

CALGARY FLOOR INSTALLERS



Hardwood Flooring

Solid and engineered hardwood installation, species selection, and maintenance for Calgary homes

20 Expert Answers from Floor IQ

calgaryfloorinstallers.com/construction-brain

Table of Contents

1. How much does hardwood flooring installation cost in Calgary per square foot?
2. Is solid hardwood or engineered hardwood better for Calgary homes with low winter humidity?
3. What happens to solid hardwood floors during Calgary chinook temperature swings?
4. Can I install hardwood flooring in my Calgary basement or is it too risky with moisture?
5. How long does it take to install hardwood floors in a typical Calgary bungalow?
6. What width of hardwood plank is best for homes in Calgary with 15 percent winter humidity?
7. Should I acclimate hardwood flooring longer in Calgary because of the dry climate?
8. What is the price difference between nail-down and glue-down hardwood installation in Calgary?
9. Are character homes in Inglewood and Hillhurst worth restoring original hardwood floors or replacing?
10. How much does oak hardwood flooring cost compared to maple in Calgary?
11. Do I need a whole-home humidifier to protect hardwood floors through Calgary winters?
12. What hardwood species holds up best against gapping in Calgary's dry winters?
13. Can I install hardwood over concrete slab in a Calgary main floor without moisture issues?
14. How much should I budget for hardwood flooring in a 1500 square foot Calgary home?
15. Is it worth paying extra for site-finished hardwood versus prefinished in Calgary?
16. What direction should hardwood planks run in a Calgary split level home?
17. How do I prevent hardwood floor cupping in a Calgary home without air conditioning?
18. What is the cost to install herringbone hardwood flooring in Calgary?
19. Should I replace builder-grade laminate with hardwood in my Cranston home for resale value?
20. How much more does wide plank hardwood cost versus standard strip in Calgary?

How much does hardwood flooring installation cost in Calgary per square foot?

Hardwood flooring installation in Calgary typically costs between \$6 and \$15 per square foot fully installed, depending on the species, plank width, installation method, and subfloor condition. Calgary sits in a moderate pricing tier for Canadian flooring markets — roughly 10-20% below what you would pay in Toronto or Vancouver, but 20-30% above smaller markets like New Brunswick.

Oak remains the most popular and affordable hardwood option in Calgary, running **\$6-\$10 per square foot installed**. This includes material, underlayment where applicable, and professional labour. **Maple** is a step up at **\$8-\$12 per square foot**, offering a harder surface that resists denting well in high-traffic areas. **Walnut**, the premium domestic species, runs **\$12-\$15 per square foot installed** and delivers that rich, dark character that many Calgary homeowners love in formal living spaces and dining rooms.

These per-square-foot figures cover the core installation, but there are additional costs that catch many homeowners off guard. **Old flooring removal** adds \$1-\$3 per square foot — carpet is the cheapest to pull up, while removing old tile or glued-down hardwood is significantly more labour-intensive. **Subfloor repair or levelling** runs \$2-\$6 per square foot where needed, and in older Calgary communities like Brentwood, Lakeview, or Glamorgan, subfloor work is common. **Baseboards and trim** add \$3-\$8 per linear foot installed, and most installers recommend replacing or at minimum removing and reinstalling trim during a hardwood project. **Furniture moving** typically runs \$200-\$600 depending on how much needs to be shifted.

For a typical Calgary bungalow or two-storey home with 1,200 to 1,500 square feet of hardwood, you are looking at a **total project cost of roughly \$9,000 to \$18,000 for mid-range oak or maple**, and \$15,000 to \$25,000 or more for premium walnut or wide-plank engineered hardwood. These figures assume reasonably good subfloor conditions — if the subfloor needs significant levelling or repair, budget an additional 15-25% on top.

One important consideration specific to Calgary is that **engineered hardwood often delivers better long-term value than solid hardwood** in our climate. Engineered hardwood costs \$7-\$14 per square foot installed — comparable to solid — but handles Calgary's extreme winter dryness and chinook-driven humidity swings far better. Many Calgary flooring professionals now recommend engineered as the default hardwood choice, reserving solid hardwood for homes with whole-home humidification systems.

Labour costs in Calgary fluctuate somewhat with the oil and gas sector — when the energy industry is booming, skilled trades are in higher demand and rates trend upward. Getting quotes from multiple installers is always wise. If you are planning a hardwood project, **Calgary Floor Installers can match you with local flooring contractors for free estimates** through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Eshine Cleaning Services
- Calgary Custom Concepts
- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Dealtwith.
- Durable Decks

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q2

Is solid hardwood or engineered hardwood better for Calgary homes with low winter humidity?

Engineered hardwood is the better choice for the vast majority of Calgary homes, and the reason comes down to one factor that affects us more than almost any other city in Canada: extreme seasonal humidity swings. Calgary's indoor relative humidity regularly drops to **15-20% during winter months**, even with a furnace-mounted humidifier running, and then rebounds to 40-50% or higher in summer. That cycle puts enormous stress on solid hardwood.

Solid hardwood is a single piece of wood, and wood is a natural material that expands when it absorbs moisture and shrinks when it dries out. In Calgary's winter, solid hardwood planks shrink noticeably — gaps of 1-2mm or more between boards are common by February. When humidity returns in spring, the planks swell back, and if the expansion exceeds the original gap spacing, you get **cupping, crowning, or buckling**. Over years of Calgary's aggressive expansion-contraction cycling — made worse by chinook events that can swing temperatures 20-30 degrees in a single afternoon — solid hardwood takes a beating. Glue joints stress, finish coats crack, and gaps become a permanent feature rather than a seasonal one.

Engineered hardwood is built specifically to resist this movement. It has a real hardwood wear layer on top — typically 2-6mm of the same oak, maple, or walnut you would get in solid — bonded to multiple layers of plywood or HDF arranged in cross-grain orientation. This cross-ply construction counteracts the wood's natural tendency to expand and contract in one direction, reducing seasonal movement by **50-80% compared to solid hardwood**. The result is dramatically less gapping in winter and virtually no cupping in summer.

From a practical standpoint, engineered hardwood also gives you more installation flexibility. It can be **glued down over concrete** — which means it works on main floors built on slab, a common construction method in newer Calgary communities like Mahogany, Seton, and Livingston. Solid hardwood must be nailed or stapled to a plywood subfloor and cannot go over concrete without a plywood overlay, which adds cost and raises the floor height.

The cost difference is minimal. **Solid hardwood runs \$6-\$15 per square foot installed in Calgary, while engineered runs \$7-\$14.** For that comparable investment, you get a floor that looks identical, can be refinished 1-3 times depending on wear layer thickness, and performs dramatically better through Calgary's punishing climate cycle.

If you are determined to install solid hardwood, it can work beautifully in a Calgary home — but you will need a **whole-home humidifier maintaining 35-45% relative humidity year-round**, which is an ongoing cost for filter replacements and increased water usage. Without that humidity control, solid hardwood in Calgary is a maintenance headache. For most homeowners, engineered hardwood delivers the same beauty with far less worry. **Browse flooring contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory** to get professional advice tailored to your specific home.

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

- The Original Workshop
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Dealtwith.
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q3

What happens to solid hardwood floors during Calgary chinook temperature swings?

