

CALGARY FLOOR INSTALLERS



Floor Refinishing

Hardwood sanding, staining, and refinishing for
Calgary character homes and older floors

21 Expert Answers from Floor IQ

calgaryfloorinstallers.com/construction-brain

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Can I refinish only one room of hardwood without it looking different from the rest in Calgary?

Refinishing just one room is possible, but achieving a perfect match with existing floors in other rooms is extremely challenging and often results in a noticeable difference. The success depends on several factors specific to your floors and Calgary's climate conditions.

Color Matching Challenges

The biggest hurdle is that hardwood changes color over time due to UV exposure, oxidation, and wear patterns. Calgary's intense UV radiation at 1,045 meters elevation accelerates this aging process, especially in south and west-facing rooms. A 10-year-old oak floor will have developed a patina that's nearly impossible to replicate on a freshly sanded surface. Even using the exact same stain color, the newly refinished room will likely appear lighter and more vibrant than the aged floors in adjacent rooms.

Wood species also affects matching success. **Oak and maple** are more forgiving because their grain patterns help camouflage slight color variations. **Cherry and walnut** are much more challenging because they develop rich, deep tones over time that can't be rushed. If your floors were installed with a clear finish (no stain), matching is somewhat easier since you're working with the wood's natural color evolution.

Practical Considerations for Calgary Homes

Calgary's extreme seasonal humidity swings add another complication. The newly refinished room will have fresh polyurethane that may react differently to Calgary's 15-20% winter humidity compared to the aged finish in other rooms. You might notice slight differences in how the floors expand and contract, particularly at doorway transitions.

When Single-Room Refinishing Works Best

Your best chance of success is when the room can be naturally separated from others - like a master bedroom, home office, or dining room with doorways and transitions. **Avoid refinishing high-traffic areas like hallways or open-concept spaces** where the color difference will be most obvious. If the existing floors are heavily worn or damaged in just one area, the improvement from refinishing may outweigh the slight color variation.

Professional Assessment is Critical

A experienced refinishing contractor can assess your specific floors and provide samples showing likely color outcomes. They may suggest custom stain blending or multiple coats to better match the existing patina. Some contractors can even apply accelerated aging techniques, though results vary.

The Alternative Approach

Many Calgary homeowners find it more cost-effective to refinish the entire main floor at once (\$3-6 per square foot) rather than attempting room-by-room matching. This ensures uniform color and finish throughout your home and typically provides better long-term value.

Need help finding a flooring professional? Calgary Floor Installers can match you with experienced hardwood refinishing contractors who understand Calgary's unique climate challenges and can assess whether single-room refinishing will work for your specific floors.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Universal Slate International Inc.
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- Radon Lab

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Q2

How much does hardwood floor refinishing cost in Calgary per square foot?

Hardwood floor refinishing in Calgary typically costs between \$3 and \$6 per square foot, depending on the condition of the floors, the type of finish selected, and whether a colour change is involved. A straightforward sand-and-refinish job on floors in reasonable condition — where the wood just needs freshening up with three coats of polyurethane and no stain change — tends to land in the \$3 to \$4.50 per square foot range. Adding a custom stain colour or dealing with floors that have deep scratches, pet stains, or water damage pushes costs toward the \$5 to \$6 range or higher.

For a typical Calgary home with 800 to 1,200 square feet of hardwood, you're looking at roughly **\$2,400 to \$7,200 for a full refinishing project**. That includes sanding with progressively finer grits (usually 36, 60, 80, and 100), edge sanding along walls and in closets, applying stain if desired, and finishing with three coats of polyurethane. Most refinishing professionals in Calgary also include basic furniture moving for the rooms being refinished, though some charge a separate fee of \$200 to \$400 for extensive furniture handling.

Additional costs to be aware of include repairs to individual damaged boards (\$15 to \$40 per board replaced), filling large gaps or cracks (\$1 to \$2 per square foot surcharge), and removing old carpet tack strips or staples from previous coverings (\$0.50 to \$1.50 per square foot). If your home was built before 1985, the existing finish may contain lead-based coatings, which require special containment and disposal procedures that can add \$1 to \$2 per square foot.

Calgary's refinishing market is moderate by Canadian standards — roughly 10 to 15 percent below what you'd pay in Toronto or Vancouver for the same work, and comparable to Edmonton rates. One factor that can affect pricing is the time of year. Spring and summer are peak season for refinishing, and the best crews book up weeks in advance. Booking during the quieter fall months can sometimes yield better scheduling and occasionally modest discounts.

Refinishing is one of the best value propositions in flooring — it costs a fraction of full replacement and can make decades-old floors look brand new. If your existing hardwood has enough wear layer remaining and the subfloor is solid, refinishing almost always makes more financial sense than tearing out and replacing. Browse flooring contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=flooring to get estimates on your refinishing project.

Q3

Can I refinish my original hardwood floors in a Kensington character home?

Absolutely — original hardwood floors in Kensington character homes are almost always excellent candidates for refinishing, and restoring them is one of the best investments you can make in these charming older properties. Many Kensington homes date from the 1910s through the 1950s, and the hardwood flooring from that era was typically solid 3/4-inch red or white oak, fir, or maple — dense, tight-grained wood that has held up remarkably well for decades and often has plenty of material left for sanding.

The first step is assessing how much wear layer remains. A 3/4-inch solid hardwood floor can typically withstand **three to five full sand-and-refinish cycles** over its lifetime, with each sanding removing about 1/32 to 1/16 of an inch. If your floors have only been refinished once or twice in 70-plus years, there's plenty of wood left. A professional can measure the remaining thickness above the tongue-and-groove joint to confirm. Even floors that look rough on the surface — with scratches, worn finish, and minor staining — usually sand down to beautiful clean wood underneath.

There are a few considerations specific to older Kensington homes. First, check for asbestos in any areas where the original hardwood was covered with vinyl tile. Those 9x9-inch tiles and the black mastic adhesive

underneath, common in Calgary homes built before 1980, frequently contain asbestos and must be professionally tested before removal. Second, older homes often have areas where boards have been patched or replaced with slightly different species or dimensions — a skilled refinisher can blend these during sanding and staining so the patches become virtually invisible. Third, original fir flooring (common in the earliest Kensington homes) is softer than oak and requires a gentler sanding approach with finer grits to avoid gouging.

Calgary's dry winter climate and chinook-driven humidity swings are particularly relevant for these older floors. After refinishing, the wood will respond to seasonal humidity changes, and gaps between boards during winter are normal and expected in a character home — they close up again in spring. Running a whole-home humidifier at **35 to 45 percent relative humidity** year-round will minimize this seasonal movement and protect your freshly refinished investment.

