

CALGARY FLOOR INSTALLERS



Laminate Flooring

Laminate flooring options, installation methods, and care for Calgary's dry climate

23 Expert Answers from Floor IQ

calgaryfloorinstallers.com/construction-brain

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What happens to laminate with an integrated cork backing in a cold Calgary basement?

Laminate with integrated cork backing performs reasonably well in Calgary basements, but the cork backing doesn't eliminate the fundamental moisture and temperature challenges that all laminate faces below grade.

The cork backing provides excellent thermal insulation and comfort underfoot, which is particularly valuable in Calgary basements where concrete slabs stay cold from October through April. Cork is naturally antimicrobial and provides some moisture buffering, which helps compared to basic foam underlayment. However, **laminate itself is not waterproof** — the HDF (high-density fiberboard) core will swell and delaminate if exposed to standing water or high humidity, regardless of the backing material.

Calgary's basement conditions create specific challenges for any laminate installation. Concrete slabs frequently have elevated moisture levels due to groundwater migration and condensation from temperature differentials. The cork backing may slow moisture transmission slightly, but it won't prevent moisture damage if the slab has serious moisture issues. You absolutely must moisture test the concrete slab with a calcium chloride test or relative humidity probe before installing any laminate — cork-backed or otherwise. Moisture vapor emission above 3 lbs per 1,000 sqft per 24 hours requires mitigation with a vapor barrier or moisture-blocking primer.

Temperature cycling from Calgary's chinook winds can stress laminate joints over time. When outdoor temperatures swing from -25°C to +10°C in a few hours, basement temperatures fluctuate as well, causing the laminate to expand and contract. The cork backing provides some thermal mass to moderate these swings, but the click-lock joints can still loosen over years of cycling. Proper expansion gaps (8-10mm at all walls) are critical to accommodate this movement.

For Calgary basements, luxury vinyl plank (LVP) or stone polymer composite (SPC) flooring significantly outperforms any laminate. These products are 100% waterproof, handle temperature swings better than HDF-core laminate, and many come with attached cork or foam backing for comfort. They cost only slightly more than quality laminate (\$4-7/sqft vs \$3-6/sqft installed) but eliminate the moisture risk entirely. If you're set on the wood look and cork comfort, consider SPC with cork backing — you get the same benefits with true waterproof performance.

If you proceed with cork-backed laminate in your basement, ensure the concrete is properly moisture-tested, use a 6-mil polyethylene vapor barrier over the slab, maintain consistent basement temperatures year-round, and install a dehumidifier to keep relative humidity below 60%. The cork backing is a nice upgrade for comfort, but proper moisture management is what determines long-term success in Calgary's challenging basement

environment.

Need help finding a flooring installer experienced with basement moisture management? Calgary Floor Installers can match you with contractors who understand Calgary's unique basement conditions.

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

- Durable Decks
- Royland Stucco
- The Original Workshop
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc
- Premium Built Structures

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Q2

Can laminate flooring handle a Calgary home with three large dogs?

Laminate flooring can handle three large dogs in a Calgary home, but you'll need to choose a high-quality product with an AC4 or AC5 wear rating and be prepared for some maintenance challenges. The bigger concern isn't the dogs' weight—it's their claws, potential accidents, and the fact that laminate is NOT waterproof.

Durability for Large Dogs

Modern laminate with an AC4 (heavy residential) or AC5 (commercial grade) wear rating can absolutely withstand the foot traffic and weight of large dogs. The HDF (high-density fiberboard) core in quality laminate is remarkably durable—much more so than many people realize. Brands like Pergo, Quick-Step, and Mohawk make residential laminates that can handle decades of heavy use. You'll want to budget \$5-7 per square foot installed for this commercial-grade durability versus \$3-4 for basic residential laminate.

The surface wear layer on AC4/AC5 laminate resists scratching from dog claws better than many people expect, especially compared to softer materials like luxury vinyl plank. However, if your dogs have long, sharp claws or tend to "dig" at the floor when excited, you'll see some scratching over time. Regular nail trimming becomes essential with any hard flooring surface.

The Water Problem

Here's where laminate becomes challenging with multiple large dogs: **laminate is not waterproof**. If a dog has an accident and urine sits on the floor for more than a few minutes, it will seep into the joints between planks and cause the HDF core to swell permanently. This creates raised edges, gaps, and eventually requires plank replacement. With three large dogs, accidents are statistically more likely, and the larger the dog, the larger the potential mess.

Calgary's extremely dry climate actually helps here—spills evaporate faster than in humid climates, giving you more time to clean up before moisture penetrates the joints. But you'll need to be vigilant about immediate cleanup and consider area rugs in high-risk zones like near doors and feeding areas.

Better Alternatives for Multi-Dog Homes

Luxury Vinyl Plank (LVP) or Stone Polymer Composite (SPC) would be a much better choice for your situation. These products are 100% waterproof, handle dog claws well, and cost only slightly more than quality laminate (\$4-9 per square foot installed). The rigid SPC core performs exceptionally well in Calgary's temperature swings from chinook winds, and you'll never worry about water damage from pet accidents.

Engineered hardwood is another excellent option if you want the authentic wood look. While more expensive (\$7-14 per square foot), it can handle moisture better than laminate and can be refinished if scratching becomes an issue over the years.

Installation Considerations

If you do choose laminate, ensure your installer uses a high-quality moisture-resistant underlayment and seals all perimeter cuts with silicone. In Calgary's dry climate, proper acclimation (5-7 days in the home before installation) is crucial to prevent gapping during the first heating season.

Practical Tips for Dog Owners

Regardless of flooring choice, invest in quality entry mats to catch dirt and moisture from Calgary's muddy spring conditions and winter salt. Consider area rugs in feeding areas and near doors. Keep dog nails trimmed regularly, and clean up any accidents immediately with an enzyme cleaner designed for pet messes.

Need help finding a flooring installer experienced with pet-friendly installations? Calgary Floor Installers can match you with contractors who understand the unique challenges of flooring in active pet households.

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

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- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Keystone Exteriors
- Amar Homes Inc
- Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing

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Q3

Does laminate flooring void my Calgary home warranty if installed incorrectly?

Laminate flooring installation typically does not void your home warranty, but improper installation can create warranty complications for both the flooring product and potentially related home systems. The key distinction is between your home's structural warranty and the flooring manufacturer's product warranty.

Home Warranty vs. Flooring Product Warranty

Your Calgary home's new home warranty (typically provided by builders for 1-2 years on materials and labour, plus longer coverage on major structural elements) generally covers the home's structure, mechanical systems, and builder-installed finishes. If you're replacing existing flooring with laminate, this work is considered a renovation and doesn't directly impact your home warranty coverage. However, if improper laminate installation damages the subfloor, causes moisture issues, or interferes with HVAC systems, those secondary problems could complicate warranty claims.