Chinook winds are one of the most damaging weather phenomena for hardwood flooring in Canada, and they are uniquely Calgary's problem. When a chinook rolls in, outdoor temperatures can swing from -25 to +10 degrees Celsius within hours. Inside your home, that rapid temperature change causes a sudden shift in relative

humidity — the air quickly absorbs or releases moisture, and your hardwood floor reacts almost in real time.

During a typical winter cold snap, your solid hardwood planks have already shrunk due to Calgary's extremely low indoor humidity (often 15-20%). The gaps between boards are at their widest, the wood has stabilized in its contracted state, and everything is in a dry equilibrium. Then a chinook arrives. The sudden warming causes indoor humidity to spike — sometimes jumping 10-15% in a matter of hours. The surface of the wood absorbs this moisture and expands, but the core of the plank is still dry and contracted. This creates **uneven expansion across the thickness of the board, which is the textbook cause of cupping** — the edges of each plank rise higher than the centre, creating a washboard-like surface.

When the chinook passes and temperatures plummet again — often within 24-48 hours — the process reverses. The surface dries and contracts while the core still holds some moisture, potentially causing **crowning** (the opposite of cupping, where the centre of the plank is higher than the edges). Over a single Calgary winter, a home might experience **four to eight chinook events**, and each one puts the hardwood through a rapid expansion-contraction cycle that ages the floor prematurely.

Over years, this repeated chinook cycling causes several visible problems. **Finish coats develop micro-cracks** as they flex with the wood, eventually losing their protective seal. **Glue joints in engineered hardwood can weaken**, though engineered products handle this far better than solid. **Click-lock connections in floating installations can loosen**, leading to gaps at the end joints. And in solid hardwood, you may see **checking** — tiny surface cracks that run along the grain — particularly in wider planks that have more cross-grain movement.

The best defences against chinook damage are choosing **engineered hardwood over solid** (its cross-ply construction resists rapid movement), keeping **indoor humidity as stable as possible** with a whole-home humidifier set to 35-45% year-round, and selecting **narrower planks** (3.25-inch strips show less individual movement than 5-7 inch wide planks). If you already have solid hardwood, **avoid the temptation to fill winter gaps** — the wood needs that space to expand when humidity returns, and filled gaps lead to buckling.

Calgary is one of the few cities in Canada where chinook awareness is a genuine factor in flooring selection. A knowledgeable local installer understands these dynamics and will recommend products and installation methods that account for them. **Get matched with a flooring professional who understands Calgary's climate through the Calgary Construction Network.**

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

- Keystone Exteriors
- Mike's Restoration Service

- Calgary Custom Concepts
- Besademolition
- Durable Decks

[View all contractors ?](#)

Can I install hardwood flooring in my Calgary basement or is it too risky with moisture?

Solid hardwood should never be installed in a Calgary basement — the moisture risk is simply too high.

Basements are below grade, meaning the concrete slab is in direct contact with the ground, and moisture continuously migrates upward through the concrete via capillary action and vapour diffusion. Even in Calgary's relatively dry climate, basement slab moisture is a year-round reality, and it is the enemy of solid wood flooring.

Calgary's frost depth exceeds 1.2 metres, and during winter the ground surrounding your foundation freezes and thaws repeatedly. This frost heave cycle can cause subtle slab movement and cracking, which telegraphs through rigid flooring. Combined with the moisture present at the slab-floor interface, solid hardwood in a Calgary basement will **cup, warp, develop mould on the underside, and eventually rot**. This is not a question of if, but when — even with a vapour barrier in place, solid hardwood cannot handle the persistent below-grade moisture conditions.

Engineered hardwood is a viable option for Calgary basements, but only with proper preparation. Because its cross-ply construction resists moisture-driven expansion far better than solid wood, engineered hardwood can work over concrete if you follow critical steps. First, **moisture testing is mandatory** — a calcium chloride test or relative humidity probe test must confirm that moisture vapour emission is below 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet per 24 hours. If it exceeds that threshold, you need a moisture mitigation system before any flooring goes down. Second, a **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier** or a specialized moisture-blocking underlayment must be installed over the slab. Third, the engineered hardwood should be **glued down rather than floated** for maximum stability over concrete.

That said, the **best flooring options for Calgary basements** are materials that are inherently moisture-resistant. **Luxury vinyl plank (LVP) and SPC** are the top recommendation at \$4-\$9 per square foot installed — they are 100% waterproof, handle Calgary's humidity extremes without gapping or cupping, and are comfortable underfoot with attached cork or foam backing. **Porcelain tile** is another excellent basement option at \$8-\$25 per square foot, especially paired with electric radiant heated flooring to take the chill off the cold slab. **Carpet with a moisture barrier and quality pad** works well in basement bedrooms and recreation rooms at \$3-\$8 per square foot.

Before installing any flooring in a Calgary basement, have the slab inspected for cracks, active moisture, and levelness. Many older Calgary homes — particularly in communities like Ogden, Forest Lawn, and Acadia built in the 1950s-1970s — have basement slabs that were poured without modern moisture barriers, making them especially prone to moisture migration. If you are finishing a basement or replacing existing flooring, **Calgary Floor Installers can connect you with local flooring contractors who understand Calgary's below-grade conditions** — get matched for free through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Makki Abatement
- Calgary Custom Concepts
- Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing
- The Original Workshop
- Canadian Closet

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q5

How long does it take to install hardwood floors in a typical Calgary bungalow?

A full hardwood flooring installation in a typical Calgary bungalow takes 3 to 5 days of active work, not counting the critical acclimation period beforehand. For a standard 1,000-1,200 square foot bungalow main floor — common in established Calgary communities like Brentwood, Lake Bonavista, Killarney, and Bowness — here is what a realistic timeline looks like.

Acclimation comes first and is non-negotiable in Calgary. Hardwood flooring must sit inside your home, out of the box and stacked with spacers for air circulation, for a minimum of 48-72 hours before installation. In Calgary, most flooring professionals recommend **5-7 days of acclimation**, especially during the heating season from October through April when indoor humidity sits at 15-25%. The wood needs time to reach equilibrium with your home's moisture content. If you skip this step, the planks will shrink after installation as they dry to Calgary's low indoor humidity, creating unsightly gaps that are entirely preventable.

Day 1 typically involves old flooring removal and subfloor preparation. Pulling up carpet, laminate, or old hardwood takes most of a day for a full bungalow. If there is vinyl or tile to remove, it may take longer — and in pre-1980s Calgary homes, those old 9x9-inch vinyl tiles should be tested for asbestos before anyone touches them. Once the old flooring is out, the subfloor is inspected and prepared. The subfloor must be flat to within 3mm over 1.8 metres. High spots are ground down, low spots are filled with levelling compound, and any damaged plywood is replaced. Subfloor prep is the foundation of a successful installation and should never be rushed.

Days 2-3 are the main installation. An experienced two-person crew can install **200-350 square feet of hardwood per day** depending on the installation method (nail-down is faster than glue-down), room layout

complexity, and how many cuts are required around doorways, closets, and transitions. A straightforward bungalow with a relatively open floor plan goes faster than one with multiple small rooms, tight hallways, and complex angles. For a 1,000-1,200 square foot bungalow, expect 2-3 days of installation work.