Budget roughly **\$3.50 to \$5.50 per square foot** for refinishing original hardwood in a character home, which accounts for the extra care needed on older, potentially uneven subfloors and the board-by-board repairs that are commonly required. The result is well worth it — restored original hardwood adds significant character and resale value to Kensington properties. Get matched with a flooring professional experienced in heritage home refinishing through the Calgary Construction Network.

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- Home Style Supplies
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Jk Stucco

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How many times can I sand and refinish hardwood floors in my Calgary home?

Standard 3/4-inch solid hardwood floors can be sanded and refinished three to five times over their lifespan, giving them a practical life of 50 to 100 years with proper care. Each full sanding removes approximately 1/32 to 1/16 of an inch of wood, so the total number of refinishes depends on the original thickness of the flooring and how aggressively each sanding was performed.

The critical measurement is the thickness of wood remaining **above the tongue-and-groove joint**. On a standard 3/4-inch solid hardwood plank, there's roughly 5/16 of an inch of usable wear layer above the tongue. Once sanding approaches that joint, the floor can no longer be safely refinished — you'll start exposing the tongue, weakening the connection between boards, and creating an uneven surface. A professional refinisher can measure this with a thickness gauge to tell you exactly how many refinishes your floors have left.

Engineered hardwood is a different story. The wear layer on engineered hardwood ranges from 1mm to 6mm depending on the product. Thinner wear layers (1-2mm) generally cannot be sanded at all — at best, they can handle a light screen-and-recoat. Mid-range wear layers (3-4mm) can typically handle one full sand-and-refinish. Premium engineered with 5-6mm wear layers can handle two to three refinishes, approaching the versatility of solid hardwood.

Calgary's climate makes this question especially important because our extreme dry winters and chinook-driven humidity swings put more stress on hardwood finishes than most Canadian cities. Finish coats wear faster when the wood underneath is constantly expanding and contracting through Calgary's seasonal humidity cycle of 15-20 percent in winter to 45-55 percent in summer. This means Calgary hardwood floors tend to need refinishing more frequently than identical floors in more humid, stable climates — roughly every 7 to 12 years depending on traffic levels and maintenance.

To maximize the number of refinishes your floors can support, consider a **screen-and-recoat** (also called a buff-and-coat) between full sandings. This process lightly abrades the existing finish and applies a fresh topcoat without removing any wood. At \$1.50 to \$2.50 per square foot in Calgary, it's significantly cheaper than a full refinish and can extend the life of each sanding by three to five years. Think of it as touching up the finish rather than starting from scratch.

If your floors are nearing the end of their sandable life, a flooring professional can assess whether one more refinish is feasible or whether replacement is the better path forward. Find local flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network to get an honest assessment of your floors' remaining life.

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Q5

What finish type lasts longest on hardwood floors in Calgary's dry climate?

Water-based polyurethane with a high solids content is the longest-lasting and best-performing finish for hardwood floors in Calgary's dry climate, particularly products marketed as "commercial grade" or "professional grade" with 30 percent or higher solids content. These finishes form a hard, flexible film that can better handle the constant expansion and contraction Calgary's extreme humidity swings impose on wood flooring.

The reason finish performance matters so much in Calgary comes down to our unique climate conditions. **Chinook winds can swing indoor humidity dramatically within hours**, and Calgary winters regularly push indoor relative humidity down to 15-20 percent. This constant wood movement stresses the finish film — a rigid finish will crack and flake, while a finish with some flexibility will stretch and compress with the wood. This is why finish selection in Calgary is more important than in cities with stable humidity.

Water-based polyurethane (brands like Bona Traffic HD, Loba Supra, or Pallmann X-96) offers the best combination of durability, clarity, and flexibility for Calgary conditions. It dries clear without yellowing, cures relatively quickly (24-48 hours for light traffic), and modern commercial-grade formulations are extremely hard-wearing — lasting 8 to 12 years in moderate-traffic areas before needing a recoat. The flexibility of these high-end water-based products handles Calgary's wood movement better than most alternatives. Expect to pay \$4 to \$5.50 per square foot for a full sand-and-refinish with a premium water-based polyurethane.

Oil-based polyurethane is the traditional choice and still has its place. It penetrates the wood slightly more than water-based, creating a warm amber tone that many homeowners prefer on red oak and walnut. It's extremely durable — lasting 10 to 15 years in normal traffic — but it yellows noticeably over time, takes 3 to 5 days to fully cure, and produces strong fumes during application. In Calgary's dry winter air, oil-based finishes can cure

unevenly if humidity drops below 25 percent during application, which is a practical concern from November through March.

Hardwax oil finishes (like Rubio Monocoat or Osmo) have become increasingly popular in Calgary. These penetrating finishes soak into the wood rather than forming a film on top. They're excellent at handling wood movement because there's no surface film to crack — the finish moves with the wood. The trade-off is lower scratch resistance and the need for periodic maintenance coats every 2 to 4 years in high-traffic areas. They're ideal for homeowners who prefer a natural, matte look and don't mind occasional spot maintenance.

For most Calgary homes, a **three-coat system with commercial-grade water-based polyurethane** in a satin or matte sheen offers the best balance of longevity, appearance, and climate performance. Calgary Floor Installers can match you with refinishing professionals who understand which finishes perform best in our demanding climate.

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- Turnbull masonry
- Durable Decks
- Ardco Construction

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Q6

Is oil-based or water-based polyurethane better for floor refinishing in Calgary?

Water-based polyurethane is the better choice for most Calgary floor refinishing projects, offering faster cure times, lower odour, no yellowing, and excellent performance in our dry climate — though oil-based still has specific advantages that make it the right pick in certain situations.

Water-based polyurethane advantages in Calgary are significant. It dries much faster — typically 2 to 4 hours between coats versus 8 to 24 hours for oil-based — meaning a three-coat job can be completed in a single day rather than stretching over three to four days. This matters enormously if you're living in the home during refinishing, because you're displaced from the rooms for less time. Water-based finishes produce far less odour

and off-gassing, which is especially relevant in Calgary's cold months when opening windows for ventilation isn't practical. Modern commercial-grade water-based products like Bona Traffic HD or Loba Supra are extremely durable and rival oil-based polyurethane in hardness and wear resistance. They dry crystal clear and stay that way — no yellowing over time.

Oil-based polyurethane still has its place. It produces a warm, amber tone that deepens over time, which many homeowners find beautiful on species like red oak and walnut. This ambering effect is a deliberate aesthetic choice, not a defect. Oil-based penetrates slightly deeper into the wood grain, creating a richer appearance. It's also marginally more forgiving of application imperfections — brush marks and roller lines level out better during the longer drying time. Some refinishing professionals prefer oil-based for older character homes where the warm golden tone complements the home's period character.