The **laminate manufacturer's warranty** is separate and covers defects in the flooring material itself — not installation errors. Most laminate warranties require professional installation or strict adherence to manufacturer guidelines for DIY installation. Common installation mistakes that void product warranties include inadequate expansion gaps (minimum 6-10mm at all walls), installing over an unlevel subfloor (must be flat within 3mm over 1.8 metres), skipping moisture barriers over concrete, or using incompatible underlayment. In Calgary's extreme climate, failing to acclimate laminate for 48-72 hours before installation frequently voids warranties when gapping or buckling occurs during the first heating season.

Calgary-Specific Installation Risks

Calgary's dry winters and chinook temperature swings create unique challenges for laminate installation. Without proper expansion gaps, laminate floors can buckle during rapid humidity changes when chinook winds cause sudden temperature fluctuations. Installing laminate in Calgary basements without proper moisture barriers over

concrete slabs can lead to mould growth beneath the flooring — a problem that could affect indoor air quality and potentially impact warranty coverage for related HVAC or ventilation systems.

Protecting Your Investment

To avoid warranty complications, ensure your installer follows manufacturer specifications exactly, including proper subfloor preparation, moisture testing on concrete (especially in basements), adequate acclimation time, and correct expansion gap spacing. Keep all installation documentation, photos of the subfloor condition, and proof of materials used. If you're DIY installing, follow the manufacturer's installation guide precisely and document each step.

Professional Installation Recommendation

While laminate is among the most DIY-friendly flooring options, professional installation in Calgary typically costs only \$2-4 per square foot and ensures warranty compliance while handling Calgary's specific climate challenges. Professional installers understand local subfloor conditions, proper moisture management for Calgary basements, and expansion requirements for our extreme seasonal humidity swings.

Need help finding a qualified laminate installer? Calgary Floor Installers can match you with local flooring professionals who understand warranty requirements and Calgary's unique installation challenges.

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

- Amar Homes Inc
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
- True North Overhead Doors
- Wise Abatement
- Keystone Exteriors

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How much does laminate flooring installation cost in Calgary?

Laminate flooring installation in Calgary typically costs between \$3 and \$7 per square foot fully installed, making it one of the most budget-friendly flooring options available. For a typical Calgary home with 1,200 to 1,800 square feet of flooring area, you're looking at a total project cost of roughly \$3,600 to \$12,600 depending on the laminate quality, subfloor condition, and scope of prep work required.

The material itself ranges from about \$1.50 to \$4.00 per square foot at Calgary flooring retailers, with professional installation labour adding another \$1.50 to \$3.00 per square foot. Entry-level laminate in the \$1.50-\$2.00 range is fine for rental properties or rooms with light traffic, but for a family home in communities like Tuscany, Cranston, or Legacy, you'll want to budget for a mid-range product in the \$2.50-\$3.50 range that offers better wear resistance and a more realistic wood-grain appearance.

Don't forget the additional costs that catch many Calgary homeowners off guard. Removing old flooring adds \$1 to \$3 per square foot — carpet is on the cheaper end, while pulling up old tile or glued-down sheet vinyl is more labour-intensive. Subfloor levelling, if needed, runs \$2 to \$6 per square foot and is essential because laminate requires a flat surface within 3mm over 1.8 metres to avoid hollow spots and premature joint failure. Quality underlayment adds \$0.50 to \$1.50 per square foot, and you should never skip it — especially on concrete subfloors where a vapour barrier underlayment is non-negotiable. New baseboards and transition strips typically add \$3 to \$8 per linear foot installed, and furniture moving runs \$200 to \$600 for a full home.

Calgary's laminate pricing sits in a moderate range by Canadian standards — roughly 10 to 20 percent below what you'd pay in Toronto or Vancouver for the same product and installation quality, and about 20 to 30 percent above smaller markets. Pricing can fluctuate with economic activity in the oil and gas sector, which directly affects skilled trades availability in Calgary. Getting quotes from two or three installers is always wise — pricing varies more than you'd expect between companies, and the cheapest quote isn't always the best value if they're cutting corners on subfloor prep or underlayment.

If you're looking to keep costs down, laminate is an excellent choice for bedrooms, living rooms, and hallways where moisture exposure is minimal. For a free estimate tailored to your specific project, Calgary Floor Installers can match you with local flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Mike's Restoration Service

- UR COWRY CABINETS
- Premium Built Structures
- Home Style Supplies
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc

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Q5

Is laminate flooring a good choice for Calgary basements with occasional moisture?

Laminate flooring is generally not the best choice for Calgary basements where any moisture is a concern, because standard laminate is not waterproof. The HDF (high-density fibreboard) core that gives laminate its rigidity will swell and permanently warp when exposed to standing water or sustained moisture, and once that damage occurs, the affected planks cannot be repaired — they must be replaced.

Calgary basements present particular moisture challenges that make this decision especially important. Concrete basement slabs in Calgary homes sit below grade where moisture naturally migrates upward through the concrete via capillary action. During spring snowmelt and heavy summer rains, hydrostatic pressure can push moisture through even well-sealed slabs. Calgary's frost depth exceeds 1.2 metres, and the freeze-thaw cycling can create micro-cracks in basement slabs over time that allow additional moisture intrusion. If your basement has ever had even minor dampness along the walls or a faint musty smell, that's a strong signal that moisture vapour emission is elevated.

If you're set on a laminate look, there are water-resistant laminate products now available at Calgary retailers that feature wax-coated edges and sealed joints designed to resist surface spills for 24 to 72 hours. These cost \$3 to \$5 per square foot for the material alone and are a meaningful step up from standard laminate. However, they are still not truly waterproof — they'll handle a knocked-over glass of water, but they will not survive a sump pump failure, a sewer backup, or a foundation leak that puts standing water on the floor for hours.

For Calgary basements with any moisture history, luxury vinyl plank (LVP) or SPC flooring is the significantly better choice. At \$4 to \$9 per square foot installed, LVP is 100 percent waterproof, handles Calgary's extreme humidity swings without gapping, and today's products look remarkably similar to wood-grain laminate. SPC (stone polymer composite) rigid-core vinyl is especially well-suited to Calgary basements because it handles temperature swings better than WPC alternatives. You can install it directly over concrete with a basic vapour barrier underlayment, and if your basement ever floods, you can pull up the planks, dry the subfloor, and

reinstall the same material.

Before installing any flooring on a Calgary basement slab, a moisture test is essential — either a calcium chloride test or a relative humidity probe test. If moisture vapour emission exceeds 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet per 24 hours, you'll need a proper moisture mitigation system before any flooring goes down, regardless of material.

Need help choosing the right basement flooring for your situation? Browse flooring installers in your area through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

- Besademolition
- Venkor Group Inc
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Eshine Cleaning Services
- Ardco Construction

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Q6

What AC rating laminate should I use for a busy Calgary family home with dogs?

For a busy Calgary family home with dogs, you want AC4 or AC5 rated laminate flooring — these are the commercial-grade durability ratings that can handle pet claws, heavy foot traffic, and the grit that gets tracked in from Calgary's gravel-heavy winter roads and sidewalks.

