



THE HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

The Flooring **Project** Playbook

Choose the right floor for every room, measure like a pro, read a quote line by line and know exactly what to expect, from first idea to final walkthrough.

10 chapters

8 printable worksheets

Planner spreadsheet included



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What's inside

Use it in order: each chapter prepares the next. Or jump straight to the chapter you need today.

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Hardwood, engineered, LVP, laminate: honest pros and cons, then room by room

03 Measuring your home

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The cost drivers behind every quote, and how to save without cutting corners

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09 The final walkthrough

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10 Living with your new floor

Care basics by floor type and the records worth keeping

T Worksheets

Project at a glance · Room measurements · Floor scorecard · Quote comparison · Contractor interview · Prep countdown · Final walkthrough · Floor record

About this guide

This guide was written by Vision Flooring LLC, a flooring company in Everett, Washington, led by owner Alex Babko. We have 20+ years of experience and 3,800+ clients behind us. Hardwood refinishing and installation, LVP, laminate, baseboards and floor repair after water damage are our everyday work, and this guide is what we explain to homeowners at their kitchen tables, written down so you can keep it.

One promise: there are **no prices in this guide**. Flooring costs change by region, season and home, and a number printed today would mislead you tomorrow. Instead you'll learn exactly what drives a price, so you can read any quote, anywhere, and know what you are paying for. The planner spreadsheet does the math with your own numbers.



General information, not a substitute for your instructions

Every home, floor and product is different. Your flooring and product manufacturers' instructions, your local building codes and your insurance policy always come first; where they differ from this guide, follow them. Work safely and call a licensed professional for anything you are not sure about.

How to use it

- Read it once start to finish (about an hour), then keep it handy. Every chapter has **"The short version"**: its key points in a few lines.
- Boxes marked **Pacific Northwest note** matter most in damp climates like ours; they are good practice anywhere.
- The worksheets at the back are made to print on letter paper. The spreadsheet that comes with this guide does the math for you.

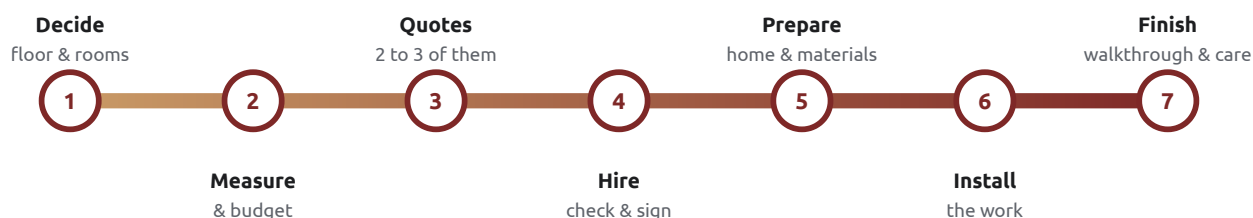
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How a flooring project really goes

Most flooring problems are decided long before installation day: in the choice of floor, the measurements, a vague quote or a rushed start. Here is the whole journey at a glance, so you can see where the important decisions are.

THE SHORT VERSION

- The first four stages happen on paper; that is where projects are won or lost.
- Most problems come from the wrong floor, a vague quote, a hidden subfloor issue or a rushed start.
- Get everything in writing, and give yourself more time than you think.



The seven stages of a flooring project. The first four happen on paper; that is where most money is saved or lost.

The seven stages

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	TYPICAL TIME	THE DECISION THAT MATTERS
1. Decide	Pick which rooms, and which kind of floor suits each one (Chapter 2).	A few evenings	Choosing a floor for how you live, not how it looks in a showroom.
2. Measure & budget	Rough square footage, a material estimate and a budget range (Chapter 3).	An afternoon	Adding waste, trim, transitions and a contingency.
3. Quotes	Two or three contractors visit, measure and send written quotes.	1 to 3 weeks	Asking every contractor to quote the same scope (Chapter 5).
4. Hire	Check license, insurance and reviews; agree on scope, schedule and payments.	A few days	Getting everything in writing before any work starts.

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	TYPICAL TIME	THE DECISION THAT MATTERS
5. Prepare	Order materials, let them acclimate, empty the rooms, plan where you'll live.	1 to 3 weeks	Starting with the house really ready (Chapter 7).
6. Install	Removal, subfloor prep, installation or refinishing, trim.	Days, not weeks, for most homes	Raising questions on the day, not after.
7. Finish	Walkthrough, paperwork, cure times and care.	An hour, then weeks of curing	Inspecting properly and keeping the records (Chapters 9 and 10).

Where projects go wrong

The same few causes come up again and again, and none of them is about skill on installation day:

The wrong floor for the room

Solid hardwood in a basement, laminate in a bathroom, a glossy dark floor in a house with two big dogs. Chapter 2 helps you match each floor to its room.

A vague quote

"Install flooring, 800 sq ft" leaves out removal, subfloor work, transitions and trim. Those come back later as change orders. Chapter 5 fixes that.

A wet or uneven subfloor

Moisture and flatness problems hide under the old floor. A good contractor checks and explains them; a rushed one covers them up.

Rushing the start

Material not acclimated, furniture still in the room, appliances not disconnected, decisions not made. Chapter 7 is the countdown.



The one habit that prevents most problems

Put everything in writing: the scope, the product, what is included and excluded, the schedule, the payments. A good contractor is happy to do this; it protects them too.

How long does the whole thing take?

For a typical home, plan on **three to eight weeks** from first phone call to finished floor. Most of it is waiting: for quotes, for a spot in the contractor's schedule, for material to arrive and acclimate. The work itself is usually days. Special-order materials and busy seasons stretch it. Have a deadline (moving in, a holiday, listing the house)? Count back at least six weeks and start collecting quotes now; the **Project at a glance** worksheet has room for your key dates.