Day 4-5 covers trim, transitions, and final details. Installing or reinstalling baseboards, quarter round, door casings, and transition strips between rooms takes a full day or more. If you are having site-finished hardwood (sanded and finished in place rather than prefinished), add another **2-3 days for sanding, staining, and applying three coats of polyurethane**, with drying time between coats.

All told, a prefinished hardwood installation in a Calgary bungalow runs about **one week from acclimation start to finished floor**. Site-finished hardwood extends that to **10-14 days**. Winter installations in Calgary may require slightly longer acclimation due to the extremely low humidity. Planning your installation when you can vacate the space for a few days makes the process smoother for everyone. **Need a timeline estimate for your specific home? Get matched with a local flooring installer for free through the Calgary Construction Network.**

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

- Dealtwith.
- Amar Homes Inc
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Royland Stucco
- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q6

What width of hardwood plank is best for homes in Calgary with 15 percent winter humidity?

Narrower planks — 3.25 to 4 inches wide — are the safest choice for solid hardwood in Calgary homes dealing with 15% winter humidity, because narrower boards show less individual movement and produce smaller gaps when they shrink. If you prefer the look of wider planks (5-7 inches), engineered hardwood is strongly recommended over solid to handle Calgary's extreme dryness.

The physics are straightforward. Wood expands and contracts primarily across its width, not its length. A 5-inch wide solid oak plank might shrink by 1.5-2mm when humidity drops from 40% to 15%, while a 3.25-inch plank of the same species shrinks by roughly 1-1.3mm. That difference sounds small, but multiply it across an entire floor and the visual impact is significant. With narrow strip flooring, the gaps are distributed across many more seams, so each individual gap is less noticeable. With wide planks, fewer seams mean each gap is wider and more visible — and at 15% humidity, which is common in Calgary from December through March, those gaps become genuinely unsightly.

If you love the wide-plank look — and it is undeniably beautiful, especially in open-concept living areas popular in newer Calgary communities like West Springs, Aspen Woods, and Springbank Hill — **engineered hardwood in 5-7 inch widths is the way to go.** Engineered planks have cross-ply construction that reduces width-wise movement by 50-80% compared to solid. A 6-inch engineered oak plank will show minimal gapping even at 15% humidity, while a 6-inch solid oak plank in the same conditions will gap noticeably.

Rift and quarter-sawn hardwood is another option worth considering for Calgary homes. These cuts expose the wood grain at a different angle than standard flat-sawn lumber, which results in roughly **50% less seasonal movement.** Rift and quarter-sawn oak in a 4-5 inch width performs nearly as well as engineered in terms of dimensional stability. The tradeoff is cost — rift and quarter-sawn typically runs 20-30% more than flat-sawn because there is more waste in the milling process.

Regardless of plank width, a **whole-home humidifier is essential** if you are installing any hardwood in Calgary. Maintaining indoor humidity at 35-45% year-round dramatically reduces seasonal movement in both narrow and wide planks. At 15% humidity without humidification, even narrow strip flooring will gap visibly — it is just less pronounced than with wider planks.

For a practical recommendation: if you want solid hardwood in Calgary, stick to **3.25-inch strip in oak or maple** and invest in a humidifier. If you want the wide-plank aesthetic, go with **5-7 inch engineered hardwood** — you get the beautiful look with far better climate performance. A local flooring professional can show you samples and explain the options specific to your home. **Browse flooring installers in your area through the Calgary Construction Network directory.**

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

- One OAK Flooring
- Home Style Supplies
- Royland Stucco

- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Amar Homes Inc

[View all contractors ?](#)

Should I acclimate hardwood flooring longer in Calgary because of the dry climate?

Yes — Calgary's extremely dry climate means hardwood flooring should acclimate for 5 to 7 days minimum, compared to the 48-72 hours that manufacturers typically recommend as a baseline. This extended acclimation is one of the most important steps in any hardwood installation in Calgary, and skipping it or cutting it short is the single most common cause of gapping in the first heating season.

The reason is Calgary's indoor humidity. From October through April, indoor relative humidity in Calgary homes regularly drops to **15-25%**, which is among the lowest of any major Canadian city. Hardwood flooring is typically manufactured and stored at a moisture content of 6-9%, calibrated to a balanced environment of around 35-45% relative humidity. When that wood enters a Calgary home in January running at 18% humidity, it needs time to release its excess moisture and reach equilibrium with the drier indoor environment. If you install it before it has fully acclimated, the planks will continue to shrink after installation, opening gaps between every board.

Proper acclimation protocol for Calgary involves more than just leaving the boxes in the room. The flooring should be **removed from all packaging** — cardboard boxes and plastic wrap trap moisture and prevent the wood from breathing. Stack the planks loosely with spacers between layers to allow air circulation on all surfaces. The room should be at its **normal living temperature** (20-22 degrees Celsius) with the HVAC system running as it normally would. If you are acclimating during summer when humidity is higher, that baseline is fine — but in winter, the low humidity is actually an advantage because the wood will reach its driest, most contracted state before installation, meaning any gaps that appear will be at their worst before a single plank is nailed down.

Use a moisture meter to verify acclimation. The wood's moisture content should be within 2% of the subfloor's moisture content before installation begins. For Calgary in winter, this often means the hardwood needs to reach 5-7% moisture content to match a plywood subfloor that has been equilibrated to the home's dry environment. Without a meter, you are guessing — and guessing leads to callbacks.

Engineered hardwood generally needs less acclimation time than solid due to its dimensional stability, but 48-72 hours minimum is still recommended even for engineered products in Calgary. Laminate and LVP require 48 hours to temperature-acclimate but are far less sensitive to humidity.

One practical tip: plan your delivery timing carefully. If you are having hardwood installed in February, have it delivered at least a full week before the installation crew arrives. Coordinate with your installer so the acclimation period is built into the project schedule from the start. **A knowledgeable Calgary flooring installer will insist on proper acclimation — find one through the Calgary Construction Network.**

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

- Besademolition
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Eshine Cleaning Services

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q8

What is the price difference between nail-down and glue-down hardwood installation in Calgary?

Glue-down hardwood installation in Calgary typically costs \$1-\$3 more per square foot in labour than nail-down, primarily because it is more time-consuming, requires more skill, and uses expensive adhesive. For a mid-range oak or maple hardwood, expect to pay roughly **\$6-\$10 per square foot for nail-down installation and \$8-\$13 per square foot for glue-down**, all-in with materials and labour.

The cost difference comes down to the installation process. **Nail-down** (or staple-down) is the traditional method for solid hardwood over plywood subfloors. A pneumatic floor nailer drives cleats through the tongue of each plank at an angle, securing it firmly to the subfloor. An experienced crew can move quickly — 250-350 square feet per day is typical — and the only consumable beyond the flooring itself is the fasteners, which are inexpensive. This method works exclusively over **wood subfloors** (plywood or OSB) and is the standard approach for most Calgary homes with traditional wood-frame construction.