The AC rating (Abrasion Class) is a European-standard durability scale that measures a laminate floor's resistance to wear, impact, staining, and burns. **AC3 is the minimum for residential use** and is fine for bedrooms or low-traffic areas, but it will show scratch marks and wear patterns within a few years under the abuse that dogs and active kids dish out. **AC4 is rated for general commercial use** — think light office or retail traffic — which translates to excellent durability in a busy household. **AC5 is the highest rating**, designed for heavy commercial traffic, and it's essentially bulletproof for residential use. In Calgary's retail market, AC4 laminate typically runs \$2.50 to \$4.00 per square foot for material, while AC5 products land in the \$3.50 to \$5.00 range.

With dogs, texture matters as much as the AC rating. Look for laminate with an embossed-in-register (EIR) or textured surface rather than a smooth, high-gloss finish. Textured surfaces hide micro-scratches from claws far better than smooth finishes, and they provide better traction for your dogs — slippery floors can actually cause joint problems in larger breeds over time. Darker colours and mid-tone wood grains with visible grain patterns also hide scratches better than very light or very dark solid colours.

Calgary-specific considerations for pet owners include the seasonal grit factor. From November through April, sand, gravel, and salt get tracked into Calgary homes constantly — by boots, shoes, and muddy paws coming in from walks. This abrasive grit is essentially sandpaper on your floor's surface. A quality entry mat system and regular sweeping or vacuuming is critical to preserving any laminate floor, but it's especially important when dogs are tracking in wet, gritty paws multiple times a day. The drier winter months also mean more static, which attracts fine dust and grit into the floor's embossed texture.

One important note: laminate is not waterproof, which matters with dogs. Accidents, drool, and water from dog bowls will damage standard laminate if not cleaned up promptly. If your dogs are puppies still being house-trained, or older dogs with occasional accidents, consider a water-resistant laminate with sealed edges — or step up to LVP, which is fully waterproof and available at \$4 to \$9 per square foot installed in Calgary.

For professional installation that ensures your new floor handles everything your family and pets can throw at it, Calgary Floor Installers can match you with experienced local installers for a free estimate.

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

- Canadian Closet
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Dealtwith.
- Mike's Restoration Service
- UR COWRY CABINETS

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How does laminate flooring handle the extreme dryness of Calgary winters?

Laminate flooring handles Calgary's extreme winter dryness reasonably well compared to solid hardwood, but it is not immune to the effects of Calgary's notorious low humidity. The HDF (high-density fibreboard) core in laminate planks does expand and contract with humidity changes, though significantly less than solid wood. During Calgary's winter months when indoor relative humidity regularly drops to 15 to 20 percent — sometimes even lower without a humidifier running — you may notice minor gapping at the joints between laminate planks.

Calgary's winter dryness is among the most extreme of any major Canadian city, and it creates conditions that stress all wood-based flooring products. From roughly November through March, furnaces run constantly, driving indoor humidity well below the 35 to 45 percent range that flooring manufacturers specify for optimal performance. When the HDF core in laminate planks loses moisture, it shrinks slightly, and because laminate is a floating floor connected by click-lock joints, this shrinkage can cause small gaps to appear between planks — typically most noticeable along the long edges. These gaps are usually cosmetic, measuring less than a millimetre, and they close up again when humidity rises in spring.

Chinook winds add another layer of stress that's unique to Calgary flooring. A chinook can swing temperatures from -25 to +10 degrees Celsius in a matter of hours, causing rapid humidity fluctuations inside the home. This sudden expansion and contraction stresses click-lock connections more than the gradual seasonal changes you'd see in other cities. Over years of chinook cycling, this repeated stress can loosen joints in lower-quality laminate products, eventually causing edges to lift or click connections to fail.

To protect your laminate flooring through Calgary winters, a whole-home humidifier is a worthwhile investment. Maintaining indoor humidity at 35 to 45 percent year-round dramatically reduces seasonal movement in laminate — and in every other wood-based flooring product in your home, including doors, trim, and cabinetry. A furnace-mounted humidifier typically costs \$400 to \$800 installed in Calgary and pays for itself in flooring longevity and general comfort. Portable humidifiers are a budget alternative for individual rooms but won't maintain consistent humidity through a full home.

Proper installation also makes a significant difference. Laminate must have a minimum 6 to 10mm expansion gap at all walls, doorframes, and fixed objects to accommodate seasonal movement. In Calgary, I'd lean toward the 10mm end of that range given our humidity extremes. If your installer pinches the flooring tight against a wall or a kitchen island, you'll see buckling or peaking when humidity rises in spring and summer. Also, allow laminate planks to acclimate in your home for at least 48 hours before installation — this is especially important if you're installing during winter when the material may have been stored in a cold, dry warehouse.

Higher-quality laminate with tighter click-lock tolerances (brands offering AC4 or AC5 ratings) handles Calgary's humidity swings better than budget products. If you're looking for flooring contractors who understand Calgary's climate challenges, browse the Calgary Construction Network directory for local professionals who install laminate daily in conditions like yours.

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

- Amar Homes Inc
- Besademolition
- Premium Built Structures
- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services
- Makki Abatement

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Q8

Can I install laminate flooring myself in my Calgary home or should I hire a pro?

Laminate is one of the most DIY-friendly flooring options available, and a handy Calgary homeowner can absolutely install it successfully — provided you're willing to invest time in proper preparation and follow manufacturer instructions carefully. That said, there are situations where hiring a professional is the smarter move.

What makes laminate DIY-friendly is the click-lock floating installation system. There's no adhesive to spread, no nails to drive, and no special pneumatic tools required. The planks snap together with tongue-and-groove joints, floating over an underlayment pad without being attached to the subfloor. The essential tools are straightforward: a tape measure, spacers for expansion gaps, a tapping block, a pull bar for the last row, a straight edge, and a saw for cutting planks. A mitre saw makes the job faster, but a circular saw or even a good jigsaw will work. Most Calgary home improvement stores rent mitre saws for \$40 to \$60 per day if you don't own one.

The part of the job that trips up most DIY installers isn't the laminate itself — it's the subfloor preparation. Laminate requires a subfloor that is flat to within 3mm over 1.8 metres. If your subfloor has humps, dips, or uneven areas, the laminate will develop hollow spots that click and flex underfoot, and the joints will eventually fail. On concrete basement slabs in Calgary, self-levelling compound may be needed to correct low spots, and a moisture test is absolutely essential before any material goes down. On plywood subfloors, you may need to sand down high

spots or add shims. This prep work is where experience really matters, and it's the most common reason homeowners wish they'd hired a pro.

Consider hiring a professional installer if your project involves any of the following: Complex room layouts with lots of angles, closets, and doorways require precise cuts and careful planning of plank direction and stagger patterns. Open-concept main floors that span large areas and transition between multiple rooms need continuous runs that require careful expansion joint planning — get this wrong and the entire floor can buckle. Concrete subfloors that need levelling or moisture mitigation should be handled by someone who's done it before. Transitions between laminate and existing flooring types (tile, carpet, hardwood) at doorways need proper transition strips installed correctly.