Reading a quote line by line

A good quote answers every question before you have to ask it. Use this checklist with each quote you receive. Anything marked “unclear” is a question for the contractor, in writing, before you sign.

THE SHORT VERSION

- Check all 26 items; anything unclear becomes a written question.
- Quote the same scope with every contractor, then fill the gaps before comparing totals.
- Clear, complete paperwork is the best predictor of a smooth job.

The 26-point quote checklist

#	LINE ITEM	WHAT A CLEAR QUOTE SAYS
1	Rooms and square footage	Which rooms, closets and halls, and the measured square feet.
2	The floor product	Brand, product line, color, size and grade; who supplies it.
3	Material quantity and waste	Square feet ordered, including waste, and who keeps the leftovers.
4	Underlayment, pad or vapor barrier	Which one, and whether the product needs it.
5	Fasteners and adhesives	Nails, staples or glue included in the installation price.
6	Removal of existing floor	What comes up (every layer) and that it is included.
7	Disposal	Hauling and dump fees included.
8	Subfloor preparation included	What standard prep is in the price.
9	Extra prep pricing	How extra leveling or repairs are priced if found (unit price or allowance).
10	Moisture testing	Whether moisture is checked and what happens if it is high.
11	Acclimation	When material is delivered and how long it acclimates inside the home.
12	Furniture moving	Included, priced separately, or done by you.
13	Appliances	Who moves, disconnects and reconnects them (water lines included?).

#	LINE ITEM	WHAT A CLEAR QUOTE SAYS
14	Toilets and fixtures	Bathrooms: removal, new wax ring and reset.
15	Doors	Undercutting door jambs and trimming doors if the floor is higher.
16	Transitions	How many, where, and which type.
17	Baseboards and quarter round	Remove and reinstall, replace, add quarter round; painted or not.
18	Stairs	Number of treads and risers, nosing type, finish.
19	Stain and finish	Refinishing: stain color line, finish type, sheen and number of coats.
20	Dust control	Masking and containment included.
21	Cleanup	Daily and final cleanup.
22	Schedule	Start date, number of days, and when you can use the rooms again.
23	Payment schedule	Deposit, progress and final payments, tied to stages of work.
24	Warranty	Workmanship warranty in writing, plus the manufacturer's.
25	Changes	How change orders are approved (in writing, before the work).
26	License and insurance	Contractor license number on the quote; insurance on request.

Comparing quotes fairly

1 Give every contractor the same scope

Use your notes from Chapters 2 and 3: the rooms, the floor type, and what you want included (removal, furniture, trim). Ask each one to quote all of it.

2 Lay the quotes side by side

Use the **Quote comparison** worksheet or the Quotes tab in the planner. Mark each of the 26 items: included, not included, or unclear.

3 Fill the gaps before you compare totals

For anything not included, ask the contractor for a price, or estimate what it will cost you to have it done. Add it to that quote. Now the totals are comparable.

4 Look past the price

Compare how clearly each contractor explained things, how quickly they answered and what their reviews say. Clear paperwork before the job usually means clear work during it.



Questions to send in writing

- What happens, and how is it priced, if the subfloor needs more work than expected?
- Which items in my house are not included in this price?
- When will the material be delivered, and how long does it acclimate?
- Who will be working in my home, and who is my contact during the job?

Red flags

- ✗ A one-line quote with only a total.
- ✗ Pressure to sign today for a “special price”.
- ✗ A large payment demanded long before any material or work arrives.
- ✗ No license number, or a license you can’t find in your state’s lookup.
- ✗ Cash only, no written agreement, no invoice.
- ✗ Promises that every stain, scratch or crack will disappear (good contractors explain limits honestly).

Quote comparison

Mark each item ✓ included, X not included or ? unclear. For every X and ?, ask for a price and add it before comparing totals.

#	ITEM	CONTRACTOR A	CONTRACTOR B	CONTRACTOR C
1	Rooms and sq ft			
2	Floor product named			
3	Material qty incl. waste			
4	Underlayment / pad / barrier			
5	Fasteners or adhesive			
6	Removal (all layers)			
7	Disposal			
8	Standard subfloor prep			
9	Extra prep pricing			
10	Moisture testing			
11	Acclimation plan			
12	Furniture moving			
13	Appliances			
14	Toilets and fixtures			
15	Door undercuts / trimming			
16	Transitions (how many)			
17	Baseboards / quarter round			
18	Stairs			
19	Stain and finish coats			
20	Dust control			
21	Cleanup			
22	Schedule and duration			
23	Payment schedule			
24	Written warranty			
25	Change order process			
26	License # and insurance			

	CONTRACTOR A	CONTRACTOR B	CONTRACTOR C
Quoted total			
+ missing items			
= Comparable total			

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

The Flooring Project Playbook

You just read a few pages. The complete version has everything below, with every worksheet and the spreadsheet.

- ✓ The Playbook: a step-by-step guide from "which floor?" to the final walkthrough
- ✓ Room-by-room floor chooser for kitchens, baths, basements, stairs, bedrooms and entries
- ✓ The quote checklist: the line items that cause most surprise costs, and how to ask about each
- ✓ Contractor interview questions, license and insurance checks, and the red flags
- ✓ Project Planner spreadsheet: room measurements, boxes to buy, budget and a side-by-side comparison of 3 quotes
- ✓ Printable worksheets: measuring sheet, floor scorecard, prep countdown and final walkthrough

Get the full guide →

visionflooringllc.com/flooring-project-playbook · Instant download · PDF guide + planner spreadsheet

Questions first? Text **425-218-4234**; a real person answers.