Calgary-specific considerations tip the scale toward water-based. Our winter indoor humidity regularly drops to 15-20 percent, and oil-based polyurethane requires a minimum of 30-40 percent relative humidity for proper curing. Applying oil-based finish in a Calgary home during December or January without supplemental humidification can result in a cloudy, improperly cured finish that peels prematurely. Water-based products are less sensitive to low humidity during application, though maintaining at least 30 percent RH is still recommended for optimal results. Additionally, chinook-driven temperature and humidity swings can disrupt the slow curing process of oil-based finishes, potentially causing fisheye, bubbling, or uneven sheen.

Cost comparison: water-based refinishing runs about **\$3.50 to \$5.50 per square foot** in Calgary, while oil-based is typically \$3 to \$5 per square foot. The material cost for water-based is slightly higher, but the reduced labour time (fewer days on site) often offsets the difference. Oil-based jobs take longer because the crew must return on consecutive days for each coat.

For the vast majority of Calgary refinishing projects, a high-quality commercial-grade water-based polyurethane in three coats will deliver the best combination of durability, appearance, and climate performance. Browse flooring contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory to find refinishing professionals who can recommend the right finish for your specific floors and aesthetic preferences.

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- WestAim Construction Ltd.
- UR COWRY CABINETS
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc
- One OAK Flooring

- The Original Workshop

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How long do I need to stay off refinished hardwood floors in Calgary's dry air?

Plan to stay off your refinished hardwood floors for a minimum of 24 hours for light foot traffic in socks, and wait a full 72 hours before placing furniture back and resuming normal use. Full curing takes 7 to 14 days in Calgary's dry climate, during which you should avoid area rugs, high heels, and heavy furniture without felt pads.

These timelines depend heavily on the type of finish applied. **Water-based polyurethane** dries to the touch in 2 to 4 hours and can handle careful sock-foot traffic after 24 hours. Furniture can go back at 48 to 72 hours. However, the finish doesn't reach full hardness for 7 to 14 days, so you'll want to be gentle during that curing window — no dragging furniture, no high-heel shoes, no wet mopping, and no placing area rugs that could trap moisture against the curing finish. **Oil-based polyurethane** takes significantly longer — allow 24 to 48 hours before any foot traffic, 72 to 96 hours before furniture, and a full 2 to 4 weeks for complete cure.

Calgary's dry winter air directly affects these cure times. Polyurethane cures through a chemical reaction that requires some moisture in the air. When indoor humidity drops to 15-20 percent during Calgary's heating season, the cure process slows noticeably. A finish that cures in 7 days at 40 percent humidity might take 10 to 14 days at 20 percent humidity. This is why many refinishing professionals in Calgary recommend running a humidifier in the refinished rooms during the curing period, maintaining at least **30 to 40 percent relative humidity**. This not only speeds the cure but also produces a harder, more durable finish.

Chinook events during the curing window can create problems. A sudden chinook warming can spike indoor humidity for a day or two, then drop it back down dramatically. These rapid humidity changes during the critical first week of curing can cause the finish to blush (turn milky white in patches) or develop micro-cracking. If a chinook is forecast during your curing window, try to keep indoor conditions as stable as possible by closing windows and running your HVAC system on a consistent setting.

Practical tips for the curing period: wear only clean socks when walking on the floors — no bare feet (body oils can affect the finish) and no shoes. Place felt pads on all furniture legs before moving anything back. Avoid placing area rugs for at least 2 weeks after the final coat, as trapped moisture and reduced airflow can affect the cure. Don't wet mop — dry Swiffer-style dust mopping only for the first two weeks. And if you have pets, keep their nails trimmed and consider booties for the first week if possible.

A professional refinishing crew will give you a specific timeline based on the product they use and the current conditions in your home. Get matched with experienced refinishing professionals through Calgary Floor Installers for a free estimate.

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- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Keystone Exteriors
- Venkor Group Inc
- Greenstone landscaping solutions

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Q8

How much does it cost to refinish and stain hardwood floors darker in Calgary?

Refinishing hardwood floors with a custom dark stain in Calgary typically costs \$4.50 to \$6.50 per square foot, which is roughly \$1 to \$1.50 more per square foot than a clear or natural refinish without a colour change. For a typical Calgary home with 800 to 1,200 square feet of hardwood, that works out to approximately **\$3,600 to \$7,800 for the complete project** including sanding, staining, and three coats of polyurethane.

The additional cost for a colour change comes from the extra labour involved. **Staining adds a full additional step between sanding and finishing.** The floor must be sanded to completely bare wood with no trace of the old finish — any remaining old stain or polyurethane will cause blotchy, uneven colour absorption. The stain itself must be applied evenly and consistently across the entire floor, which requires skill and speed since stain dries quickly and overlapping wet and dry areas creates lap marks. Most professionals apply the stain by hand with lambswool applicators or rags, working in manageable sections. After the stain dries (typically 12-24 hours), three coats of polyurethane go on top.

Choosing a darker stain colour involves some important considerations specific to Calgary's climate.

Darker stains — popular choices include Jacobean, Dark Walnut, Ebony, and Espresso — show dust, pet hair, and scratches more readily than lighter natural finishes. In Calgary's dry climate, the fine dust that blows in regularly and the white mineral deposits from our hard water are more visible on dark floors. On the positive side, darker stains do an excellent job of hiding the natural colour variations, mineral streaks, and patching that are common in older Calgary homes.

Species matters for stain absorption. Red oak takes stain beautifully and evenly, which is why it's the most popular choice for colour changes. White oak also stains well and is especially stunning with grey or cool-toned

dark stains. Maple, birch, and fir are problematic — they absorb stain unevenly due to their tight grain, often producing a blotchy appearance. If you have maple floors and want them darker, a skilled professional may recommend a water-popping technique (dampening the sanded wood before staining) to open the grain and improve absorption, or using a dye-based stain instead of a pigmented stain.

UV fading is more pronounced on dark-stained floors at Calgary's elevation of 1,045 metres, where UV radiation is more intense than at sea level. South- and west-facing rooms with dark-stained hardwood will show fading more noticeably than lighter floors. UV-filtering window film or low-E glass is strongly recommended if you're going dark.

A colour change refinish is a significant transformation that can completely update the look of your home. Find local flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network to get estimates from professionals experienced with custom stain work.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc
- Amar Homes Inc
- The Original Workshop
- Canadian Closet
- Venkor Group Inc

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Q9

Can I refinish engineered hardwood floors or do they need full replacement?

Many engineered hardwood floors can be refinished, but it depends entirely on the thickness of the wear layer — the solid hardwood veneer on top of the plywood or HDF core. This is the single most important factor, and it varies enormously between products. Some engineered hardwood can handle multiple refinishes, while others cannot be sanded at all.