For Calgary specifically, acclimation matters more than in most cities. Leave the laminate planks in the room where they'll be installed for at least 48 hours — ideally 72 hours during winter — with the heating system running at normal temperature. If you're installing in January or February when indoor humidity is at its lowest, this acclimation period is critical to prevent gapping after installation.

A typical bedroom takes a capable DIY installer a full day; a complete main floor might take a long weekend. Professional installation in Calgary runs \$1.50 to \$3.00 per square foot for labour alone, so on a 500-square-foot room, you'd save \$750 to \$1,500 by doing it yourself. If you decide professional installation makes more sense for your project, Calgary Floor Installers can match you with experienced local contractors for free estimates through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Makki Abatement
- The Original Workshop
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc

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Q9

What is the price range for waterproof laminate flooring in Calgary stores?

Waterproof and water-resistant laminate flooring in Calgary retail stores typically ranges from \$2.50 to \$5.50 per square foot for material only, with most homeowners landing in the \$3.00 to \$4.50 range for a quality product suitable for everyday family use. It's important to understand the distinction between water-resistant and truly waterproof, because it directly affects where you can use the product and how much protection you're actually getting.

Water-resistant laminate uses an HDF core with wax-impregnated edges and sealed click-lock joints to resist moisture penetration from surface spills. These products can typically handle standing water for 24 to 72 hours depending on the manufacturer, which is a major improvement over standard laminate that begins swelling within minutes. In Calgary stores, water-resistant laminate from brands like Pergo WetProtect, Mohawk RevWood Plus, and Quick-Step Impressive Ultra runs \$2.50 to \$4.50 per square foot. These are genuinely good products for kitchens, hallways, and main living areas where spills happen but standing water is uncommon.

Truly waterproof laminate is a newer category where manufacturers have replaced the traditional HDF core with a waterproof composite core while maintaining the laminate wear layer on top. These hybrid products blur the line between laminate and LVP, and they typically cost \$4.00 to \$5.50 per square foot at Calgary retailers. They offer the realistic look and feel of laminate with waterproof performance closer to luxury vinyl plank.

Here's the honest truth about waterproof laminate for Calgary homeowners: even the best water-resistant laminate products are not designed to survive a basement flood, a burst pipe, or prolonged moisture exposure from below the subfloor. If you're shopping for basement flooring, a bathroom, or a laundry room, luxury vinyl plank at \$2.50 to \$6.00 per square foot for material is a more reliable choice because the entire plank — core included — is completely impervious to water. For main floors, kitchens, and entryways where you want the look and feel of laminate with better spill protection, water-resistant laminate is a solid middle ground.

Where to shop in Calgary: Major retailers like Home Depot and Lowe's carry a wide selection in the \$2.00 to \$4.00 range, while specialty flooring stores along Macleod Trail, in the Crossroads Market area, and in the northeast industrial areas typically carry higher-end products in the \$3.50 to \$5.50 range with better selection and more knowledgeable staff. Specialty stores often include more detailed warranty information and can advise on which products perform best in Calgary's dry climate. Factor in another \$0.50 to \$1.50 per square foot for quality underlayment, and \$1.50 to \$3.00 for professional installation labour if you're not going the DIY route.

Need help comparing options and getting installed pricing? Calgary Floor Installers can connect you with local flooring professionals who carry and install these products daily.

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

- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Bracha Concrete & Coatings Inc.
- Amar Homes Inc
- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Radon Lab

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How long does laminate flooring last in a Calgary home compared to hardwood?

Quality laminate flooring lasts 15 to 25 years in a typical Calgary home, while solid hardwood can last 50 to 100 years with refinishing — but the real comparison is more nuanced than raw lifespan numbers suggest, especially when you factor in Calgary's uniquely challenging climate.

Laminate's lifespan depends heavily on the product quality (AC rating), installation quality, subfloor condition, and how well the floor is maintained. An AC3-rated budget laminate in a busy family home with dogs and kids might show significant wear in 10 to 15 years. An AC4 or AC5 product properly installed with quality underlayment in the same home could easily last 20 to 25 years before it looks dated or worn enough to replace. **The critical difference between laminate and hardwood is that laminate cannot be refinished.** Once the wear layer is scratched through or the printed image layer shows damage, the only option is replacement. A single deep gouge from dragging furniture exposes the brown HDF core underneath, and there's no sanding that out.

Solid hardwood, by contrast, can be sanded and refinished 3 to 5 times over its lifetime, each time removing surface scratches, dents, and stains and applying a fresh coat of stain and polyurethane. A well-maintained oak hardwood floor installed in the 1970s can be sanded down and look brand new today — and that same floor could be refinished again in another 15 to 20 years. Refinishing costs \$3 to \$6 per square foot in Calgary, far less than the \$6 to \$15 per square foot you'd pay for new hardwood installation.

However, Calgary's extreme climate changes the equation significantly. Solid hardwood suffers more in Calgary than in almost any other major Canadian city. The winter humidity that drops to 15 to 20 percent causes chronic gapping, and the chinook-driven temperature swings stress wood fibres with rapid expansion and contraction cycles. Without a whole-home humidifier maintaining 35 to 45 percent relative humidity year-round, solid hardwood in a Calgary home will develop visible gaps every winter and may cup or check over time. That humidifier costs \$400 to \$800 to install plus ongoing maintenance and water costs. Laminate handles these humidity swings better than solid hardwood because the HDF core is more dimensionally stable, though it's not entirely immune to seasonal movement.

Engineered hardwood offers an interesting middle ground at \$7 to \$14 per square foot installed. It has a real hardwood wear layer that can be refinished 1 to 3 times, its plywood core handles Calgary's humidity swings far better than solid hardwood, and it typically lasts 25 to 40 years. For many Calgary homeowners, engineered hardwood hits the sweet spot between laminate's affordability and solid hardwood's longevity.

From a cost-per-year perspective, laminate at \$5 per square foot lasting 20 years costs about \$0.25 per square foot per year. Hardwood at \$10 per square foot lasting 50 years (with two refinishinges at \$4.50 each) costs about \$0.38 per square foot per year. Laminate is actually the better value for homeowners who plan to sell or renovate

within 15 to 20 years. If you're in your forever home and willing to invest in humidity control, hardwood is the better long-term investment.

To discuss which option makes sense for your home, browse flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

- Radon Lab
- Mike's Restoration Service
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- Home Style Supplies
- Royland Stucco

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Q11

Should I remove old carpet or install laminate over top in my McKenzie Towne home?

You absolutely must remove the old carpet before installing laminate — installing laminate over carpet is not a viable option and will lead to a failed floor. This applies whether you're in McKenzie Towne or anywhere else in Calgary. No laminate manufacturer supports installation over carpet, and doing so will void your warranty immediately.

