

Frequently Asked Questions

We wanted to give you an opportunity to do a little research and possibly answer some questions before you make the phone call to not only us, but anyone. We enjoy working without a sacrifice to quality! However, we enjoy a good conversation, giving you this chance to view our FAQ page allows us to focus on what we love to do and not working the phone lines!

- Do you offer free estimates?

Definitely! Matt and Jason (owners and lead installers) will be out to bid your job at their soonest convenience. Call us for an appointment (407) 473-2639

- Are you licensed?

Oregon - CCB# - 223025

Washington - UBI# - 604-375-142

- How much does it cost?

While the cost can vary based on the shape of the rooms to sand, amount of finish used, and depending on whether you need an install, a full restoration or just to refinish our rates start at \$4-\$7 per square foot. All fasteners, vapor barriers, stains and finishes are included in square foot price. We work primarily with Bona waterborne finishes, but are happy to discuss other options such as oil-modified polyurethane.

- My floor doesn't look so bad, do I really need to sand it down to bare wood?

Not always! Sometimes depending the depth and size of the problem areas we can just refinish instead of a full restoration. This can be a much more affordable option when the floors aren't in complete disrepair. If you have mainly surface scratches and overall

your floor is held up then this may be an option for you. Call for an estimate!
407-473-2639

- Will these stains come out?



This is a difficult question to answer. It is almost impossible to tell by looking if a stain will sand out. Dark stains from urine are the worst, largely because urine is corrosive and chemically burns the wood. However, it is always best to try to sand out a stain before trying more drastic measures - occasionally they sand right out. If the stains don't lighten on sanding, patching is an option.

- **Can you do patching?**

We do! This isn't an option we suggest if the patch you are requesting is greater than 12 boards. In general, the older the house, the older the wood; the older the wood, the less likely it is to a standard shape and size and the more you will work to get replacement boards to fit.

- **How long will it take?**

We can usually refinish 400-500 square feet (a typical living/dining room/entry) in 3-4 days. The sanding is usually finished in one day; subsequent days allow for the finish to dry.

- **Do I have to move out while you do it?**

Not necessarily. However, if the floor we're sanding is the only access path to bedrooms or your bathroom, we would recommend finding another place to stay during the coating process. And anyone who might be adversely affected by the finish fumes from oil-modified finishes (waterborne finishes are fine)—infants, pregnant women, asthmatics—should not stay in the home during the finishing process.

- **Can you refinish in the winter with the heat on and the windows closed?**

You bet! We work primarily with Bona waterborne finishes which have much lower levels of VOCs and toxic solvents and will not compromise your interior air quality, even during the closed-up winter season. Cracking windows slightly overnight in the affected rooms helps to dissipate fumes without significant heat loss. We do recommend closing vents in the room being sanded to keep dust out of the air circulation system.

- **Do you take off the quarter-round molding?**

We recommend that quarter-round moulding be removed for sanding—it prevents a visible ledge from forming at room edges. However, we do charge for quarter-round

removal. Most customers prefer to remove and reinstall it themselves because it's easy and saves them money.

- **What else should I do to get ready for the refinishing process?**

Remove all furniture and take pictures down from walls in the affected rooms. If your window treatments come down easily, remove those too. Fumes from oil-modified polyurethane can be lethal to small pets (birds, gerbils, guinea pigs—anything smaller than a rabbit) so we require that those animals be removed from the premises for the entire coating process. Larger pets can stay in the home, but we recommend securing them on another level to keep them away from the work area. If your pets are traumatized by strangers or noise, you might consider sending them on a short vacation while the work is completed.

- **How dusty will my house get?**

You will be pleasantly surprised and how clean modern refinishing has become. The laws that were passed in 2010 to control lead dust during renovation decreased the cost and improved the functioning of the vacuums that we attach to our sanders. We use our big HEPA vacs on all jobs now, even when we're not worried about lead, because of how effectively they encapsulate dust (our own respiratory health has improved drastically since we started using the big HEPA vac on all jobs). These vacuums are so effective that we no longer plastic off the rooms to be sanded; it just isn't necessary any more. These days, the chop saw we use on our install jobs produces more wood dust than any of our sanding machines.