Glue-down uses a urethane-based adhesive trowelled onto the subfloor, and each plank is pressed into the adhesive. The adhesive alone costs **\$3-\$5 per square foot** of coverage, which is a significant material cost that nail-down avoids. The installer must work within the adhesive's open time (typically 30-60 minutes per section), which limits how much can be done in a pass. If the adhesive skins over before the plank is placed, that section must be scraped and re-trowelled. Installation speed is slower — roughly 150-250 square feet per day — and the cleanup is more involved. This method is used primarily for **engineered hardwood over concrete slabs** and is the required method when hardwood goes directly over concrete.

In Calgary specifically, the glue-down method is increasingly common because many newer communities — Mahogany, Seton, Livingston, Cornerstone, and others in the city's south and southeast — have main floors built on concrete slab rather than traditional wood framing. If your home has a concrete main floor, nail-down is not an option, and glue-down with a moisture barrier is the professional approach. Floating installation (click-lock engineered hardwood over underlayment) is the less expensive alternative over concrete, running comparable to nail-down costs, but many flooring professionals consider glue-down superior for long-term stability and noise reduction.

For a **1,200 square foot installation in a Calgary home**, the total cost difference between nail-down and glue-down is roughly **\$1,200 to \$3,600** — meaningful but not enormous in the context of a full hardwood project. The choice should be driven by your subfloor type and the product being installed, not just cost. A professional installer will recommend the appropriate method based on your home's construction. **Get free estimates from local flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network to compare pricing for your specific project.**

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

- Home Style Supplies
- Amar Homes Inc
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
- Bracha Concrete & Coatings Inc.

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q9

Are character homes in Inglewood and Hillhurst worth restoring original hardwood floors or replacing?

In most cases, restoring original hardwood in Inglewood and Hillhurst character homes is absolutely worth it — both for the beauty of the wood and the significant cost savings over replacement. These inner-city Calgary neighbourhoods have some of the finest original hardwood floors in the city, often solid oak or fir installed in the 1910s-1940s, and that old-growth lumber is genuinely superior to what is available today.

The hardwood in many Inglewood and Hillhurst homes was milled from old-growth timber with tight, consistent grain patterns that simply do not exist in modern hardwood products. Those trees grew slowly over centuries, producing wood that is denser, harder, and more dimensionally stable than today's plantation-grown lumber. **A well-maintained original hardwood floor in a 1920s Inglewood home can be sanded and refinished to look absolutely stunning** — the patina and character of century-old wood cannot be replicated with new material at any price.

Refinishing costs \$3-\$6 per square foot in Calgary, which includes professional drum sanding, edge sanding, staining (if desired), and three coats of oil-based or water-based polyurethane. For a typical 800-1,000 square foot main floor, that is **\$2,400 to \$6,000**. Replacing the same area with comparable-quality solid oak runs **\$6-\$10 per square foot installed, or \$4,800 to \$10,000** — roughly double the cost for a product that is arguably inferior to the original. The math strongly favours refinishing when the existing floor is structurally sound.

The key question is whether the existing hardwood is restorable. Here is what to evaluate: **Board thickness** matters — original hardwood in these character homes is typically 3/4-inch solid, which can be sanded and refinished 3-5 times over its lifetime. If it has already been refinished several times, a flooring professional can measure the remaining thickness to determine if another sanding is feasible. **Structural damage** from water, rot, or termites may make sections irreparable — but patching in matching boards is often possible. **Severe cupping or crowning** that does not flatten out when humidity is corrected may require board replacement in affected areas. **Pet stains that have penetrated through the finish into the wood** may not come out with sanding and may require board replacement in stained areas.

One caution for pre-1950s Calgary homes: **check for asbestos in any existing underlayment, tile, or adhesive** before starting demolition or sanding. Many Inglewood and Hillhurst homes had vinyl tile or linoleum installed over the original hardwood at some point, and the adhesive used may contain asbestos. Have it tested before disturbing it.

For resale value, restored original hardwood in Inglewood and Hillhurst is a genuine selling feature — buyers in these neighbourhoods specifically seek character and authenticity. New engineered hardwood, no matter how nice, does not carry the same appeal in a character home context. **Find a flooring refinishing specialist through the Calgary Construction Network** who has experience with Calgary's heritage homes.

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

- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services

- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
- Radon Lab
- UR COWRY CABINETS

[View all contractors ?](#)

How much does oak hardwood flooring cost compared to maple in Calgary?

Oak hardwood flooring runs \$6-\$10 per square foot installed in Calgary, while maple costs \$8-\$12 per square foot installed — a difference of roughly \$2-\$3 per square foot that adds up to \$2,400-\$3,600 on a typical 1,200 square foot project. Both are excellent domestic hardwood species, but they differ in appearance, hardness, and how they handle Calgary's climate.

Oak is Calgary's most popular hardwood species by a wide margin, and the pricing reflects strong supply and competition among suppliers. Red oak is the most affordable option at the lower end of the \$6-\$10 range, with its warm, pinkish-brown tones and distinctive cathedral grain pattern. White oak commands a premium — typically \$8-\$12 per square foot installed — and has become increasingly popular due to its cooler, more neutral tones that work well with contemporary and farmhouse design styles. White oak also has a tighter grain and slightly better moisture resistance than red oak, making it marginally better suited to Calgary's dry climate.

Maple is a harder wood than oak — it scores 1,450 on the Janka hardness scale compared to red oak's 1,290 and white oak's 1,360. That extra hardness translates to better dent and scratch resistance, which matters in high-traffic areas and homes with active kids or pets. However, maple's tight, subtle grain pattern means it **does not absorb stain evenly**, often producing a blotchy appearance. This limits your colour options — maple looks best in its natural light blonde tone or with a very light stain. If you want a dark or medium-brown floor, oak is the better canvas for staining.

In terms of **Calgary climate performance**, both species behave similarly — they are both susceptible to gapping in our dry winters and expansion during humid summers. Maple's slightly denser grain structure gives it a marginal advantage in resisting moisture absorption, but the difference is minor. Both species benefit enormously from a whole-home humidifier maintaining 35-45% relative humidity, and both are available in engineered construction that handles Calgary's conditions far better than solid.

For budget-conscious Calgary homeowners, red oak in a standard 3.25-inch strip is the best value — \$6-\$8 per square foot installed gets you a beautiful, durable floor that looks great with virtually any stain colour. **For homeowners prioritizing durability and a modern light aesthetic**, natural maple delivers a clean, contemporary look that pairs well with the bright, modern interiors popular in communities like Altadore, Bridgeland, and Marda Loop. **For those wanting the premium look**, white oak in a wider 5-inch plank at \$10-\$12 per square foot strikes an excellent balance of style, performance, and value.

Walnut is worth mentioning as the premium domestic alternative at \$12-\$15 per square foot installed — it delivers rich, dark chocolate tones but is the softest of the three species and the most expensive. **Get free quotes from local flooring installers through the Calgary Construction Network** to compare material options and pricing for

your project.

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

- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc
- Radon Lab
- True North Overhead Doors

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q11

Do I need a whole-home humidifier to protect hardwood floors through Calgary winters?

If you have solid hardwood floors, a whole-home humidifier is essentially a requirement in Calgary — not a luxury. Calgary's indoor humidity drops to 15-20% during winter months, far below the 35-45% range that hardwood flooring needs to remain stable. Without active humidification, you will see visible gaps between boards every winter, and over years of cycling, the cumulative damage accelerates finish cracking, joint loosening, and checking.