The reason is structural. Laminate flooring relies on a firm, flat, stable surface to support the click-lock joints that hold the planks together. Carpet and carpet padding are soft and compressible, which means the laminate planks would flex and bounce with every step. This constant flexing puts enormous stress on the click-lock connections, and within weeks to months, joints begin separating, edges lift, and the floor develops gaps and squeaks. The soft substrate also creates hollow spots that feel spongy underfoot, and the laminate surface will eventually crack at stress points. It's not a question of whether the floor will fail — it's a question of how quickly.

Removing carpet in a McKenzie Towne home is straightforward and relatively affordable. Most McKenzie Towne homes were built in the late 1990s through the 2010s, so you're typically dealing with standard residential

carpet over plywood subfloor on the main and upper levels, with carpet over concrete in finished basements. Professional carpet removal in Calgary runs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot, including disposal. For a typical 800-square-foot main floor, that's \$800 to \$1,200. If you want to save money, carpet removal is one of the easiest DIY tear-out jobs — cut the carpet into manageable strips with a utility knife, roll them up, pull out the underpad, and remove the tack strips along the walls with a pry bar and hammer. Budget a half-day for a medium-sized room and arrange a trip to a Calgary landfill or schedule a junk removal pickup.

Once the carpet is up, inspect the subfloor carefully before installing laminate. In McKenzie Towne's plywood-subfloor homes, check for squeaky spots (screw them down with construction screws into the joists), high spots (sand them flat), and any areas where moisture may have caused damage. In basement areas with concrete slab, do a moisture test before proceeding — tape a piece of plastic sheeting to the slab, wait 48 hours, and check for condensation underneath. If moisture is present, you'll need a vapour barrier underlayment at minimum.

For McKenzie Towne basements specifically, keep in mind that standard laminate is not waterproof. If your basement has any history of moisture, even minor dampness, LVP at \$4 to \$9 per square foot installed is the safer choice. For the main floor and bedrooms, laminate at \$3 to \$7 per square foot installed is an excellent option that will look great and perform well.

Need help finding an installer for your McKenzie Towne flooring project? Calgary Floor Installers can match you with local contractors for free estimates through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Premium Built Structures
- Makki Abatement
- Canadian Closet
- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc

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Q12

What thickness laminate is best for Calgary homes with concrete subfloors?

For Calgary homes with concrete subfloors, choose laminate that is at least 10mm to 12mm thick — the thicker the plank, the better it performs over concrete in terms of feel underfoot, sound dampening, joint durability, and resistance to the temperature differentials that concrete slabs create in Calgary's cold climate.

Laminate thickness ranges from about 6mm at the budget end up to 14mm for premium products. Here's how the thickness tiers compare over concrete in Calgary conditions. **6mm to 8mm laminate** (\$1.50 to \$2.50 per square foot) feels thin and hollow over concrete, transmits cold readily, and produces a noticeable clicking sound with every step. The thinner HDF core is also less resistant to the moisture vapour that migrates through Calgary basement slabs. For a bedroom closet or a rental unit where budget is the primary concern, it'll function, but it won't feel like quality flooring. **10mm to 12mm laminate** (\$2.50 to \$4.00 per square foot) is the sweet spot for concrete subfloors. The thicker core provides better thermal insulation from the cold slab, significantly reduces hollow sound, and the joints are more robust because the tongue-and-groove profiles are deeper with more material engagement. This thickness range also bridges minor subfloor imperfections better than thinner products. **12mm to 14mm laminate** (\$3.50 to \$5.50 per square foot) is the premium tier and feels most like real hardwood underfoot. It provides the best sound dampening, thermal comfort, and joint durability. If budget allows, this is the best choice for main-floor living areas over concrete.

Underlayment selection is just as important as laminate thickness when installing over concrete in Calgary.

On a concrete slab, you need an underlayment that serves three functions: vapour barrier to block moisture migration from below, thermal insulation to reduce cold transfer from the slab, and acoustic padding to dampen footstep sound. A combination vapour-barrier-and-foam underlayment rated at 2mm to 3mm thick is the standard choice, running \$0.50 to \$1.50 per square foot. Some premium laminate products come with underlayment pre-attached to the back of each plank, which is convenient but may not include the vapour barrier layer — always check before assuming it's included.

Calgary's cold winters make thermal comfort on concrete a real consideration. Basement concrete slabs can stay at 10 to 15 degrees Celsius through the winter even in heated basements, and that cold transfers directly through thin laminate. A thicker laminate plank combined with quality underlayment creates a meaningful thermal break. If cold floors are a major concern, consider adding a 6mm foam underlayment or a cork underlayment (\$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot) for additional warmth and sound insulation.

Before installing any thickness of laminate over concrete, a moisture test is mandatory. Calgary basement slabs frequently have elevated moisture levels from groundwater pressure and spring snowmelt. If moisture vapour emission exceeds 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet per 24 hours, you'll need a dedicated moisture mitigation membrane before any flooring goes down.

For professional guidance on your concrete subfloor project, browse flooring installers through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

- The Original Workshop
- Makki Abatement
- True North Overhead Doors
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- One OAK Flooring

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How much does it cost to replace laminate flooring in a Calgary condo?

Replacing laminate flooring in a Calgary condo typically costs between \$5 and \$10 per square foot all-in, covering removal of the old laminate, subfloor preparation, new material, underlayment, and professional installation. For a typical Calgary condo with 600 to 900 square feet of flooring area, that translates to a total project cost of roughly \$3,000 to \$9,000 depending on the laminate quality you choose, the condition of your subfloor, and one factor that's unique to condos: acoustic underlayment requirements.

Breaking down the costs for a Calgary condo laminate replacement: Old laminate removal runs \$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot — it's a floating floor, so it pulls up relatively easily once you remove the baseboards. New laminate material costs \$1.50 to \$5.00 per square foot depending on quality and AC rating. Underlayment runs \$0.50 to \$2.50 per square foot, and this is where condo requirements can push costs higher than a single-family home (more on that below). Professional installation labour adds \$1.50 to \$3.00 per square foot. New baseboards or baseboard reinstallation adds \$3 to \$6 per linear foot if needed. Furniture moving and protection typically runs \$200 to \$400 for a full condo.

The acoustic underlayment requirement is the biggest cost difference between condo and house laminate installation in Calgary. Most Calgary condo buildings — and virtually all built in the past 15 years in communities like East Village, Beltline, Bridgeland, Seton, and University District — have sound transmission requirements that specify minimum STC (Sound Transmission Class) and IIC (Impact Insulation Class) ratings for flooring assemblies. Your condo's bylaws or architectural guidelines will specify these requirements, and failing to meet them can result in a failed building inspection, complaints from neighbours below you, and potentially having to tear up the floor and start over. **Acoustically rated underlayment that meets condo STC/IIC requirements typically costs \$1.50 to \$2.50 per square foot** — significantly more than the \$0.50 basic foam underlayment you'd use in a house. Always check your condo board's flooring requirements before purchasing materials.