The wear layer thickness determines your options. Engineered hardwood sold in Calgary ranges from about 1mm to 6mm of real wood on top. Products with a **1 to 2mm wear layer** — common in builder-grade and lower-

cost engineered flooring — generally cannot be sanded. At best, they can handle a very light screen-and-recoat (buffing the existing finish and applying a fresh topcoat), which refreshes the appearance without removing any wood. Products with a **3 to 4mm wear layer** can typically handle one careful full sand-and-refinish. Premium engineered hardwood with a **5 to 6mm wear layer** can handle two to three full refinishes, approaching the versatility of solid hardwood.

If you're unsure about your floor's wear layer thickness, there are a few ways to find out. Check the original purchase documentation or manufacturer specifications if available. Look for a label on the underside of a plank — sometimes accessible at a floor vent or transition strip. Or have a professional measure the thickness above the plywood core at an exposed edge. **Never attempt to sand engineered hardwood without knowing the wear layer thickness** — sanding through the veneer into the core destroys the floor and requires full replacement.

Screen-and-recoat is often the best option for thin-veneer engineered hardwood. This process costs about **\$1.50 to \$2.50 per square foot** in Calgary and involves lightly abrading the existing finish with a buffer and fine-grit screen, then applying one or two fresh coats of polyurethane. It won't remove deep scratches or change the stain colour, but it restores the sheen and provides a fresh protective layer. It's an excellent maintenance step every 5 to 8 years to extend the life of your engineered floors.

Full refinishing of engineered hardwood with adequate wear layer costs about the same as solid hardwood refinishing — **\$3.50 to \$5.50 per square foot** in Calgary. The key difference is that the sanding must be done with a lighter touch. An experienced refinisher will use finer grits and fewer aggressive passes to preserve as much wear layer as possible. This is not a job for an amateur — sanding through the veneer takes only seconds with a drum sander and is irreversible.

If your engineered floors have a wear layer too thin for sanding and a screen-and-recoat won't address the damage, replacement is the path forward. The good news is that engineered hardwood is an excellent choice for Calgary's climate, offering better dimensional stability than solid hardwood through our chinook-driven humidity swings. Browse flooring contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory to get a professional assessment of your engineered floors' refinishing potential.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Bracha Concrete & Coatings Inc.
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing
- Wise Abatement

- Makki Abatement

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What is the cost to screen and recoat hardwood floors versus full sand in Calgary?

A screen-and-recoat in Calgary costs \$1.50 to \$2.50 per square foot, while a full sand-and-refinish runs \$3 to \$6 per square foot — making a screen-and-recoat roughly half to one-third the cost of a complete refinishing. For a typical 1,000-square-foot Calgary home, that's the difference between \$1,500 to \$2,500 for a screen-and-recoat versus \$3,000 to \$6,000 for a full sanding.

The two processes serve very different purposes, and choosing the right one depends on the current condition of your floors. **A screen-and-recoat** (also called buff-and-coat) uses a floor buffer with a fine abrasive screen to lightly scuff the existing finish, then applies one or two fresh coats of polyurethane on top. It does not remove any wood — it simply refreshes the protective coating. The entire process can often be completed in a single day, with the floors ready for sock-foot traffic in 24 hours. This is the right choice when your floors have minor surface scratches, dulling, and wear in traffic paths but the finish is still intact with no bare wood showing through.

A full sand-and-refinish strips everything down to bare wood using a drum sander and edger, progressing through coarse to fine grits (typically 36, 60, 80, and 100). This removes all existing finish, stain, scratches, gouges, and surface damage. It's the only option when the floor has deep scratches reaching the wood, worn-through areas where bare wood is visible, water stains penetrating beyond the finish, or when you want to change the stain colour. A full refinishing typically takes 3 to 5 days from start to walkable, with full cure requiring 7 to 14 days.

Here's the critical decision point for Calgary homeowners: a screen-and-recoat only works if the existing finish coat is intact and bonded to the wood. If the finish is peeling, flaking, or worn through to bare wood — which happens faster in Calgary's dry climate due to the constant expansion and contraction from chinook-driven humidity swings — the new coat won't bond properly over the damaged areas and will peel off within months. A professional can assess your floors and tell you honestly which approach will work.

Think of screen-and-recoat as maintenance and full refinishing as renovation. Ideally, you'd do a screen-and-recoat every 3 to 5 years in high-traffic areas to maintain the finish, and a full sand-and-refinish every 10 to 15 years when accumulated wear overcomes what a recoat can address. This maintenance approach maximizes the total lifespan of your hardwood by preserving the wear layer — each screen-and-recoat extends the interval before a full sanding is needed.

Need help deciding which approach is right for your floors? Calgary Floor Installers can match you with a refinishing professional for a free assessment and estimate.

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Q11

Should I refinish or replace worn hardwood floors in my Hillhurst bungalow?

In almost every case, refinishing the original hardwood floors in a Hillhurst bungalow is the better choice — it costs a fraction of replacement, preserves the home's character, and the results can be stunning. Most Hillhurst bungalows date from the 1920s through the 1950s, and the original hardwood flooring from that era is typically solid 3/4-inch red oak, white oak, or fir that has decades of sandable life remaining.

The cost comparison strongly favours refinishing. Refinishing existing hardwood in Calgary runs **\$3 to \$6 per square foot**, while tearing out the old floors and installing new hardwood costs **\$8 to \$18 per square foot** when you factor in demolition (\$1.50 to \$3/sqft), disposal, subfloor preparation, and new material plus installation. For a typical Hillhurst bungalow with 700 to 1,000 square feet of hardwood, that's roughly \$2,100 to \$6,000 for refinishing versus \$5,600 to \$18,000 for replacement. That's a savings of \$3,500 to \$12,000 or more.

When refinishing makes sense — which is most of the time: the floors are structurally sound with no significant rot or water damage to the subfloor; there's enough wear layer remaining for sanding (most Hillhurst originals have been refinished once or twice at most, leaving plenty of material); and the boards are tight with no excessive warping or cupping. Even floors that look terrible on the surface — deeply scratched, stained, worn through the finish in traffic paths — typically sand down to beautiful clean wood underneath.

When replacement becomes the better option: the subfloor underneath has structural damage from water, plumbing leaks, or termite/carpenter ant activity; the hardwood has been sanded so many times that the wear layer above the tongue is too thin to sand again (rare in Hillhurst homes); large sections of boards are missing, cracked, or irreparably damaged; or you want to switch to a completely different material like LVP or tile for lifestyle reasons.

Hillhurst-specific considerations: Many of the earlier bungalows in Hillhurst have original fir flooring rather than oak. Fir is softer and shows wear more readily, but it sands beautifully and has a warm, distinctive grain that many homeowners love. It does require a gentler sanding approach and a harder finish coat to protect the softer wood. Some Hillhurst bungalows also have areas where the original hardwood was covered with vinyl tile or linoleum — check for asbestos before removing any overlay in homes built before 1980, as 9x9-inch vinyl tiles and black mastic adhesive commonly contain asbestos fibres.

