damp cloth	Easy to remove
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, clean	Laminate cleaner	Easy cleanup within window
Pet accidents	Blot, clean with enzyme then laminate cleaner	Enzyme cleaner, then laminate cleaner	Clean within core thickness protection window (72-96h)

Stain Type	Treatment Method	Products to Use	Notes
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:

- □ Clean up spills and pet accidents within the core thickness protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours)
- □ Use laminate-approved products
- □ Test cleaners in hidden area first
- □ Work with the plank direction

DON'T:

- □ Never let standing water pool beyond the core thickness protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours)
- □ Never use steam cleaners
- □ Never use abrasive cleaners or steel wool
- □ Never use vinegar, ammonia, or bleach
- □ Never use polish, wax, or shine products

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	Use with damp mop
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
Steam cleaners	Heat and moisture	Warping, delamination, core damage
Standing water beyond window	Penetrates joints over time	Swelling, buckling, permanent damage (72h/84h/96h by thickness)
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)
- □ Damp or wet microfiber mops
- □ Soft, clean cloths

Prohibited Equipment:

- □ **Steam mops** - Causes swelling, warping, delamination
- □ **Beater bar vacuums** - Can scratch surface
- □ **Abrasive scrub pads** - Scratches wear layer
- □ **String mops holding excessive water** - Hard to control water volume

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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:

Even waterproof laminate responds to air moisture:

- **High humidity (>55%):** Core absorbs moisture from air, 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

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

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

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

Heavy Furniture:

- Use furniture coasters or cups to distribute weight
- Never drag furniture—ALWAYS lift
- Use furniture sliders when moving

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

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

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

Pet Care

Nail Maintenance:

- Keep pet nails trimmed and smooth to prevent scratches.

Accident Management:

- Clean up pet accidents within the core thickness protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours).
- Clean with enzyme cleaner, then laminate cleaner.

Food and Water:

- Use waterproof mats under bowls. Clean up splashes within specified window.

Room-Specific Guidelines

Kitchens

- Extremely suitable for kitchens.
- Wipe up food spills and drink splashes.
- Clean dishwasher/sink spills within the specified protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours).
- Use protective mats in high-spill zones (sink, dishwasher).

Bathrooms

- Suitable for bathrooms due to waterproof locking joints.
- **Perimeter Seal:** Always seal the perimeter expansion gap around tubs, toilets, and sinks with 100% silicone caulk during installation to prevent water from running under the flooring.
- Use bath mats to catch standing water.
- Clean up large puddles within the specified protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours).

Basements

- Monitor humidity continuously (below 65% RH).
- Use a vapor barrier (6 mil poly film) over concrete subfloors before installation.
- Clean up any basement moisture/leaks within the specified protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours).

Troubleshooting Common Issues

Gapping Between Planks

- **Causes:** Low humidity, lack of acclimation.
- **Solutions:** Maintain 35-55% RH.

Swelling or Buckling

- **Causes:** Water exposure exceeding the core thickness protection window (72, 84, or 96 hours), high humidity, subfloor moisture, or lack of expansion gaps.
- **Solutions:** Eliminate moisture source. Replace damaged planks if swelling is permanent.

Scratches

- **Causes:** Grit, pet nails, dragging furniture.
- **Solutions:** Use laminate repair kits or touch-up markers.

Peaking at Seams

- **Causes:** Insufficient expansion gap at walls, pinching under molding, or prolonged moisture.
- **Solutions:** Check/increase expansion gaps at walls; ensure molding isn't pinning the floor down.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Cleaning Mistakes

Mistake	Why It's Harmful	Correct Approach
Steam cleaning	Destroys laminate wear layer	Damp or wet mop only
Using vinegar	Damages wear layer	Laminate cleaner only
Wax or polish	Creates buildup	Never use
Standing water beyond window	Exceeds waterproof design	Wipe up within window (72h / 84h / 96h)

Environmental Mistakes

Mistake	Why It's Harmful	Correct Approach
Ignoring humidity	Causes gapping or buckling	Maintain 35-55% RH
Unsealed bathroom edges	Water seeps underneath floor	Seal perimeter with silicone

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Maintenance Schedule Checklist

Daily Checklist

- □ Sweep or dust mop all traffic areas
- □ Check entry mats
- □ Visual inspection for spills

Weekly Checklist

- □ Vacuum all areas (hard-floor setting)
- □ Damp or wet mop with approved cleaner
- □ Check furniture pads

Monthly Checklist

- □ Deep clean with approved cleaner
- □ Check humidity levels
- □ Inspect and replace worn felt pads

Warranty Considerations

Maintaining Warranty Coverage

- □ Follow manufacturer's care guidelines exactly
- □ Use only approved cleaning products
- □ Maintain humidity at 35-55% RH
- □ Maintain temperature at 60-80°F
- □ Never use steam cleaners
- □ Clean up all topical water within the specified protection window (72 hours for 8mm, 84 hours for 10mm, and 96 hours for 12mm cores)

Actions That May Void Warranty

- Using steam cleaners
- Using vinegar, ammonia, wax, or bleach
- Failure to maintain proper humidity
- Leaving standing water beyond the specified protection window (72 hours for 8mm, 84 hours for 10mm, and 96 hours for 12mm cores)
- Subfloor moisture or lack of vapor barrier on concrete

Understanding Laminate Limitations

Cannot Be Refinished

Laminate cannot be sanded or refinished. Damaged planks must be replaced.

Repair Options

- Minor scratches: Touch-up markers
- Large/deep damage or water-soaked planks: Plank replacement

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Additional Resources

Industry Resources

- **North American Laminate Flooring Association (NALFA)**
  - ANSI/NALFA LF-01 standards
  - Assembled Joint surface swell testing
- **European Producers of Laminate Flooring (EPLF)**

Certification Programs

- **AC Rating System** (AC1-AC5)
- **CARB Compliance**
- **FloorScore**

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