Additional condo-specific considerations in Calgary: Many buildings require advance notice and approval before flooring work begins — some require architectural committee approval with material specifications, underlayment documentation, and installer insurance certificates. Most condos restrict construction hours, typically 8 AM to 5 PM on weekdays and limited Saturday hours. Elevator booking for material delivery may be required and sometimes carries a refundable deposit. These logistics can add a few days to the project timeline but shouldn't significantly affect cost.

A practical approach for Calgary condo owners: Get your condo board's flooring requirements in writing first, then get two to three quotes from installers who specifically mention acoustic underlayment experience. Condo flooring installation has enough nuances that this is a project where professional installation typically pays for itself

in avoided mistakes.

Calgary Floor Installers can match you with condo-experienced flooring contractors for free estimates through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- One OAK Flooring
- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Canadian Closet

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Q14

Does laminate flooring gap or buckle during chinook warm spells in Calgary?

Yes, chinook warm spells can cause both gapping and buckling in laminate flooring, and this is one of the most common laminate complaints from Calgary homeowners. Chinooks are Calgary's unique weather phenomenon — warm Pacific air masses that can raise temperatures by 20 to 30 degrees Celsius within hours, swinging from -25 to +10 in a single afternoon. This rapid temperature change causes sudden humidity fluctuations inside your home, and laminate flooring responds to those fluctuations with expansion and contraction that's far more abrupt than the gradual seasonal changes you'd see in most Canadian cities.

Here's what happens during a chinook cycle. When a chinook arrives and temperatures spike, outdoor air suddenly carries more moisture than the cold, dry air it replaced. If you open windows to enjoy the warm spell (as many Calgarians do), indoor humidity rises quickly. The HDF core in laminate planks absorbs this moisture and expands. If the floor was installed without adequate expansion gaps — or if those gaps have been blocked by baseboards nailed too tightly, heavy furniture pushed against walls, or transition strips that pin the floor — the expanding planks have nowhere to go and the floor buckles or peaks, creating raised ridges along joints. When the chinook passes and cold, dry conditions return, sometimes within the same day, the planks contract again, potentially leaving visible gaps at the joints.

This rapid cycling is more damaging than gradual seasonal change because the click-lock joints in laminate are stressed by sudden movement rather than slowly adjusting over weeks. Over several years of chinook cycling, lower-quality laminate joints can loosen permanently, and you'll hear clicking sounds and feel subtle movement underfoot even in stable weather.

How to prevent chinook-related laminate problems in your Calgary home. First and most importantly, ensure proper expansion gaps during installation. Every wall, doorframe, cabinet, and fixed object needs a minimum 8 to 10mm gap — lean toward 10mm in Calgary given our extreme conditions. These gaps should be hidden by baseboards that rest on top of the laminate without pinning it down. Second, maintain consistent indoor humidity at 35 to 45 percent year-round using a whole-home humidifier. This reduces the magnitude of humidity swings during chinook events. Third, resist the urge to throw open every window during a chinook — crack a few for fresh air, but letting warm, moist chinook air flood your entire home creates exactly the sudden humidity spike that causes expansion problems. Fourth, invest in quality laminate with tight-tolerance click-lock joints (AC4 or higher) that can withstand repeated stress cycling better than budget products.

If your laminate is already showing gapping after chinook events, the gaps are likely cosmetic and will close when humidity stabilizes in spring. If the floor has buckled, check whether expansion gaps are blocked — a blocked gap is the most common cause of buckling and is usually fixable by removing baseboard and trimming the laminate edge back to restore the gap.

If chinook-related flooring issues are giving you trouble, a professional assessment can identify the root cause. Find local flooring experts through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Venkor Group Inc
- Eshine Cleaning Services

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Q15

What underlayment do I need for laminate flooring on a Calgary basement slab?

For laminate flooring on a Calgary basement slab, you need a combination vapour barrier and foam underlayment at minimum — and choosing the right underlayment is arguably more important than choosing the laminate itself, because the underlayment is your only line of defence against the moisture that migrates through every Calgary basement concrete slab.

Calgary basement slabs face persistent moisture migration from below. Groundwater pressure, spring snowmelt, and the natural capillary action of concrete mean that even a bone-dry-looking basement slab is transmitting moisture vapour upward constantly. Calgary's frost depth exceeds 1.2 metres, and the freeze-thaw cycling can create micro-cracks in older slabs that increase moisture transmission over time. Without a proper vapour barrier between the slab and your laminate, this moisture will eventually reach the HDF core and cause swelling, warping, and mould growth on the underside of the flooring — damage that's invisible until the floor starts buckling or developing a musty odour.

The three types of underlayment suitable for Calgary basement slabs, from basic to premium:

Standard foam with built-in vapour barrier (\$0.50 to \$1.00 per square foot) is the entry-level option. These products combine a 2mm to 3mm closed-cell foam pad with an integrated polyethylene moisture barrier, typically a 6-mil film attached to the top surface. They provide basic cushioning, adequate moisture protection for dry basements, and minimal sound dampening. Products in this category are readily available at Calgary retailers. This is acceptable for dry basements with no history of moisture issues.

Premium foam or cork with vapour barrier (\$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot) offers significantly better thermal insulation and sound dampening. Cork underlayment in particular provides excellent thermal resistance, which matters on a Calgary basement slab that stays cold for six months of the year. These products also provide better cushioning underfoot, reducing fatigue from the hard concrete beneath. For a basement that doubles as a living space or recreation room, this upgrade is worth the investment.

Moisture-mitigating membrane systems (\$2.00 to \$4.00 per square foot) like DMX One-Step or Delta-FL create an air gap between the slab and the flooring, allowing moisture vapour to dissipate rather than building up against the flooring. These are the gold standard for Calgary basements with known moisture concerns and are the best choice if your calcium chloride moisture test shows elevated vapour emission rates.

Before installing any underlayment, test your slab's moisture levels. Tape a two-foot square of clear polyethylene sheeting to the slab, seal all edges with tape, and check after 48 to 72 hours. If condensation or darkening appears under the plastic, your slab has elevated moisture and you should use a moisture-mitigating membrane system or reconsider whether LVP (which is fully waterproof) would be a safer choice than laminate.

One critical installation detail: when laying underlayment on a basement slab, overlap the seams of the vapour barrier layer by at least 8 inches and tape them with vapour barrier tape. Any gaps in the barrier allow moisture through and defeat the purpose. Run the vapour barrier material up the wall by 2 inches behind the baseboard.

For expert installation over your Calgary basement slab, get matched with experienced flooring contractors for free through Calgary Floor Installers and the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services
- Durable Decks
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Ardco Construction

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Is name-brand laminate worth the extra cost over budget options in Calgary?

In Calgary's challenging climate, name-brand laminate is generally worth the extra \$1 to \$2 per square foot over budget options — and the reasons go beyond just appearance. The chinook-driven humidity swings, extreme winter dryness, and temperature cycling that Calgary homes experience put more stress on laminate flooring than nearly any other Canadian market, and this is exactly where the engineering differences between premium and budget products show up.