The relationship between humidity and hardwood movement is direct and measurable. At 40% relative humidity, a typical 3.25-inch solid oak plank is at its manufactured width. At 20% humidity — a normal Calgary January — that same plank has shrunk enough to create a visible gap. Multiply that across an entire floor, and by mid-winter your beautiful hardwood has noticeable dark lines between every board where you can see the subfloor or felt paper below. When humidity returns in spring, the boards swell back — but each cycle stresses the wood, the finish, and the fasteners holding it down.

A whole-home humidifier (also called a furnace-mounted humidifier) connects to your HVAC system and adds moisture to the air as it circulates. The two main types are **bypass humidifiers** (\$300-\$600 installed) and **powered flow-through humidifiers** (\$500-\$900 installed). For Calgary homes with hardwood, a powered unit is recommended because it produces more humidity output to combat our extremely dry conditions. Set the target to **35-40% relative humidity** — going above 45% in Calgary's cold winters can cause condensation on windows and

potential moisture issues in walls.

The ongoing cost includes water usage (modest), annual pad or filter replacement (\$15-\$40), and slightly higher heating costs because humidified air takes more energy to warm. Budget roughly **\$100-\$200 per year in operating costs**. Compared to the cost of repairing or refinishing damaged hardwood — \$3-\$6 per square foot for refinishing, or \$6-\$15 per square foot for replacement — the humidifier pays for itself many times over.

Engineered hardwood is significantly more forgiving of low humidity than solid. If you have engineered hardwood, a humidifier is still beneficial but not as critical — engineered construction reduces seasonal movement by 50-80%. Many Calgary homes with engineered hardwood do fine without a dedicated humidifier, especially if the home has other moisture sources (cooking, showers, plants) that keep humidity above 25%.

Portable room humidifiers are not a substitute for a whole-home system when protecting hardwood. They cannot maintain consistent humidity across an entire floor area, and they create localized wet zones that can actually cause more problems than uniform dryness. If you have hardwood throughout your main floor, a furnace-mounted unit is the right solution.

One additional tip: invest in a **hygrometer** (\$15-\$30 at any Calgary hardware store) and place it in the room with the most hardwood. Monitor your humidity levels through the heating season and adjust your humidifier output accordingly. Chinook events can cause sudden humidity spikes that are temporary — do not over-adjust. **For advice on protecting your hardwood investment, connect with a local flooring professional through the Calgary Construction Network.**

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

- True North Overhead Doors
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Calgary Custom Concepts
- Besademolition

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q12

What hardwood species holds up best against gapping in Calgary's dry winters?

White oak and hickory are the two domestic hardwood species that resist gapping best in Calgary's dry winters, but the honest answer is that no solid hardwood species is immune to gapping at 15-20% indoor humidity. The species you choose matters less than the construction method (engineered vs solid), plank width, and humidity control in your home.

That said, there are real differences between species. **White oak** has a tighter, more closed grain structure than red oak, which means it absorbs and releases moisture more slowly. This translates to slightly less aggressive seasonal movement — white oak's tangential shrinkage coefficient is about 10% lower than red oak's. Over a full Calgary winter, a white oak floor will gap slightly less than an identical red oak floor in the same conditions. White oak also contains tyloses (cellular structures that block water penetration), making it more resistant to moisture damage overall. It runs **\$8-\$12 per square foot installed** in Calgary.

Hickory is the hardest domestic hardwood commonly used for flooring (Janka rating of 1,820), and its density gives it good dimensional stability. Hickory's dramatic grain variation and colour range — from creamy white sapwood to dark brown heartwood — also help camouflage minor gaps because the busy grain pattern draws the eye away from seam lines. It costs **\$8-\$13 per square foot installed**.

Maple (Janka 1,450) has a very tight, uniform grain that resists moisture absorption reasonably well, but its light colour and clean grain pattern make gaps more visually obvious than in species with more character. **Red oak** (Janka 1,290) is the most affordable option but has the most open grain and shows gapping more readily than other species.

Exotic species like Brazilian cherry (jatoba) and santos mahogany are extremely dense and gap less than domestic species, but they cost \$12-\$20+ per square foot installed, are harder to source in Calgary, and their extreme hardness makes them difficult to refinish.

Here is the most practical advice for minimizing gapping in a Calgary home: **choose engineered hardwood in your preferred species**. An engineered white oak plank will gap 50-80% less than the same species in solid construction. If you insist on solid hardwood, go with **white oak or hickory in a narrower width (3.25-4 inches)**, maintain **35-45% indoor humidity with a whole-home humidifier**, and accept that some minor seasonal gapping is normal and unavoidable in Calgary. The gaps should close when humidity returns in spring — if they do not, it suggests either the wood was not properly acclimated before installation or indoor humidity is dropping below 15%.

Rift and quarter-sawn lumber in any species also helps — these cuts reduce cross-grain movement by roughly 50% compared to flat-sawn planks. Rift and quarter-sawn white oak is arguably the best possible solid hardwood choice for Calgary's climate, though it commands a premium of 20-30% over standard flat-sawn. **Browse flooring contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory** to find an installer who can walk you through

species options suited to your home.

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

- Turnbull masonry
- Keystone Exteriors
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- Home Style Supplies
- One OAK Flooring

[View all contractors ?](#)

Can I install hardwood over concrete slab in a Calgary main floor without moisture issues?

You can install engineered hardwood over a concrete slab on a Calgary main floor, but solid hardwood should not go directly over concrete under any circumstances. The key to success is thorough moisture testing, a proper moisture barrier, and choosing the right installation method.

Many newer Calgary communities — Mahogany, Seton, Livingston, Cornerstone, Walden, and Legacy among others — are built with main floors on concrete slab rather than traditional wood framing. This is a different scenario from a basement slab because main-floor slabs are typically at or above grade, receive less ground moisture, and benefit from the home's heating system keeping the slab warm. However, all concrete is porous and will transmit some moisture vapour from the ground, so preparation is essential.

Step one is moisture testing, and it is non-negotiable. Before any hardwood goes down, the slab must be tested using either a **calcium chloride test** (measuring moisture vapour emission rate — must be below 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet per 24 hours) or a **relative humidity probe test** (must be below 75% RH within the slab). In Calgary, main-floor slabs typically test within acceptable ranges, but never assume — test every time. Slabs less than 60 days old almost always test too wet. Slabs in homes with poor exterior drainage or missing damp-proofing may test high regardless of age.

If the slab passes moisture testing, you have two proven installation methods for engineered hardwood. **Glue-down** is the professional preference — a urethane-based adhesive is trowelled onto the slab (many modern adhesives also function as a moisture barrier), and the engineered planks are pressed into the adhesive. This produces the most solid, quiet floor with no hollow spots. Expect to pay **\$8-\$14 per square foot installed** for engineered hardwood glued over concrete. The **floating method** uses a click-lock engineered hardwood over a moisture-barrier underlayment — it is less expensive (\$7-\$11 per square foot installed) and faster to install, but can feel slightly hollow underfoot and may produce a clicking sound in high-traffic areas.

