



A Guide to Choosing the Right Hospital Flooring

- BROUGHT TO YOU BY EAST COAST FLOORING & INTERIORS -

TABLE OF CONTENTS

-  **Intro**
- 1** **Contaminant Resistance**
- 2** **Safety**
- 3** **Effects on Patient Morale**
- 4** **Effects on Staff Morale**
- 5** **High-Traffic Flooring**
- 6** **Installation Requirements**
-  **Conclusion**

A GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT HOSPITAL FLOORING

Flooring is center stage.

While it isn't the star in medical dramas, hospital flooring plays an essential role in ensuring safe and sanitary conditions, boosting patient morale, establishing soothing environments, wayfinding in labyrinthine hallways, and more. When it comes to healthcare, flooring must be able to meet specific needs in a variety of different areas.

How do facility managers choose the best options?

In this eBook, you'll learn more about healthcare flooring requirements and how different surfaces, materials and flooring contractors can help you meet key aesthetic, functional and financial objectives. We will cover:

- Contaminant resistance
- Safety
- Effects on patient morale
- Effects on staff morale
- High-traffic flooring
- Installation requirements

Flooring is not an afterthought; it is a critical element in maintaining a clean, calming, operational (no pun intended) medical facility.



CHAPTER ONE

CONTAMINANT RESISTANCE

CONTAMINANT RESISTANCE

Hospital-acquired, or nosocomial, infection is a clear and pervasive danger. This type of infection occurs in a medical facility and is secondary to a patient's original reason for admittance. Sterile flooring reduces the rate of secondary infection while patients are at their most vulnerable. It also reduces the risk of passing germs, bacteria and other agents to visitors and staff.



The following flooring options help protect health and maintain sanitary conditions:

Sheet vinyl and sheet rubber: These surfaces are good choices for areas such as operating rooms, intensive care units (ICUs) and emergency rooms. Instead of chemical bonding, heat welding is recommended so that seams are sealed evenly and protected from contaminants.



Note: Vinyl plank flooring cannot be used anywhere there is a need for sterilization. However, it is commonly installed in doctors' and back offices.

Flash coving: Sheet vinyl and sheet rubber also allow flash coving, which means that the floor extends up the wall. This effectively forms a baseboard that's flush with the floor, eliminating the border between the floor and the wall where it's usually such a hotbed for lingering contaminants.

Hospital-grade seamless flooring: This type of flooring utilizes an epoxy coat over concrete to create a seamless floor that's highly resistant to contamination. There are no seams into which germs, bacteria and other agents might leak. The advantages are that you get a floor that's both resistant to contaminants and remarkably easy to maintain. The only disadvantage is that it's a hard floor to take a fall on. You'll have to make your staff especially aware and take action to reduce the risk of spills.

Rubber tile: Hospital flooring must meet strict requirements for hygiene. Rubber tile is inherently resistant to bacteria and fungi. It's dense, nonporous and easy to clean and maintain. It's also difficult to damage, meaning that it won't develop imperfections. The adhesives used to install it can be protected with antimicrobial agents.



CHAPTER TWO

REDUCING FALL RISK

REDUCING FALL RISK

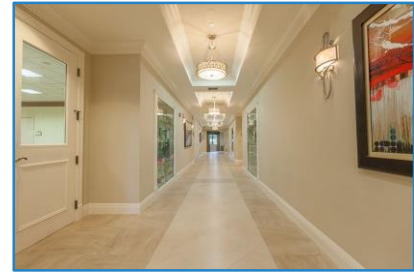
Fall resistance isn't futile.

Rubber flooring: Rubber flooring is easily the best choice for fall resistance. Here's why:

1. Rubber flooring can meet and exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) healthcare flooring requirements for slip resistance. You can increase traction on rubber flooring by adding texture to the floor's surface.
2. Rubber flooring with a certain thickness and give is more forgiving if there is a fall. Don't think of rubber flooring as bouncy like a rubber ball; it does have a little bit of softness to it. It's still sure underfoot, but it will absorb much of the impact of a fall rather than redirecting it back into a patient's body. This reduces the risk of injury.

With rubber flooring, not only is the risk of falling reduced, but any injury resulting from a fall that does occur is minimized. These are the biggest reasons why rubber flooring is used so much in assisted living facilities.

Rubber flooring often is used in hospital hallways, rooms and areas where patients are expected to be traveling. The risk for falls is especially high with older patients, obese patients and patients who are walking for the first time after surgery. Nurses and doctors work long shifts, frequently traveling through rooms and corridors, so you'll want to reduce their risk of falling as well.



Minimize boundaries: Use low-profile flooring so wheelchairs, carts and wheeled beds can be moved without difficulty. On an installation note, you'll want to make sure that shifts from room to room, or from one flooring type to another, don't result in a height change between floors.

Even a height difference of a few centimeters can make it difficult to get equipment across boundaries. Worse yet, patients who have difficulty walking will be more prone to tripping over raised boundaries, heightening the risk of falls and injuries.

Responsible installation can and should avoid any sudden height changes in flooring. Any height change that's necessary due to architecture should be gradualized in the hospital flooring installation.



Slips and falls are among the leading causes of injuries in bathrooms. Non-slip flooring is a must for hospital bathrooms, as patients often struggle with mobility issues.

JEREMY LEWIN



CHAPTER THREE

EFFECTS ON PATIENT MORALE

EFFECTS ON PATIENT MORALE

Make your space feel like a safe place.