Calgary's dry climate and chinook humidity swings will affect the refinished floors, so maintaining **35 to 45 percent indoor humidity** year-round with a whole-home humidifier is important to protect your investment. Find experienced refinishing professionals through the Calgary Construction Network who have worked on heritage homes in established inner-city neighbourhoods like Hillhurst.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

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- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Premium Built Structures
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc
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Q12

How much does dustless floor refinishing cost in Calgary?

Dustless hardwood floor refinishing in Calgary typically costs \$4 to \$7 per square foot, which represents a premium of roughly **\$0.75 to \$1.50 per square foot over conventional sanding**. For a typical Calgary home with 800 to 1,200 square feet of hardwood, expect to pay \$3,200 to \$8,400 for a dustless refinishing job including sanding, optional staining, and three coats of polyurethane.

The premium is justified by the specialized equipment involved. **Dustless sanding systems** use commercial-grade drum and edger sanders connected to powerful HEPA-filtered vacuum systems that capture 95 to 99 percent of the dust at the point of generation. The equipment itself represents a significant investment for the refinishing company — a complete dustless system costs \$15,000 to \$30,000 — and the HEPA filters and collection bags are ongoing

consumables. This equipment cost is reflected in the per-square-foot pricing.

"Dustless" is more accurately described as "dust-minimized." No system captures 100 percent of the sanding dust, and there will always be some fine particles, particularly from edge sanding along walls and in closets where the vacuum attachment is less effective. However, a quality dustless system reduces airborne dust by 95 percent or more compared to conventional sanding. The difference is dramatic — instead of a thick layer of fine wood dust coating every surface in your home, you'll have minimal residue confined mostly to the room being sanded.

In Calgary, dustless refinishing is especially valuable for several reasons. Many Calgary homeowners refinish their floors while living in the home, and dustless systems make this far more practical by keeping the rest of the house relatively clean. For homeowners with respiratory conditions, allergies, or young children, dust reduction is a meaningful health benefit. Calgary's dry winter air can make fine wood dust particularly irritating to airways, and conventional sanding in a sealed-up winter home can create unhealthy air quality for days.

When comparing quotes from Calgary refinishing companies, ask specifically what dustless system they use. Some companies advertise "dustless" but use only a shop vacuum attached to their sander, which captures a fraction of what a true HEPA-filtered dustless system manages. A legitimate dustless operation uses purpose-built sanding equipment with integrated vacuum ports and a separate industrial HEPA filtration unit — not a retrofit. Ask to see the equipment or photos of it.

The quality of the finished result should be identical between dustless and conventional sanding — the difference is entirely in the mess during the process. Both methods sand the wood to the same standard and accept the same finishes. If the price premium fits your budget, dustless is the more comfortable option, especially for occupied homes. Get matched with dustless refinishing professionals through Calgary Floor Installers for a free estimate on your project.

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- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Radon Lab
- Eshine Cleaning Services
- UR COWRY CABINETS
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Can I refinish hardwood floors in winter in Calgary with all the windows closed?

Yes, you can refinish hardwood floors in winter in Calgary — professionals do it regularly — but it requires careful planning around ventilation, humidity control, and product selection. Winter refinishing is completely viable and is actually one of the less busy seasons for flooring professionals, which can mean better scheduling availability.

The biggest challenge with winter refinishing in Calgary is **ventilation for finish fumes**. Oil-based polyurethane produces strong VOC fumes that require significant ventilation — multiple windows open and cross-ventilation with fans. At -25 to -35 degrees Celsius, opening windows for extended periods is simply not practical and creates its own problems (frozen pipes, extreme energy waste, and cold temperatures that prevent the finish from curing properly). This is the primary reason why **water-based polyurethane is the strongly preferred finish for winter refinishing in Calgary**. Water-based products produce far lower VOC levels and much less odour, making closed-window application manageable with indoor air circulation from HVAC fans and a few box fans for air movement.

Calgary's extremely low winter humidity creates a second challenge. Indoor relative humidity in Calgary homes during winter regularly drops to 15-20 percent, and polyurethane finishes — both oil and water-based — cure best at 30-50 percent RH. Low humidity slows the cure, can cause the finish to become brittle, and may produce a hazy or cloudy appearance. The solution is to **run a humidifier in the refinished rooms during the curing period**, targeting at least 35 percent relative humidity. Many Calgary refinishing professionals bring their own humidifiers for winter jobs.

Temperature control is actually an advantage in winter. Unlike summer work where you might be at the mercy of a hot or humid day, winter allows you to control the indoor environment precisely with your thermostat. Most polyurethane products cure best at 18-24 degrees Celsius, and maintaining a consistent temperature is straightforward in a well-heated Calgary home. Keep the thermostat steady — avoid setback programs during the curing period — and the finish will cure evenly.

The sanding phase is unaffected by winter conditions since it doesn't involve fumes or chemical curing. If you opt for a dustless sanding system, the sealed-up nature of a winter home actually works in your favour — there's no wind blowing dust around and the HEPA filtration can clean the indoor air effectively.

Practical winter tips: schedule the work during a mild spell if possible, as even briefly cracking a window or two during finish application helps enormously; run your furnace fan continuously during curing to keep air circulating; and plan to stay out of the refinished rooms for a full 48 to 72 hours since water-based finishes cure somewhat slower in low humidity. Browse flooring contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory who have experience with winter refinishing projects.

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- Royland Stucco
- Turnbull masonry
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Q14

What is the best time of year to refinish hardwood floors in Calgary?

Late spring through early fall — specifically May through September — is the ideal window for hardwood floor refinishing in Calgary, with the best conditions typically falling in June and September. That said, professional refinishers work year-round in Calgary, and winter jobs are entirely feasible with the right preparation.

The reason spring and fall are optimal comes down to Calgary's climate. **Temperature and humidity are the two factors that most affect finish quality and cure time.** In May through September, Calgary's outdoor temperatures are mild enough to open windows for ventilation during finishing, which dramatically improves air quality and speeds the cure. Indoor humidity levels are naturally closer to the 35-50 percent range that polyurethane finishes prefer for optimal curing. The moderate temperatures of spring and fall (15-22 degrees Celsius indoors without the cooling system fighting to keep up) provide ideal curing conditions.

June is arguably the single best month for refinishing in Calgary. Temperatures are comfortable, humidity is moderate, the long daylight hours give refinishing crews maximum working time, and chinook events have ended for the season. September is similarly excellent — warm enough for ventilation, humidity levels are still reasonable, and it's before the heating season drives indoor humidity down to winter lows.

July and August work well too, but Calgary can experience hot days (30+ degrees) that may cause water-based finishes to dry too quickly, potentially trapping bubbles or creating lap marks. Experienced professionals adjust their application technique and work in smaller sections during hot spells.

