



GUIDE FOR PET OWNERS

Floors for **Dogs** and Cats

Choosing a floor your pets can't ruin, protecting the one you have, cleaning up accidents before they stain, and fixing what claws, bowls and wet paws leave behind. From a flooring company that installs, refinishes and repairs them.

7 chapters

Pet floor chooser

Accident cleanup card

Pet floor planner spreadsheet



Vision Flooring LLC · Everett, Washington
visionflooringllc.com

What's inside

No floor is completely pet-proof. But the right floor, the right finish and a few habits make the difference between a floor that looks lived-in and one that looks ruined.

01 What pets do to floors

Claws, accidents, bowls, wet paws and zoomies, and which floors handle each

02 Choosing a pet-friendly floor

LVP, laminate, solid and engineered hardwood compared; hardness, finish, color and texture

03 Hardwood with pets

Finish, sheen and color that hide wear, and recoating before scratches reach the wood

04 Vinyl plank and laminate with pets

Wear layers, grip, seams, mats and bowls

05 Accidents and odors

The first five minutes on every floor type, hidden urine, and how damaged floors are repaired

06 Everyday protection

Nails, mats, paw stations, bowls, crates, litter boxes, gates and traction for older pets

07 Floor projects with pets

Keeping pets safe during work, and the first weeks on a new or refinished floor

T Printables

Pet floor chooser · Accident cleanup card · Protection checklist · Floor and accident log

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.

The cleaning and care rules in this guide are the ones we give our own customers. Floors and finishes differ by brand: where your floor's manufacturer says something different, follow theirs, and check product labels before using any cleaner or odor remover on your floor. For your pet's health and behavior, your veterinarian comes first.



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.

© 2026 Vision Flooring LLC. Licensed to the buyer for personal use. Please don't share or resell the file; send friends to visionflooringllc.com/shop instead. Version 1.0, October 2026.

What pets do to floors

Dogs and cats bring claws, water bowls, muddy paws and the occasional accident. Each one attacks a floor in a different way, which is why the best floor for one household isn't the best for another.

THE SHORT VERSION

- Claws scratch the surface: finish on wood, wear layer on vinyl, melamine on laminate.
- Urine is the most damaging: it etches wood finish, stains the wood, and swells laminate seams.
- Water bowls and wet paws are slow, daily water damage at the same spot.
- Grit on paws acts like sandpaper; running and sliding wears traffic lanes faster.

WHAT PETS BRING	WHAT IT DOES	FLOORS THAT HANDLE IT BEST
Claws	Fine scratches in the finish or wear layer; deeper ones on soft woods	Laminate (hard surface); LVP with a good wear layer; harder wood species with a matte finish
Urine and vomit	Acids etch wood finish and stain the wood; liquid at seams swells laminate; liquid under planks reaches the subfloor	LVP (if cleaned up quickly); any floor cleaned up right away
Water bowls, wet paws	Repeated small spills at the same spot	LVP; anything with a waterproof mat under the bowl
Grit on paws	Dulls the surface like sandpaper	Any floor with mats at the doors and regular cleaning
Running, sliding, jumping	Faster wear in lanes; slipping for older pets	Textured surfaces; runners and rugs where pets run
Digging and chewing	Damage at doors, edges and transitions	Floors where a single board or plank can be replaced



Scratches in the finish aren't scratches in the floor

Most pet scratches on wood live in the finish, not the wood. A screen and recoat removes or blends them and adds a fresh protective coat. Recoating on time is what keeps claws from ever reaching the wood (Chapter 3).

Choosing a pet-friendly floor

For most homes with pets, luxury vinyl plank is the best all-round pick. Hardwood works too, if you accept some wear and plan recoats. Laminate is very scratch-resistant but doesn't like moisture.

THE SHORT VERSION

- LVP: handles accidents, bowls and wet paws well, and is quieter under claws.
- Laminate: tough surface, sensitive wood-fiber core; best where accidents are rare and cleanup is quick.
- Solid hardwood: shows wear but can be recoated and refinished, so it can look new again.
- Engineered hardwood: like solid on top, but most can't be fully sanded again.

	LVP / LVT	LAMINATE	SOLID HARDWOOD	ENGINEERED HARDWOOD
Claws	Good, with a thicker wear layer	Very good	Shows marks in the finish	Shows marks in the finish
Accidents and water	Very good if cleaned up	Weak at the seams	Stains if left	Stains if left
Noise under claws	Quietest	Loudest	Medium	Medium
Renewing it	Replace planks	Replace planks	Recoat; sand and refinish	Recoat; most can't be fully sanded
Grip	Varies: textured is better	Often slippery	Smooth; runners help	Smooth; runners help

Wood hardness (Janka)

The Janka test measures the force needed to press a steel ball halfway into wood. Higher numbers dent less. Commonly published ratings, in pounds-force:

SPECIES	JANKA
American cherry	950
Black walnut	1,010
Red oak	1,290
White oak	1,360
Hard maple	1,450
Hickory	1,820



Hardness isn't everything

Janka measures dents in the wood, not scratches in the finish, and claws mostly scratch the finish. The finish, the sheen, the color and the grain decide how much wear you see. A matte, mid-tone, grainy oak floor often hides pet wear better than a glossy, dark, very hard one.

Test samples with your pet

Put samples down where your pets walk for a few days. Drag a key lightly across each one. Spill a little water and see how fast it shows at the edges. Your own test beats any brochure.

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

Floors for Dogs and Cats

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

- ✓ What claws, accidents, bowls, wet paws and zoomies do to each kind of floor
- ✓ Choosing a pet-friendly floor: LVP, laminate, solid and engineered hardwood compared, with wood hardness ratings
- ✓ Hardwood with pets: the sheen, color and grain that hide wear, and recoating on time
- ✓ Vinyl plank and laminate with pets: wear layers, grip, seams, mats and bowls
- ✓ Accidents and odors: the first minutes on every floor type, hidden urine damage and how it is repaired
- ✓ Everyday protection and floor projects with pets in the house
- ✓ Printables: pet floor chooser, accident cleanup card, protection checklist and floor log

Get the full guide →

visionflooringllc.com/pets-and-floors · Instant download · PDF guide + pet floor planner

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