



WHEN TO REPLACE CONDO FLOORING: A CHECKLIST



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INTRODUCTION

As a condo manager, it seems as if your job never ends. From policies to implement and daily operations to facilitate to conflicts to settle and inspections to perform, there is always a task (or ten) that needs your attention. The flooring in your properties may seem like an afterthought - a job to get to when everything else settles down.

But the flooring can be the “face” of a building. It either welcomes tenants and visitors with a clean, contemporary, elegant aesthetic - or it turns them off with grime, grit, and dated design. How do you know when it’s time to put condo flooring at the top of your to-do list?

This eBook checklist will answer that question, whether your floors are carpet, tile, laminate, luxury vinyl, hardwood, concrete, or a combination of these and other materials.

CHAPTER 1



WHEN TO REPLACE CARPET





CARPET

Carpet is one of the most common flooring materials in condos; in fact, some cities institute an “80/20” rule. That is, 80 percent of the flooring must be carpeted. The primary reason is noise abatement. Carpet also creates a “homey” feel in both individual condos and the common areas (e.g., corridors).

Carpet’s life expectancy varies significantly, with 15 to 20 years at the high end of the range. However, heavy traffic and other factors can limit carpet’s life span. Look for:



Stains, rips, and tears. These are obviously the most visible signs that your carpet needs to go. Even surfaces with anti-stain properties can degrade over time, and when stains take over, it is virtually impossible to remove them entirely.

In addition, when the carpet tears or rips easily and is unraveling at the ends, replacement is a must - not only in terms of aesthetics, but because safety can be compromised. Trips and falls are an even bigger hazard to your properties than 80s patterns or 70s shag.



Odors. One issue with carpets, especially if yours is older, is that the fibers can trap bacteria, dirt, and odors. If you attack a spill immediately, for example, you'll likely have no issue. But if spills linger, odors can begin to take over. If even a deep clean doesn't leave a carpet fully refreshed, consider replacing it.



Excessive Wear. Unless you have a vintage Oriental carpet, wear does not do your flooring any favors. Be on the lookout for carpet that looks threadbare, faded, and thin.

Pro tip for your next carpet: Fibers fade over time and exposure to sunlight speeds up the process. Consider installing blinds in appropriate areas to keep the carpet looking newer longer.



Mold. If you can peel up a section of carpet, give a peek to the underside and floor. See any mold? This can trigger some people's allergic and asthmatic responses, making your property less attractive as a residence. While there are mold abatement methods you can try (e.g., steam cleaning), once mold takes root, this unwelcome visitor is difficult to evict.

CHAPTER 2



WHEN TO REPLACE TILE





TILE

One of the main selling points of tile is that it has an incredible life span. A good porcelain tile can last up to a century, and marbles and granites can surpass that – if they have the proper maintenance and upkeep. Another benefit: if a tile is damaged, you can simply remove and replace individual sections.

But in some cases, you may need to remove and replace tile flooring. When?



Out of production. Removing one tile is a great cost- and time-saver, but what if that style/pattern has gone out of production? In this case, replacing the flooring with another 100+year option is a great investment.



Chips and cracks. Over time, and with wear, even tile can become damaged. A ding can result from a heavy piece of equipment or furniture. Even a dropped cast iron pan can make a chip. A small crack may form, and usually you can just fill this in. But if cracks are deep and extensive, consider a full replacement.



Tenting. Tenting is when the tiles pop up. It can be minor, but it could just as easily become a major tripping hazard.



Loose tiles. Another trip-and-fall danger, loose tiles should be replaced immediately. Both tenting and loose tiles can indicate a foundation or structural issue, so it's always a sound idea to have a contractor come in for an evaluation.

Pro tip for your next tile installation: Problems such as tenting and loose tiles are often the result of the joints, adhesives, and grouts used during the installation process. This time around, work with an experienced flooring contractor to ensure the job is done right now - helping prevent these issues in the future.

“As tile installers, we must work with the expansion joints allowed for by the concrete subcontractor, to prevent post-installation issues such as tenting or cracking.” – Jeremy Lewin, East Coast Flooring & Interiors

CHAPTER 3



WHEN TO REPLACE HARDWOOD





HARDWOOD

Another phenomenal choice in terms of durability - and aesthetics – hardwood flooring is a terrific choice for a broad range of applications.

And again, while hardwood flooring lasts decades, it may need to be replaced:



Excessive movement. Hardwood flooring does squeak occasionally, but if you notice that it's more than once in a while, and that the floor shifts frequently, it's time for a replacement.



Sloping. No amount of re-sanding or refinishing is going to take care of this structural issue. Again, because sloping can indicate a problem with your foundation, have a contractor take a look before you put in a new floor - otherwise you may be dealing with the same issue all over again before too long.



Chipping, stains, and other damage. A big advantage of hardwood is that you can sand and refinish away cosmetic issues. But if more than 30 percent of your planks are damaged, it's quicker, easier, and more cost-effective to replace the entire floor rather than addressing each plank.



Wear. Yes, hardwood has tremendous durability. But if the flooring in your property has been sanded and refinished more than five times, you'll start seeing uneven wear.



Style. Some styles, such as parquet, may seem dated. Even the direction in which the planks are arranged can make a hardwood floor seem like a relic, rather than a treasure. You can opt to upgrade to more modern styles (e.g. wide planks, diagonal placement) and make the space feel roomier at the same time.

Another option to consider is replacing an old oak floor (common in the US) with exciting species such as cork, Brazilian Tigerwood, bamboo.

CHAPTER 4



WHEN TO REPLACE LAMINATE





LAMINATE

When you want the look of wood without the risk of warping, laminate is a top choice. Signs it needs replacing include:



Peeling. There's generally no quick fix or effective repair option for peeling. Your laminate may be near the end of its life or it has been exposed to water or overheating. Either way, consider a new installation.



Peaking. This is just what it sounds like: the floor sticks up and creates a peak where it separates from the floorboard or subflooring.



Cracking. It's fine for your cereal to snap, crackle, and pop - but if your floor does it, it signals the need for a replacement.



Gapping. Once the laminate floorboards pull away from each other to create gaps, it's difficult (and cost-prohibitive) to repair the floor. It's best to replace it entirely and ensure the you rely on an experienced flooring contractor to install the new surface properly.

CHAPTER 5



WHEN TO REPLACE OTHER FLOORING





OTHER FLOORING

In general, look for the same issues with other types of flooring, including concrete, vinyl, and engineered hardwood:



- ✓ Excessive wear
- ✓ Excessive movement
- ✓ Excessive noise
- ✓ Peeling
- ✓ Cracking
- ✓ Lifting and buckling
- ✓ Gapping
- ✓ Moisture damage
- ✓ Excessive staining
- ✓ Mold buildup

CONCLUSION

Not sure if the flooring in your property can be saved or if it should be replaced? Contact the pros at East Coast Flooring & Interiors. We'll give you an objective opinion based solely on the state of the floor. Additionally, we can recommend the best flooring options for particular applications (e.g., entryways, residences, laundry rooms, utility rooms, etc.) and install them properly. This empowers you to maximize durability - and your return on investment.

We know you're busy; we'll help you cross this job off your list so you can get back to work!



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