Winter refinishing (November through March) is the most challenging due to Calgary's extreme dryness (indoor humidity dropping to 15-20%) and the inability to open windows for ventilation at -25 to -35 degrees. However, it's absolutely doable with water-based polyurethane and supplemental humidification. Winter is also the slow season for refinishing companies, so you may find **better availability and occasionally slightly lower pricing**.

Spring chinook season (March and April) deserves a caution. Chinook events can swing temperatures 20 to 30 degrees in hours, causing rapid indoor humidity fluctuations that can affect a curing finish. If you schedule a spring refinish, be prepared for the possibility that a chinook event during the critical 48-72 hour curing window may require extra attention to indoor climate control.

Booking timing matters. Calgary's refinishing professionals book up quickly for the May through September prime season. If you want work done during the ideal window, start getting quotes and scheduling in February or March. Waiting until May to call often means a 4 to 6 week wait. Need help finding a flooring installer? Calgary Floor Installers can match you with refinishing professionals for free through the Calgary Construction Network.

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- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services
- Jk Stucco
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc

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Q15

How much does it cost to repair and refinish water-damaged hardwood in Calgary?

Repairing and refinishing water-damaged hardwood floors in Calgary typically costs \$5 to \$12 per square foot for the affected area, depending on the severity of the damage and how many boards need replacement. Minor water staining that's limited to the finish surface can be addressed during a standard refinish at \$3 to \$6 per square foot, but damage that has penetrated into the wood itself requires board replacement and significantly more labour.

The cost breaks down based on damage severity. Surface-level water stains — dark rings or cloudy spots where water sat on the finish but didn't penetrate the wood — can usually be sanded out during a normal refinish with no additional cost beyond the standard \$3 to \$6 per square foot. This is the best-case scenario and is common with minor spills that were cleaned up within a day or two.

When water has penetrated through the finish and into the wood — causing dark black staining in the grain — the affected boards need to be treated with oxalic acid (wood bleach) at a surcharge of about **\$1 to \$2 per square foot**, or the boards may need to be replaced entirely. Individual board replacement costs **\$15 to \$40 per board** depending on the species and difficulty of weaving new boards into the existing pattern. A plumbing leak that damaged 50 to 100 square feet, requiring 20 to 30 boards replaced plus full refinishing of the room, might cost **\$2,000 to \$4,000**.

Severe water damage — from flooding, long-term leaks, or burst pipes — can escalate costs substantially. If the subfloor underneath is damaged (swollen, delaminating, or showing mould growth), subfloor repair adds **\$2 to \$6 per square foot** before any flooring work begins. Mould remediation, if needed, must be completed before flooring work starts and is a separate cost typically handled by a specialized remediation company. In cases where more than 30 to 40 percent of the floor area has boards that are cupped, buckled, or black-stained beyond recovery, full replacement may become more cost-effective than extensive repair — a refinishing professional can give you an honest assessment.

Calgary-specific considerations for water damage recovery: Our dry climate actually helps with the drying process after water damage — hardwood in a Calgary home dries out faster than in humid climates. However, the wood must be dried slowly and evenly to prevent additional cracking and splitting. Rushing the drying process with heaters in Calgary's already dry air can cause the boards to shrink rapidly and crack. After water exposure, give the wood at least 2 to 4 weeks to reach equilibrium moisture content before any sanding begins — a professional will verify with a moisture metre that the wood is at 6-9 percent moisture content, which is appropriate for Calgary's climate.

Insurance may cover water damage repair. If the damage resulted from a sudden event like a burst pipe or appliance failure, your homeowner's insurance may cover the repair and refinishing costs. Document everything with photos before any cleanup begins. Find local flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network who have experience with water damage repair and can provide the documentation your insurance company needs.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- One OAK Flooring
- Universal Slate International Inc.

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Is it worth refinishing cheap builder-grade hardwood floors or better to replace?

In most cases, refinishing builder-grade hardwood is absolutely worth it and delivers excellent value — even inexpensive hardwood cleans up remarkably well after a professional sand-and-refinish. The cost savings compared to replacement are substantial, and the results are often surprising to homeowners who assumed their floors were beyond help.

The term "builder-grade" in Calgary typically refers to **2-1/4 inch red oak strip flooring or basic 3/4-inch select grade hardwood** installed in new construction during the 1990s through 2010s. While these floors lack the wide planks and premium grain selection of high-end hardwood, they're made from the same solid wood species and have the same 3/4-inch thickness as premium products. That means they have full refinishing potential — the same three to five sand-and-refinish cycles as any solid hardwood.

The math overwhelmingly favours refinishing. Refinishing builder-grade hardwood costs **\$3 to \$5 per square foot** in Calgary. Tearing it out and replacing with new mid-range hardwood or engineered hardwood costs **\$8 to \$14 per square foot** including demolition, disposal, subfloor prep, and installation. For a 1,000-square-foot home, that's \$3,000 to \$5,000 for refinishing versus \$8,000 to \$14,000 for replacement — a savings of \$5,000 to \$9,000 or more. Even if you add a custom stain colour change to completely transform the look (adding \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot), refinishing remains far more economical.

When replacement makes more sense than refinishing builder-grade floors: if the flooring is engineered hardwood with a thin wear layer (2mm or less) that can't be meaningfully sanded; if the builder used a very low-quality product with excessive gaps, loose boards, or subfloor adhesion failures; if there's significant water damage to the subfloor requiring tear-out; or if you strongly prefer a completely different material like LVP or wide-plank engineered for aesthetic or performance reasons in Calgary's climate.

A colour change during refinishing can dramatically transform builder-grade floors. That pale, generic 1990s red oak that looks dated can become rich and contemporary with a Jacobean, Dark Walnut, or grey-toned stain. Many Calgary homeowners are stunned by how different their "cheap builder floors" look after sanding down to fresh wood and applying a modern stain colour. Red oak in particular takes stain beautifully and evenly, making it one of the best species for colour transformation.

One caveat about builder-grade floors in Calgary's climate: lower-grade hardwood sometimes has more sapwood content, which is less dimensionally stable than heartwood and may show slightly more seasonal movement in Calgary's dry winters. Maintaining **35 to 45 percent indoor humidity** year-round is especially important for builder-grade floors. A good refinish with three coats of commercial-grade water-based polyurethane will protect the wood and give you another 10 to 15 years of beautiful performance. Get matched with a refinishing

professional through Calgary Floor Installers to see what your builder-grade floors can become.

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- The Original Workshop
- Home Style Supplies
- WestAim Construction Ltd.
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
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Q17

How do chinook humidity changes affect freshly refinished floors in Calgary?