What you actually get for the extra cost with name-brand laminate comes down to four factors that matter especially in Calgary. First, **tighter click-lock tolerances**. Brands like Pergo, Quick-Step, and Mohawk invest heavily in precision milling of their click-lock profiles. Tighter joints resist the repeated expansion-contraction cycling from chinooks far better than looser-tolerance budget joints, which tend to loosen and develop gaps within a few years. Second, **higher-density HDF core**. Premium laminate uses a denser core board that absorbs and releases moisture more slowly, buffering the rapid humidity changes Calgary homes experience. Budget laminate with a lower-density core reacts faster to humidity shifts, amplifying gapping and swelling. Third, **better wear layer durability**. Name-brand AC4 and AC5 rated products use more sophisticated aluminum oxide wear layers that resist scratching, fading, and scuffing longer than budget AC3 products. Calgary's intense UV at 1,045 metres elevation fades lower-quality surfaces faster, and the grit tracked in from winter roads is essentially sandpaper on a thin wear layer. Fourth, **more realistic appearance**. Embossed-in-register (EIR) texturing that matches the printed grain pattern is standard on premium laminate but rare on budget products. The visual and tactile difference is immediately obvious and affects how the floor looks for its entire lifespan.

The math makes the case. Budget laminate at \$1.50 per square foot lasting 12 to 15 years in a Calgary home costs about \$0.10 to \$0.13 per square foot per year. Mid-range name-brand laminate at \$3.00 per square foot lasting 20 to 25 years costs about \$0.12 to \$0.15 per square foot per year. The annual cost difference is minimal, but the name-brand product looks and feels better for its entire lifespan, handles Calgary's climate with fewer issues, and typically carries a stronger warranty — 25 to 30 years versus 10 to 15 years for budget products.

Where budget laminate makes sense: rental properties where appearance is secondary to cost, temporary flooring you plan to replace within 5 to 10 years, or low-traffic rooms like a guest bedroom. For main living areas, kitchens, hallways, and any room that sees daily family traffic, the premium product is the better investment.

Brands commonly available at Calgary retailers in the recommended mid-range to premium tier include Pergo, Quick-Step, Mohawk RevWood, Torlys, and Mannington. Shop at specialty flooring stores along Macleod Trail and in northeast Calgary for the best selection and knowledgeable staff who can show you the differences firsthand.

Want help comparing options for your specific project? Calgary Floor Installers can connect you with local professionals who carry these products through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Premium Built Structures
- Amar Homes Inc
- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Turnbull masonry
- Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing

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Q17

Can laminate flooring be installed over radiant heat in a Calgary home?

Yes, laminate flooring can be installed over radiant heating systems in Calgary, but only if the specific laminate product is rated for radiant heat and the system follows strict temperature limits. Not all laminate is compatible, and exceeding the surface temperature threshold will void your warranty and damage the floor.

The critical temperature limit for laminate over radiant heat is 27 degrees Celsius (80 degrees Fahrenheit) at the floor surface. This is a firm ceiling set by virtually every laminate manufacturer. Exceeding this temperature causes the HDF core to dry out, shrink, and delaminate — the wear layer can literally separate from the core. In Calgary, where homeowners understandably want warm floors during -25 to -35 degree winter nights, this temperature limit can feel frustrating. Radiant heat under laminate provides gentle, even warmth that takes the chill off the floor, but it will not make the floor feel hot to the touch like it can under tile or stone.

Electric radiant heat mats are the most common system used under laminate in Calgary, and they pair reasonably well as long as the system has a thermostat with a floor-temperature sensor (not just an air-temperature sensor) to ensure the 27-degree limit is never exceeded. Electric radiant heat systems add approximately \$5 to \$10 per square foot to the installation cost in Calgary, and the electrical connections must be performed by a licensed electrician. An electrical permit and inspection by a Safety Codes Officer are required — this is not optional. The Safety Codes Council certifies the inspectors who review this work.

Hydronic radiant heat (hot water tubing) also works under laminate, and hydronic systems actually tend to produce more gentle, even heat that's easier to keep within the temperature limit. However, hydronic systems embedded in concrete slabs — common in newer Calgary custom homes — require a moisture test before laminate installation, as the combination of slab moisture and heat can create conditions that stress the laminate's HDF core.

Installation requirements for laminate over radiant heat in Calgary include several non-negotiable steps. Use only laminate explicitly rated for radiant heat — check the manufacturer's technical data sheet, not just the box label. Use a thin, thermally conductive underlayment rather than thick foam that insulates the floor from the heat source — defeating the purpose of the system. Never use a vapour barrier over radiant heat in a plywood subfloor assembly, as it can trap moisture; over concrete, a vapour barrier is still necessary but must be radiant-heat-rated. Turn the heating system on at least 48 hours before laminate delivery to bring the subfloor to operating temperature, then allow the laminate to acclimate for at least 72 hours in those conditions. After installation, raise the thermostat temperature gradually — no more than 2 to 3 degrees per day — to avoid thermal shock.

One Calgary-specific consideration: During chinook events, outdoor temperatures can spike 20 to 30 degrees in hours, rapidly warming the home. If your radiant heat system doesn't have a floor sensor to automatically reduce output when the chinook warms the room, the combination of chinook warmth and radiant heat could push the floor surface past the 27-degree limit. A programmable thermostat with a floor probe is essential.

For radiant heat flooring installation, you'll want an experienced professional. Find flooring contractors familiar with heated floor systems through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

- True North Overhead Doors
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Durable Decks
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd

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Q18

How much do Calgary flooring companies charge to install laminate in an open concept main floor?

Calgary flooring companies typically charge \$4 to \$8 per square foot fully installed for laminate on an open-concept main floor, including material, underlayment, and professional labour. For a typical Calgary open-concept main floor of 700 to 1,200 square feet — common in communities like Mahogany, Evanston, Seton, Walden, and Nolan Hill — that puts the total project cost at roughly \$2,800 to \$9,600 depending on the laminate quality and scope of preparation required.

Here's a detailed cost breakdown for a typical 900-square-foot open-concept laminate project in Calgary.

Laminate material: \$1,800 to \$3,600 (\$2.00 to \$4.00 per square foot for a quality mid-range product, plus 10 percent overage for cuts and waste). Underlayment: \$450 to \$900 (\$0.50 to \$1.00 per square foot). Professional installation labour: \$1,350 to \$2,700 (\$1.50 to \$3.00 per square foot). Old flooring removal: \$900 to \$1,800 if removing existing carpet or laminate (\$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot). Baseboards: \$900 to \$2,400 for reinstallation or new baseboards (\$3 to \$8 per linear foot, and a 900-square-foot open floor plan typically has 150 to 300 linear feet of baseboard). Transition strips at doorways and material changes: \$150 to \$400. Furniture moving: \$200 to \$500. **Total realistic budget: \$5,750 to \$12,300 for a 900-square-foot project with old flooring removal and new baseboards.**

Open-concept layouts add specific considerations that affect pricing. A continuous laminate run across a large open area without walls to break it up requires careful planning for expansion joints. Most laminate manufacturers specify a maximum continuous run of 8 to 12 metres (roughly 25 to 40 feet) before a transition strip or expansion break is required. In a large open-concept space, your installer may need to incorporate one or two transition strips to prevent buckling — this is especially important in Calgary where seasonal humidity swings cause more expansion and contraction than most markets. A skilled installer will plan these transitions at natural visual breaks like hallway entries or between the kitchen and living areas.