- **Whats the difference between oil and water-borne finishes?**

Though oil-modified polyurethanes have been the go-to finish for hardwood floors for decades, waterborne finishes have caught up to, and in some cases exceeded them in quality. The greatest advantage of an oil-based polyurethane is how easily it adds a deep amber warmth to all woods. But their fumes and the slow drying times make them difficult to work with, not to mention the vast quantities of paint thinner it takes to clean up all our brushes and applicators. The modern waterborne finishes that we favor have a much lower VOC profile and clean up with water. And the waterborne line allows us to offer a commercial grade catalyzed finish called Traffic that is much more durable than any oil-modified finish. We are happy to accommodate customers who insist on the oil-based finishes, but our default choice will be a waterborne.

- Do you install new wood floors?

Absolutely. We specialize in **Sustainable Northwest Wood** flooring because we find that wood behaves better when it's installed in homes in a similar climate to the one where the wood originally grew. Come on down to the showroom and take a look - we are partial to site-finished full 3/4" thickness tongue and groove flooring, but we carry prefinished and engineered flooring options as well from **Cali Bamboo**.

- Is my subfloor the right composition and thickness to hold strip flooring? What if it isn't?

The ideal substrate for regular 3/4" strip flooring is a minimum of 3/4" of plywood or solid wood. Most homes built prior to 1965 will have an adequate subfloor. The next best option is 3/4" of OSB (Oriented Strand Board). If you have OSB that is thinner than 3/4" or particle board of any thickness, then we have a small problem because both are "crumbly" and won't hold a nail permanently. Inadequate subfloors can be torn out and replaced or, sometimes, we can put a new subfloor directly over the existing one.

- I have carpet and a pad laid directly on the subfloor - do you remove that?

We can charge you for tearout of carpet, pad and tack strip or you can do it yourself. It isn't a difficult job, but it is a tedious one because you have to be sure to remove every carpet pad staple.

- Do you have to remove the baseboards to install new floor?

All our install jobs are bid with the assumption that all quarter-round, baseboard, radiators and appliances will be removed before we arrive. If we're doing a kitchen install as part of a kitchen renovation, it is often easiest if we install the floor after the old cabinets have been removed but before the new ones have gone in.

- Is one species of wood better than another? Is there a difference between different grades of wood?

Choosing hardwood flooring is much like choosing a car; different lifestyles demand different qualities. Most people assume that they need to pick the hardest wood possible, but day-to-day abrasion on a floor is taken by the finish on top of a wood floor, not by the wood itself. So, extremely hard woods will not dent as easily if you throw a can of peas at them, but their density doesn't help the finish last any longer.

We recommend that customers consider not only wood hardness (American Cherry, for example, is much softer than most people realize), but its seasonal dimensional stability (some woods shrink more in winter than others) and whether it complements the other woods in the home.

Coniferous woods (fir or pine) are significantly softer than most hardwoods and deep dents and dings will appear quickly in floors made of those materials. Still, even those dents do not seriously affect the performance of the floor, and some people consider such marks a form of character or patina.

Wood grade is entirely an aesthetic evaluation. As the National Oak Manufacturers' Association puts it: "Appearance alone determines the grades of hardwood flooring since all grades are equally strong and serviceable in any application". The higher the grade, the higher the cost, the more uniform the appearance of the boards and the higher the proportion of long boards in any given set of flooring.

The one grading category that can make a difference to the performance of your floor is "quarter-sawn" or "quartered". Wood of any species that is quarter sawn is much more dimensionally stable through changes in humidity and is much less prone to gapping and cracking over time. Minnesota has one of the country's largest annual ranges of humidity change so dimensionally stable lumber makes an especially good investment here.

- **How long does a new floor take?**

Installing a straightforward 300 sq ft room, including sanding and finishing, will take 5-6 business days. Allow more time for tearout of carpet or subfloor, intricately shaped rooms and stairwells.

- **Why do you have to sand new wood after you install it - isn't it smooth already?**

The faces of the boards of new flooring may be smooth when it comes from the mill, but we're worried about the board edges whose heights don't quite match—the 'overwood' that you can feel with your bare toes as you walk across the floor. Sanding that new wood makes every board edge exactly the same height as its neighbor, so all you feel is continuous flatness under your feet. Don't worry—sanding a new floor doesn't take off more than 1/32" so it won't shorten the life of your floor.