Chinook events are one of Calgary's most significant challenges for freshly refinished hardwood floors, and understanding their impact can help you protect your investment during the critical curing period. A chinook can swing outdoor temperatures 20 to 30 degrees Celsius in just a few hours — from -25 to +10 in a single afternoon — and this rapid temperature change causes dramatic indoor humidity fluctuations that directly affect both the curing finish and the wood underneath.

During the curing period (the first 7 to 14 days after finishing), chinooks pose the greatest risk.

Polyurethane finishes cure through a chemical cross-linking process that is sensitive to temperature and humidity changes. When a chinook arrives and rapidly raises indoor humidity from a winter low of 15-20 percent to 35-40 percent or higher, the curing finish can absorb moisture unevenly, potentially causing **blushing** — a milky, cloudy appearance in patches where moisture became trapped in the partially cured film. When the chinook passes and temperatures plunge back down, the sudden drop in humidity causes the partially cured finish to dry too quickly on the surface while remaining soft underneath, which can lead to wrinkling or poor adhesion.

The wood itself responds to chinook humidity swings independently of the finish. When humidity spikes during a chinook, hardwood planks absorb moisture and expand. When the chinook passes and dry conditions return, the wood contracts. During the first 48 to 72 hours after finishing, while the final coat is still soft, this wood movement can cause tiny stress cracks in the finish called **micro-checking**. These hairline cracks in the finish coat may not be visible immediately but can become dirt traps over time and lead to premature finish failure in high-

traffic areas.

How to protect freshly refinished floors during chinook season (primarily October through April): Keep your thermostat at a consistent temperature — avoid setback programs during the curing period. Run a whole-home humidifier to maintain steady **35 to 40 percent relative humidity** regardless of outdoor conditions. Keep windows and exterior doors closed to buffer indoor conditions from the rapid outdoor changes. If you don't have a whole-home humidifier, place portable humidifiers in the refinished rooms and monitor humidity with a digital hygrometer.

After the finish has fully cured (14 days or more), chinook effects shift from finish concerns to wood movement concerns. Hardwood floors in Calgary experience more seasonal expansion and contraction than floors in virtually any other major Canadian city due to the combination of extreme dry winters and repeated chinook cycling. This means minor gaps between boards during winter are normal and expected, and they close up when humidity rises. This ongoing seasonal movement is why premium, flexible finish products perform better long-term in Calgary than rigid budget finishes.

Timing your refinishing project to avoid peak chinook season is ideal — June through September provides the most stable conditions. If you must refinish during chinook season, a professional with Calgary experience will know to monitor conditions and adjust accordingly. Find experienced refinishing professionals through the Calgary Construction Network who understand how Calgary's unique climate affects their work.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

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- Venkor Group Inc
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Q18

Can I change the stain colour of my existing hardwood floors during refinishing?

Yes, changing the stain colour is one of the most popular reasons Calgary homeowners choose to refinish their hardwood floors, and it can completely transform the look of your home. During a full sand-and-refinish, the old finish and existing stain are sanded away entirely, exposing bare wood that can accept any new stain colour you choose — from natural clear coat to deep ebony and everything in between.

The process involves sanding through all existing finish and stain down to **completely bare, clean wood**. This is essential because any remaining old stain will interfere with the new colour, causing blotchiness and uneven absorption. A professional refinisher will sand through progressively finer grits — typically 36, 60, 80, and 100 — until the wood is uniformly bare. The new stain is then applied to the raw wood, allowed to dry for 12 to 24 hours, and sealed with three coats of polyurethane.

Colour change adds roughly \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot to the cost of a standard refinish, bringing the total to approximately **\$4.50 to \$6.50 per square foot** in Calgary. The additional cost covers the stain material, the extra labour for even application, and the additional drying time between staining and finishing. For a 1,000-square-foot home, a colour-change refinish runs \$4,500 to \$6,500.

Wood species affects stain results significantly. Red oak is the champion of stain absorption — its open grain takes colour evenly and deeply, making it the easiest species to transform. White oak also stains beautifully, particularly with trending grey and cool-toned colours. Maple and birch are notoriously difficult to stain evenly due to their tight, closed grain — they tend to absorb stain in blotches rather than uniformly. If you have maple floors and want a colour change, your refinisher may recommend **water-popping** (dampening the sanded wood to open the grain before staining) or using a dye-based stain instead of a pigmented stain for more even penetration.

Popular stain colour trends in Calgary right now include cool-toned greys and greige (grey-beige), which pair well with the modern farmhouse and contemporary aesthetics popular in Calgary renovations. Dark walnut and Jacobean remain perennial favourites for a rich, traditional look. Natural or "raw" looks using matte-finish clear coats or white-washed effects are gaining popularity in newer developments. Going lighter — from a dark existing stain to a natural or blonde finish — is possible but may require wood bleaching for an additional \$1 to \$2 per square foot if the original stain has penetrated deeply.

Request a stain sample before committing. Any professional refinisher will apply test patches of your chosen colour in an inconspicuous area so you can see exactly how the stain looks on your specific floors under your home's lighting. Stain colours look dramatically different on various wood species and under different light sources — what looks perfect in the showroom may look completely different in your south-facing living room with Calgary's intense natural light. Get matched with a refinishing professional through Calgary Floor Installers who can show you colour options on your actual floors.

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- Keystone Exteriors
- Durable Decks
- One OAK Flooring
- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Dealtwith.

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How much should I budget to refinish all the hardwood floors in a 2000 square foot Calgary home?

For a 2,000-square-foot Calgary home, budget \$6,000 to \$12,000 for a complete hardwood floor refinishing project, with most homeowners landing in the \$7,000 to \$10,000 range for a professional job including sanding, finishing, and standard preparation work. The exact cost depends on the current condition of your floors, the finish type selected, whether you're changing the stain colour, and how much preparation work is needed.

Here's how the budget breaks down. Not all 2,000 square feet of a home will be hardwood — bathrooms, kitchens, and some bedrooms may have tile, carpet, or vinyl. A typical 2,000-square-foot Calgary home usually has between 1,000 and 1,500 square feet of hardwood flooring on the main floor and upper level. At **\$3 to \$6 per square foot** for refinishing, that core sanding and finishing cost comes to \$3,000 to \$9,000.

Standard refinish (no colour change): For floors in reasonable condition needing a fresh sand and three coats of water-based polyurethane, expect **\$3 to \$4.50 per square foot** — or \$3,000 to \$6,750 for 1,000 to 1,500 square feet of hardwood. This is the most common scenario and the sweet spot for value.

Refinish with custom stain colour: Add \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot for a stain change, bringing the total to **\$4.50 to \$6.50 per square foot** — or \$4,500 to \$9,750. Popular in Calgary for updating dated 1990s-era golden oak to contemporary darker or grey-toned finishes.

Dustless refinishing: Premium for dust-minimized sanding adds roughly \$0.75 to \$1.50 per square foot, bringing a standard job to **\$4 to \$6 per square foot** — highly recommended if you're living in the home during the work.