Solid hardwood cannot be nailed or stapled into concrete, and floating solid hardwood is not recommended due to its greater dimensional instability. The only way to put solid hardwood over concrete is to first install a plywood subfloor (either glued to the slab or on sleepers), which adds \$3-\$5 per square foot in cost, raises the floor height by 3/4 to 1.5 inches, and creates transitions issues at doorways. For most Calgary homeowners, this added cost and complexity makes engineered hardwood the clearly superior choice over concrete.

Calgary-specific considerations: the slab stays cold during winter months, and the temperature differential between the cold concrete and the warm room air can cause condensation at the interface. A quality moisture barrier addresses this. Calgary's chinook temperature swings also affect the slab temperature rapidly, which is

another reason engineered hardwood (with its dimensional stability) outperforms solid over concrete. **Get matched with a flooring professional experienced in slab installations — Calgary Floor Installers connects you for free through the Calgary Construction Network.**

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

- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
- Makki Abatement
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Durable Decks

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q14

How much should I budget for hardwood flooring in a 1500 square foot Calgary home?

For a complete hardwood flooring project covering 1,500 square feet in a Calgary home, budget \$12,000 to \$25,000 for a mid-range installation, or \$20,000 to \$40,000+ for premium materials and finishes. The range depends heavily on the species, whether you choose solid or engineered, the installation method, and the condition of your existing subfloor.

Here is how the numbers break down for the most common scenarios in Calgary:

Budget-Friendly Option — Engineered Oak (\$7-\$10/sqft installed): Total \$10,500-\$15,000 for materials and installation. This gets you a quality engineered oak with a 2-4mm wear layer, floating or glue-down installation, and basic trim. This is an excellent value proposition for most Calgary homes and handles our dry climate and chinook humidity swings well. Add \$1,500-\$3,000 for old flooring removal, and \$1,000-\$2,500 for new baseboards and transitions. **Realistic all-in budget: \$13,000-\$20,500.**

Mid-Range Option — White Oak or Maple (\$9-\$13/sqft installed): Total \$13,500-\$19,500 for materials and installation. White oak in 5-inch wide planks is the most requested option in Calgary right now — it offers a beautiful, contemporary look with better moisture resistance than red oak. Maple delivers a clean, light aesthetic at

similar pricing. Add removal, subfloor prep, and trim costs. **Realistic all-in budget: \$16,000-\$25,000.**

Premium Option — Wide-Plank Walnut or Site-Finished (\$12-\$18/sqft installed): Total \$18,000-\$27,000 for materials and installation. Walnut provides rich, dark tones that make a dramatic statement. Site-finished hardwood (sanded and finished in place) allows custom stain colours and a seamless appearance without micro-bevels between planks, but adds 2-3 days to the project timeline. **Realistic all-in budget: \$22,000-\$35,000+.**

Do not forget the hidden costs that many homeowners underestimate. **Old flooring removal** runs \$1-\$3 per square foot (\$1,500-\$4,500 for the whole house). **Subfloor repair or levelling** can add \$2-\$6 per square foot in areas that need it — older Calgary homes in communities like Bankview, Capitol Hill, and Rosedale often need more subfloor work than newer builds. **Furniture moving** runs \$200-\$600 unless you handle it yourself.

Baseboards and trim add \$3-\$8 per linear foot, and for 1,500 square feet of floor space, you are looking at roughly 300-400 linear feet of baseboard (\$900-\$3,200). If you are installing solid hardwood, budget **\$500-\$900 for a whole-home humidifier** to protect your investment through Calgary's dry winters.

A common strategy for cost-conscious Calgary homeowners is to use **hardwood on the main floor living areas** and a more affordable option like LVP (\$4-\$9/sqft) in bedrooms, basement, and utility areas. This can reduce your total project cost by 30-40% while still achieving the hardwood look where it has the most visual impact. **Get free estimates from multiple flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network** to compare pricing for your specific home and preferences.

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

- Dealtwith.
- Calgary Custom Concepts
- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Durable Decks
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q15

Is it worth paying extra for site-finished hardwood versus prefinished in Calgary?

Site-finished hardwood costs roughly \$2-\$5 more per square foot than prefinished in Calgary, and whether it is worth the premium depends on your priorities around appearance, customization, and project timeline.

Both produce beautiful, durable floors, but they differ in meaningful ways that matter in Calgary's climate.

Site-finished hardwood is installed as raw, unfinished planks that are then sanded smooth, stained to your chosen colour, and sealed with multiple coats of polyurethane — all done in your home. The biggest advantage is a **seamless, monolithic appearance**. Because the finish is applied after installation, it flows continuously across every plank and seam, creating a glass-smooth surface with no micro-bevels between boards. Stain colour is completely customizable — you pick the exact shade, test it on sample boards in your home's lighting, and adjust until it is perfect. Site finishing also **seals the gaps between planks**, which is particularly valuable in Calgary because it prevents dust, crumbs, and moisture from dropping between boards during the winter gapping season.

The drawbacks of site finishing are significant, though. **The process adds 3-5 days to the project** — one day for sanding, one day for staining, and 2-3 days for three coats of polyurethane with drying time between coats. During this period, the area is unusable and the home will have strong solvent odours if oil-based polyurethane is used (water-based finishes have less odour but typically cost more). **Dust is a concern** even with dustless sanding systems — they capture 95-98% of dust, not 100%. In Calgary, expect to pay **\$3-\$6 per square foot for site sanding and finishing** on top of the unfinished material cost of \$4-\$8 per square foot and installation labour, bringing the total to roughly **\$10-\$18 per square foot all-in**.

Prefinished hardwood arrives from the factory already sanded, stained, and sealed with a factory-cured finish that is harder and more durable than anything applied on-site. Modern factory finishes use **aluminum oxide-infused polyurethane or UV-cured finishes** that resist scratching and wear significantly better than site-applied poly. The planks are installed and ready to walk on immediately — no drying time, no odours, no dust. Total installed cost runs **\$6-\$15 per square foot** depending on species and quality. The tradeoff is the **micro-bevel between planks** (a small chamfer milled into the edges to accommodate slight height variations), which some homeowners find less appealing than the seamless site-finished look. The bevels also collect dirt and are more visible on lighter floors.

For Calgary specifically, there is one climate consideration worth noting. Site-finished floors with the finish sealed over the seams hold up slightly better during winter's extreme dryness because the continuous finish film bridges the gaps and slows moisture loss from the wood. Prefinished floors, with their micro-bevels and unsealed seams, allow faster moisture exchange at the board edges, which can contribute to slightly more visible seasonal movement. The difference is subtle but real in Calgary's 15-20% winter humidity.

My recommendation for most Calgary homeowners: **prefinished hardwood offers the best value** — factory finishes are tougher, the installation is faster, and you save \$2-\$5 per square foot. Choose site-finished if you want a specific custom colour, a seamless look, or you are matching existing site-finished floors in another part of the home. **Connect with a local flooring installer through the Calgary Construction Network** to see samples of

both options.

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

- Calgary Custom Concepts
- True North Overhead Doors
- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Dealtwith.
- Quality count construction Ltd.