Noise control: Resilient flooring installations – i.e., sheet vinyl and sheet rubber – reduce the sound of impacts on the floor. This is a larger concern to patients than many hospitals realize. Patients are in an unfamiliar place and worried about their health. Sometimes they've had trouble sleeping for days or weeks. It's difficult to sleep in such a new environment even before noise is factored in.

Reducing noise propagation has a positive impact on a patient's ability to sleep and to relax. This directly impacts their health and emotional well-being.

Aesthetics: Functionality and cost often win out in terms of hospital flooring choices. But aesthetics have a direct impact on patients, too. Environments with some interesting color and design can make a hospital stay feel less dire. Something as simple as some swishes of color can help a patient feel more hopeful or more communicative.

There's a second element to aesthetics, and this is a feeling of professionalism. If an environment can communicate cleanliness and professionalism, patients feel more confident in their care they're receiving. A doctor has no input on the pattern of the flooring, but a patient's impression about his/her doctor might be less favorable if a floor pattern choice looks dirty or is overly complicated. Choose patterns with clean lines and neutral colors with a mix of bold, bright accents.

One note beyond flooring: Good lighting makes any environment look healthier, more professional and more reassuring.



Jackson Holtz Children's Hospital – Miami, FL: This sheet-vinyl flooring installation involved the laying of circles within circles as colorful design accents.



Custom water-jet fabrication allows for the laying of intricate designs - like long, wavy lines or circles - in multiple colors and sizes.

JEREMY LEWIN



CHAPTER FOUR

EFFECTS ON STAFF MORALE

EFFECTS ON STAFF MORALE

Positive vibes help save lives.

It's important to note that many of the benefits for the patients also carry over to the staff. Less noise helps doctors and nurses focus, especially while working long hours in stressful situations. A visually positive environment is one that healthcare staff can look forward to working in day after day.

One element we don't address above is cushioning. Patients aren't on their feet all day, but staff often are. Cushion underfoot helps reduce foot, leg and back fatigue among healthcare staff. This can be especially important for nurses and transport personnel who are often lifting or supporting patients. Cushioning is another benefit of rubber flooring.





CHAPTER FIVE

HIGH-TRAFFIC FLOORING

HIGH-TRAFFIC FLOORING

Consider the path well traveled.

One of the main reasons resilient flooring is chosen for highly trafficked areas like emergency rooms (ERs) and ICUs is because it's both sterile and durable. Because of this combination of features, resilient flooring is particularly popular in medical offices and specialists' waiting areas.

However, resilient flooring is not only sterile and durable – it can be warmer in appearance. It's easier to make sheet vinyl and sheet rubber flooring look like natural materials, such as wood – an appearance ideal for waiting rooms where people need to be calmed and comforted.



Concrete is versatile in appearance, but it doesn't evoke a natural look the way resilient flooring does. The funny thing about high-traffic flooring is that high-traffic areas are also where patients and families require the most visual reassurance from the surrounding environment.

The wood look typically gives way to something that looks more “clinical” where patients are being directly treated. This is mainly for the patients' benefit, as regardless of the look, resilient flooring is just as contaminant resistant regardless of the appearance chosen.



CHAPTER SIX

INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS

INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS

Don't settle for less than a specialist.

Contractor approval process: When East Coast Flooring & Interiors installs flooring in a hospital setting, its contractors go through an approval process. Let's take the work East Coast Flooring's contractors did in Broward County as an example:

First, the contractors needed certification through Broward Health to work in any of their facilities. This certification requirement is common in any health system that manages a hospital. Health systems have very specific requirements for health, safety and privacy that need to be met.

The certification process often involves background checks and screenings. This is to ensure that patients, their families and the staff are completely safe. There's another reason, too. While flooring contractors have no access to patient data in any way, contractors may work in an area where they can see patients pass by.

There are often expectations that such information and observations are kept private. A contractor doesn't go home at the end of the day and tell someone else about the patients at the hospital. Hospital flooring contractors adhere to and respect the privacy of the health system whenever serving a role in a healthcare facility.

Different health systems may have different requirements. All hospitals and health systems; however, should look for a flooring company with experience installing in hospitals and healthcare facilities. Your needs are unique from any other setting.



Installation needs: Installing flooring in a hospital isn't just a case of tearing up a floor and laying a new one down. Many areas of the hospital are still in active use. This requires that the contractors only remove the flooring that can be replaced by the end of the day. This way your facility is consistently functioning at full capacity.

This may also mean that flooring contractors work night shifts, so that no work is being done during the hours of operation for clinics and specialty departments - keeping patient care from being affected.

Hospital installation also means noise and dust must be minimized. While this is always a concern in any installation, a medical facility requires even greater level of containment and cleanup for patients' health and comfort.

Finally, sanitary flooring also means sanitary installation. East Coast Flooring has even worked in sterile environments that required their contractors to don scrubs. These are all reasonable expectations that a hospital flooring company should be able to fulfill.

THE RIGHT FLOORING

Hospital flooring shouldn't be an afterthought: it is a central component of a smoothly running, hygienic and safe institution. Utilizing the best options for specific areas, and choosing an experienced contractor, will ensure that every aspect of your facility drives toward one goal: exceptional patient care.

GET YOUR FREE ESTIMATE



www.eastcoastfl.com | (954) 321-5721