Additional costs to include in your budget: Furniture moving runs \$300 to \$600 for a full home. Trim and baseboard removal and reinstallation (if needed) adds \$2 to \$4 per linear foot. Individual board repairs cost \$15 to \$40 per board. Subfloor levelling or repair in problem areas runs \$2 to \$6 per square foot where needed. These ancillary costs typically add \$500 to \$2,000 to the project total depending on the home's condition.

A realistic all-in budget for most Calgary homes: \$7,000 to \$10,000 covers refinishing 1,200 square feet of hardwood with a quality water-based finish, moderate board repairs, furniture moving, and standard preparation. Add \$1,500 to \$2,000 if you want a stain colour change throughout.

Money-saving tips: Do the furniture moving yourself to save \$300 to \$600. Remove carpet from rooms that have hardwood underneath yourself (but stop immediately if you find 9x9-inch vinyl tile — test for asbestos before removing). Get three quotes from refinishing professionals and compare not just price but also the specific products they use and their warranty terms. Booking during the slower fall or winter months may yield slightly better pricing.

Browse flooring contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=flooring to get competitive quotes for your whole-home refinishing project.

Q20

What is the price to sand and refinish red oak floors in a Calgary home?

Sanding and refinishing red oak floors in Calgary costs \$3 to \$5.50 per square foot for a natural finish, or \$4.50 to \$6.50 per square foot with a custom stain colour. Red oak is the most common hardwood species in Calgary homes and one of the easiest and most rewarding to refinish — its open grain sands smoothly, takes stain beautifully, and shows dramatic improvement after refinishing.

For a typical Calgary room-by-room breakdown: refinishing a **living room** (250 to 350 square feet) runs \$750 to \$1,925; a **main hallway** (100 to 200 square feet) costs \$300 to \$1,100; a **bedroom** (150 to 250 square feet) runs \$450 to \$1,375; and a **full main floor** (600 to 1,000 square feet) comes in at \$1,800 to \$5,500. These figures include the complete process — sanding through four grits, optional staining, and three coats of polyurethane.

Red oak is the ideal species for refinishing for several reasons that are especially relevant in Calgary. Its open, pronounced grain absorbs stain more evenly and deeply than tight-grained species like maple, making colour changes predictable and consistent. Red oak is hard enough (1,290 on the Janka hardness scale) to withstand the sanding process without gouging, yet soft enough that sanding progresses efficiently. The open grain also means finish coats bond mechanically to the wood surface, creating excellent adhesion that holds up well through Calgary's seasonal humidity cycling.

Calgary-specific considerations for red oak refinishing: Our dry winter climate (15-20 percent indoor humidity) causes red oak to show seasonal gapping between boards — this is normal and expected, and the gaps close when humidity rises in spring and summer. After refinishing, maintaining **35 to 45 percent relative humidity** year-round with a whole-home humidifier will minimize this movement and protect your new finish. Red oak's warm pinkish undertone can intensify with UV exposure at Calgary's 1,045-metre elevation, especially in south-facing rooms. If you want to maintain a consistent colour, UV-filtering window treatments are worth considering.

Finish selection for red oak in Calgary: Water-based polyurethane keeps red oak's natural colour and doesn't add the amber yellowing that oil-based finishes develop over time. If you prefer the classic warm amber look that many homeowners associate with traditional hardwood, oil-based polyurethane enhances red oak's warmth beautifully — just be aware it will deepen and yellow further over the years. For a modern, contemporary look, a matte or satin water-based finish on natural (unstained) red oak is the current trend in Calgary renovations.

Stain options that work exceptionally well on red oak include Jacobean (rich dark brown), Dark Walnut (warm deep brown), Provincial (medium warm tone), Classic Grey (contemporary cool tone), and custom blends that your refinisher can mix to your exact preference. Red oak accepts virtually any stain colour evenly, making it the most versatile species for colour transformation. Get matched with a flooring professional through Calgary Floor Installers for a free estimate on your red oak refinishing project.

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- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- One OAK Flooring
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- WestAim Construction Ltd.

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Q21

Do I need to move out of my Calgary home during hardwood floor refinishing?

You don't necessarily need to move out, but you will need to plan around the disruption — and whether staying is practical depends on the scope of the project, the finish type being used, and who's in the household. Many Calgary families successfully stay in their homes during refinishing by tackling the project in phases, room by room, while others find it more comfortable to stay with family or in a hotel for 3 to 5 days.

If water-based polyurethane is used (the most common choice in Calgary), staying in the home is quite manageable. Water-based finishes produce significantly lower VOC fumes than oil-based products, and the odour dissipates within hours of application. You'll need to stay out of the rooms being refinished for 24 to 48 hours, but you can use other areas of the home — sleep upstairs while the main floor is being done, then reverse. Most refinishing crews in Calgary are experienced at phasing work to accommodate homeowners who stay in the home.

If oil-based polyurethane is used, moving out for 3 to 5 days is strongly recommended. Oil-based finishes produce heavy fumes that permeate the entire home, not just the rooms being finished. The odour can cause headaches, nausea, and respiratory irritation, and it lingers for 48 to 72 hours after the final coat. In Calgary's winter

months, when you can't open windows to ventilate, oil-based fumes in a sealed house are particularly unpleasant and potentially harmful.

Household members who should definitely vacate during refinishing regardless of finish type include infants and young children, pregnant women, elderly family members with respiratory conditions, anyone with asthma or chemical sensitivities, and pets — particularly birds, which are extremely sensitive to airborne chemicals, and dogs and cats who walk on the floors and lick their paws.

Practical logistics for staying in your Calgary home during refinishing: Move furniture from the rooms being refinished to a garage, basement, or rooms that aren't being done. Set up a temporary sleeping area in a room that won't be touched for the first few days. Use plastic sheeting to seal doorways between the work area and living areas — this also helps contain dust during the sanding phase. Stock up on groceries beforehand if the kitchen floor is being refinished, or plan to eat out. Keep HVAC running for air circulation but close or cover vents in the work area during sanding to prevent dust from circulating through the ductwork.

Dustless sanding systems make staying in the home significantly more comfortable during the sanding phase. The 95+ percent dust capture means the rest of your home stays relatively clean, which is a major quality-of-life improvement over conventional sanding where fine wood dust infiltrates every room.

Timeline for a typical whole-home refinish in a Calgary home: Day 1 is sanding, Day 2 is staining (if applicable), Days 2-4 are three coats of finish with drying time between coats. Light sock-foot traffic is usually possible after 24 hours from the final coat, with furniture going back at 72 hours. Calgary Floor Installers can connect you with refinishing professionals who will work around your schedule and living situation.

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- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- Home Style Supplies
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc
- Turnbull masonry

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