[View all contractors ?](#)

What direction should hardwood planks run in a Calgary split level home?

In a Calgary split-level home, hardwood planks should generally run parallel to the longest wall or the primary sight line from the main entrance, but split-levels present unique challenges because of the half-level transitions and stairways that interrupt the floor plane.

The standard rule of thumb is to install hardwood **parallel to the longest dimension of the room** or **perpendicular to the floor joists** (which provides the strongest structural connection for nail-down installations). In most Calgary split-levels — whether they are the classic 1960s-1970s designs common in communities like Lake Bonavista, Braeside, Woodbine, and Dalhousie, or the updated versions in newer developments — the main living area is rectangular, and running planks along the long axis makes the space feel larger and more cohesive.

The split-level challenge is that you have two or three floor levels connected by short stairways, and the hardwood direction needs to work on all levels for visual continuity. Here is the practical approach: **choose the direction based on the largest, most visible level** — typically the main living room and kitchen area. When you transition to the upper or lower half-level, maintain the same plank direction if at all possible. This creates visual flow when you look across the stairway transition from one level to another. Changing direction between levels looks disjointed and is a common aesthetic mistake in split-level renovations.

At the stairway transitions, a professional installer will handle the direction change using **transition strips or custom nosing pieces** that create a clean visual break. If the stairway runs perpendicular to the plank direction, the transition looks natural. If the stairway runs parallel to the planks, the nosing and trim work requires more craftsmanship to look right.

For structural reasons, if you are doing a nail-down installation over plywood subfloor, the planks should ideally run **perpendicular to the floor joists** for maximum holding power. In many Calgary split-levels, the joist direction may differ between levels because the framing changes at the step-down. If this is the case, and the joists on one level run the opposite direction, a layer of **3/8-inch plywood underlayment** can be added to allow the planks to run in your preferred direction regardless of joist orientation.

Hallways are another consideration in split-levels. If a hallway connects two levels, run the planks along the length of the hallway — planks running across a narrow hallway look chopped up and make the space feel even narrower. This may mean the hallway planks run at a different angle than the rooms they connect, which requires a transition strip at each doorway.

Light direction matters too. In Calgary, where natural light is abundant and enters at a low angle during winter months, planks running toward the main window source show seams and imperfections less than planks running

parallel to the light. South-facing rooms with large windows are particularly sensitive to this.

A skilled installer will walk through your split-level, consider the joist direction, sight lines, stairway transitions, and natural light, and recommend the optimal layout. **Get matched with an experienced flooring installer through the Calgary Construction Network** who has worked on Calgary's split-level homes.

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

- Ardco Construction
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Mike's Restoration Service
- Keystone Exteriors

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q17

How do I prevent hardwood floor cupping in a Calgary home without air conditioning?

Cupping in Calgary homes without air conditioning is most likely to occur during summer when indoor humidity rises significantly after months of extreme winter dryness, and the best prevention is maintaining consistent humidity year-round rather than relying on cooling. The good news is that Calgary's dry climate means summer cupping is less common here than in humid cities like Toronto — but it does happen, especially in homes that swing from 15% humidity in winter to 50%+ in summer without any moisture management.

Cupping occurs when the bottom of a hardwood plank absorbs more moisture than the top, causing the edges to rise higher than the centre. In a Calgary home without air conditioning, this typically happens in July and August when outdoor humidity spikes during rainstorms or prolonged warm weather, and the house — which has been bone-dry all winter — suddenly takes on moisture. The subfloor absorbs this humidity from below, swelling the bottom of the plank faster than the top, and the boards cup.

The most effective prevention strategy is humidity control through ventilation rather than air conditioning. Open windows during dry periods and close them during humid weather. Use **bathroom and kitchen exhaust**

fans diligently to remove moisture at the source. A **whole-home dehumidifier** (separate from air conditioning) can maintain summer humidity below 50% for \$200-\$400 per year in operating costs. These plug-in units are especially important in lower-level rooms and areas near the grade line where ground moisture contributes to indoor humidity.

A whole-home humidifier running in winter is equally important for preventing cupping — counterintuitively, the winter dryness contributes to summer cupping. When hardwood shrinks excessively in winter (gaps of 1-2mm between boards at 15% humidity), the boards reach an extremely contracted state. When summer humidity arrives, the wood tries to absorb moisture rapidly to return to equilibrium, and that rapid, uneven absorption causes cupping. By maintaining **35-40% humidity through winter**, you reduce the total seasonal swing that the wood experiences, which means less aggressive expansion in summer and lower cupping risk.

Practical steps for Calgary homeowners without AC:

Keep interior doors open to promote air circulation throughout the home. **Ceiling fans and portable fans** help equalize temperature and humidity between rooms. Ensure your **basement is well-dehumidified** in summer — moisture migrating up from the basement into main-floor rooms is a common cause of cupping in two-storey homes. Check that your home's **exterior grading slopes away from the foundation** and that downspouts direct water at least 6 feet from the house — poor drainage increases ground moisture that affects both basement and main-floor humidity levels.

If you notice mild cupping in summer, **do not panic and do not sand the floor**. Mild cupping often resolves on its own as humidity drops through autumn and winter in Calgary. Sanding a cupped floor while it is still swollen locks in the distortion, and when the wood eventually dries and contracts, you end up with crowned boards — the opposite problem. Only address cupping with sanding or refinishing after the floor has been through a full annual humidity cycle and the cupping persists. **If your hardwood is cupping persistently, consult a flooring professional — find one through the Calgary Construction Network.**

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

- Jk Stucco
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc

[View all contractors ?](#)

What is the cost to install herringbone hardwood flooring in Calgary?

Herringbone hardwood flooring installation in Calgary costs \$12-\$25 per square foot fully installed, which is roughly 40-80% more than standard straight-lay hardwood. The premium reflects the significantly higher material waste, labour intensity, and skill required for herringbone patterns.

The cost breaks down into several components. **Material costs are higher** because herringbone requires shorter, precisely dimensioned planks (typically 12-24 inches long) that are more expensive per square foot than standard-length boards. Additionally, the angular cuts at walls, doorways, and transitions produce **15-25% material waste** compared to 5-10% for standard installations. Budget \$5-\$10 per square foot for the herringbone hardwood material itself, depending on species — oak herringbone is at the lower end, walnut at the higher end.

Labour is the biggest cost driver. A herringbone pattern requires each plank to be cut and placed at a precise 45 or 90-degree angle to its neighbour, with every joint perfectly aligned. The installer must establish a perfectly centred starting line, ensure the pattern remains symmetrical as it progresses toward the walls, and make complex angular cuts at every perimeter edge. An experienced crew installing standard straight-lay hardwood can cover 250-350 square feet per day; the same crew doing herringbone covers **100-180 square feet per day**. That slower pace translates directly to higher labour costs — typically **\$6-\$12 per square foot for herringbone labour** versus \$3-\$5 for straight-lay in the Calgary market.

For a **500 square foot living room** in a Calgary home — a popular application for herringbone as a statement floor in communities like Mount Royal, Elbow Park, Britannia, and Upper Mount Royal — expect a total cost of **\$6,000-\$12,500**. For a larger 1,000 square foot main floor area, the total runs **\$12,000-\$25,000**.

Engineered hardwood is strongly recommended for herringbone in Calgary for two reasons. First, engineered herringbone planks come pre-cut to exact dimensions with tongue-and-groove or click-lock connections designed for the pattern, which speeds installation and reduces waste compared to cutting solid planks on-site. Second, engineered construction handles Calgary's humidity extremes far better — a herringbone pattern amplifies any seasonal movement because the alternating angles create stress points where boards meet at angles rather than parallel. If solid herringbone boards gap in winter, the angular gaps are more visually disruptive than gaps in a straight-lay floor.

Chevron is a related pattern that is sometimes confused with herringbone. In chevron, the plank ends are mitre-cut at an angle so they form a continuous V shape — it produces cleaner lines but requires even more precision and waste, adding another \$1-\$3 per square foot over herringbone. Both patterns make a stunning visual statement and are increasingly popular in high-end Calgary renovations.

Herringbone is not a DIY project. The layout precision, angular cutting, and subfloor preparation required make professional installation essential. **Get matched with a flooring installer experienced in pattern work through the Calgary Construction Network** — not every installer offers herringbone, so finding one with demonstrated experience is important.

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

- Home Style Supplies
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- WestAim Construction Ltd.
- Ardco Construction
- Makki Abatement

[View all contractors ?](#)

Should I replace builder-grade laminate with hardwood in my Cranston home for resale value?

Replacing builder-grade laminate with hardwood in a Cranston home can add meaningful resale value, but the return depends on the scope, the materials you choose, and what buyers in that price range expect.

Cranston is a popular southeast Calgary community with homes typically in the \$450,000-\$700,000 range, and buyer expectations have evolved significantly — hardwood or high-quality LVP on the main floor is now seen as standard rather than premium in this market segment.

Builder-grade laminate — the \$2-\$4 per square foot material that many Calgary home builders install as standard — tends to show its age quickly. After 5-8 years of family traffic, the edges swell from moisture exposure at seams, the finish dulls and scratches, and the click-lock joints loosen. By the time you are preparing to sell, dated laminate can make an otherwise well-maintained Cranston home look tired compared to competing listings with upgraded flooring.

The financial math works like this. For a typical Cranston two-storey home with approximately 800-1,000 square feet of main-floor living space (kitchen, living room, dining area, hallway), replacing builder-grade laminate with **engineered oak hardwood** at \$8-\$11 per square foot installed runs roughly **\$6,400-\$11,000 including removal of the old laminate, subfloor prep, and new baseboards**. Real estate professionals in Calgary estimate that quality hardwood flooring adds approximately **\$10,000-\$20,000 to a home's perceived value** in this price range, and homes with upgraded flooring sell faster because they show better in photos and in person. The return on investment is typically 100-180% — one of the better renovation returns you can achieve.

However, there is a compelling middle ground. High-quality **luxury vinyl plank (LVP) or SPC flooring** at \$5-\$8 per square foot installed gives you a waterproof, extremely durable floor that looks remarkably like hardwood, handles Calgary's humidity extremes without any issues, and costs 30-40% less than engineered hardwood. For a Cranston home in the mid-price range, premium LVP delivers nearly the same buyer appeal as hardwood at a lower investment. Many Calgary real estate agents now say that quality LVP and engineered hardwood are viewed equally by buyers in communities like Cranston, Auburn Bay, and Mahogany.

If you do go with hardwood, stick with **engineered rather than solid** in Cranston. Many homes in this community are built on concrete slab for the main floor, which requires engineered hardwood glued down — solid hardwood would need a plywood overlay at significant additional cost. White oak or natural oak in a 5-inch plank width is the most universally appealing choice for resale — it works with both contemporary and traditional decor styles and photographs beautifully for listings.

Timing matters for resale renovations. If you plan to sell within 6-12 months, the flooring upgrade makes strong financial sense. If you are 3-5 years out, consider that you will enjoy the upgraded floor yourself while also building resale value. If you are renting the property, LVP is the smarter investment due to its superior durability and lower cost. **Get free estimates from flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network** to compare hardwood and LVP options for your Cranston home.

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

- Calgary Custom Concepts
- One OAK Flooring
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Canadian Closet

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q20

How much more does wide plank hardwood cost versus standard strip in Calgary?

Wide plank hardwood (5-7 inches) typically costs \$2-\$5 more per square foot than standard strip (2.25-3.25 inches) in Calgary, bringing the total installed cost to roughly \$9-\$15 per square foot for wide plank compared to \$6-\$10 for standard strip in the same species. The premium comes from higher material costs, increased waste during milling, and slightly more demanding installation requirements.

The material cost difference exists because wider planks require larger, higher-grade logs to produce. A 7-inch wide plank must come from a section of the log with consistent grain, colour, and structural integrity across the full width — defects like knots, sapwood streaks, and grain irregularities that would be hidden in a narrow strip become visible and objectionable in a wide plank. Mills grade and price accordingly. For **oak**, standard 3.25-inch strip material runs \$3-\$6 per square foot, while 5-7 inch wide plank material runs \$5-\$9 per square foot. **Walnut** wide plank commands the highest premium at \$8-\$12 per square foot for material alone.

Installation costs are comparable on a per-square-foot basis — wider planks actually cover area slightly faster since there are fewer seams per row. However, wide plank installation requires a **flatter, more precisely levelled subfloor** because any undulation in the subfloor is more visible across a wider board. If your subfloor needs additional levelling to meet the tighter tolerance, that adds \$1-\$3 per square foot.

For Calgary homes specifically, there is an important performance consideration. Wide planks show more visible seasonal movement than narrow strips. A 7-inch solid oak plank at 15% winter humidity (typical Calgary indoor conditions) can shrink enough to create a gap of nearly 2mm — that is quite visible and noticeable underfoot. A 3.25-inch strip in the same conditions shows roughly half that movement per plank. Over an entire floor, the total movement is similar, but it is distributed across more seams with narrow strip, making each individual gap less obvious.

This is why **engineered construction is especially important for wide planks in Calgary.** A 6-inch engineered oak plank will show dramatically less seasonal gapping than a 6-inch solid oak plank because the cross-ply core resists expansion and contraction. The price difference between engineered and solid is minimal in wide plank — often only \$1-\$2 per square foot — making engineered the clear value leader.

Here is a practical cost comparison for a 1,200 square foot Calgary home:

Standard 3.25-inch red oak strip (solid, nail-down): **\$7,200-\$12,000 installed.** Wide 5-inch white oak (engineered, glue-down): **\$10,800-\$18,000 installed.** Premium 7-inch walnut (engineered): **\$14,400-\$21,600 installed.**

The wide plank aesthetic is undeniably appealing — it creates a more modern, spacious look that is hugely popular in Calgary's upscale communities like Aspen Woods, West Springs, Altadore, and Britannia. For open-concept floor plans, wide planks reduce visual clutter by having fewer seam lines across the expanse. Just be sure to go with engineered construction in Calgary's climate, and budget for proper humidity control. **Find flooring installers who specialize in wide plank through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=flooring.**

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Calgary Floor Installers. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any flooring project. Information is current as of April 5, 2026 and may change. Visit calgaryfloorinstallers.com for the latest answers.