The direction of plank installation matters more in open-concept spaces because the continuous sight lines make the layout very visible. Most installers run planks parallel to the longest wall or toward the primary light source, but in open-concept homes with multiple window walls, the best direction requires professional judgment. Running planks through doorways and around kitchen islands requires precise cuts and stagger planning that takes more time — and therefore more labour cost — than installing in a simple rectangular bedroom.

Getting the best value from Calgary flooring companies means getting at least two to three quotes that break down material, labour, and preparation costs separately. Some companies bundle everything into a single per-square-foot price, which makes comparison difficult. Ask specifically what's included in the quote: Does it include old flooring removal? Subfloor levelling if needed? Baseboard removal and reinstallation? Furniture moving? These items can add \$1,500 to \$3,000 to a project if they weren't in the original quote.

For free estimates on your open-concept laminate project, Calgary Floor Installers can match you with experienced local contractors through the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Jk Stucco
- Dealtwith.
- Amar Homes Inc
- Calgary Custom Concepts
- Radon Lab

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What is the best laminate flooring brand available in Calgary for high traffic areas?

For high-traffic areas in Calgary homes, the top-performing laminate brands consistently available at local retailers are **Pergo, Quick-Step, and Mohawk RevWood** — all offering AC4 to AC5 durability ratings, tight click-lock systems that handle Calgary's chinook-driven humidity swings, and realistic appearance that holds up over years of daily use.

Pergo is arguably the gold standard for laminate flooring — they literally invented laminate flooring in Sweden in 1977. Their TimberCraft and Outlast+ lines are widely available at Calgary Home Depot locations and specialty flooring stores. Pergo's SpillProtect surface provides water resistance for up to 24 hours, the click-lock system (Uniclic) is one of the tightest in the industry, and their AC5-rated products handle heavy residential traffic for 25 years or more. Material pricing in Calgary runs \$3.00 to \$4.50 per square foot. The TimberCraft WetProtect line is their premium offering with built-in underlayment and a waterproof surface.

Quick-Step (made by Unilin, a Belgian company) offers the Naturetek and Impressive Ultra lines that are popular with Calgary installers. Their Uniclic click-lock system is the same technology licensed from the Unilin patent family, and their HydroSeal treatment coats the joint edges to resist moisture penetration. Quick-Step products in Calgary retail at \$2.50 to \$4.00 per square foot and are available at specialty flooring stores and some Home Depot locations. Their scratch-resistance ratings are excellent for homes with pets and kids.

Mohawk RevWood is widely available through Calgary's independent flooring retailers and the Mohawk dealer network. The RevWood Plus line features their WetProtect waterproof technology and Uniclic joint system. Pricing runs \$3.00 to \$5.00 per square foot for the RevWood Plus tier. Mohawk offers one of the widest style selections in the Calgary market, so if matching a specific wood species look is important, they likely have what you need.

Torlys is a Canadian brand (based in Toronto) with strong distribution in Calgary through specialty retailers. Their Smart Laminate line is well-suited to Calgary conditions and runs \$3.00 to \$4.50 per square foot. Being Canadian, their products are designed with Canadian climate extremes in mind, and their customer service is domestic.

What to look for regardless of brand in Calgary's high-traffic context: AC4 or AC5 rating (non-negotiable for heavy traffic), embossed-in-register texture (hides scratches far better than smooth finishes and provides better traction), water-resistant treated edges, and a warranty of 25 years or more. For high-traffic areas specifically, avoid very light or very dark solid colours — mid-tone wood grains with visible grain patterns are the most forgiving of scuffs, micro-scratches, and tracked-in grit from Calgary's winter roads.

Where to shop in Calgary: Specialty flooring stores offer the widest brand selection and most knowledgeable staff — look along Macleod Trail, in the northeast industrial area, and near Crossroads. Home Depot and Lowe's carry Pergo and select Mohawk products at competitive pricing with convenient availability. For the best buying experience, visit a specialty store first to see and compare products, then decide whether the price difference justifies purchasing there versus a big-box retailer.

Want professional guidance on which brand suits your specific traffic patterns and budget? Browse flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

- Bracha Concrete & Coatings Inc.
- Premium Built Structures
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd
- The Original Workshop
- Radon Lab

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Q20

Should I choose laminate or luxury vinyl plank for my Airdrie home basement?

For an Airdrie home basement, luxury vinyl plank is the significantly better choice over laminate — and this recommendation is especially strong given the moisture conditions, temperature extremes, and below-grade challenges that basements in the Airdrie and greater Calgary area face year-round.

The fundamental difference comes down to water. **Laminate is not waterproof.** Its HDF (high-density fibreboard) core absorbs water and swells irreversibly when exposed to moisture. Once laminate swells from water exposure, the damage is permanent — the planks cannot be dried out and returned to their original shape. In a basement, this is a critical vulnerability. **LVP and SPC (stone polymer composite) are 100 percent waterproof** through their entire thickness. You can submerge an LVP plank in water indefinitely and it will not swell, warp, delaminate, or sustain any damage.

Why this matters specifically for Airdrie basements. Airdrie sits at roughly 1,080 metres elevation on the Alberta prairie, and homes in communities like Coopers Crossing, Ravenswood, Bayside, and Hillcrest are subject to the same below-grade moisture dynamics as greater Calgary. Concrete basement slabs transmit moisture vapour upward constantly through capillary action. Spring snowmelt from the heavy late-season dumps Calgary and Airdrie receive can elevate groundwater levels, increasing hydrostatic pressure against basement walls and slabs. Airdrie has experienced significant growth in the past 15 years, and many homes have relatively new slabs — but even new concrete transmits moisture vapour. And the reality is that basements flood. Sump pump failures, sewer backups, washing machine leaks, and water heater failures are not rare events — they're eventualities over the life of a home. With laminate, any of these events means full replacement of the affected area. With LVP, you pull up the wet planks, dry the subfloor thoroughly, and reinstall the same planks.

The cost comparison is closer than most people expect. Budget laminate runs \$3 to \$5 per square foot installed, while mid-range LVP runs \$4 to \$7 per square foot installed in the Calgary/Airdrie market. For a 600-square-foot finished basement, that's a difference of roughly \$600 to \$1,200 — a modest premium for a floor that's waterproof, warmer underfoot (especially SPC with attached cork backing), and immune to the moisture issues that plague basement laminate installations.

LVP also handles Calgary's temperature and humidity extremes better in a basement context. SPC rigid-core vinyl is dimensionally stable across the wide temperature range a Calgary basement experiences — from 12 to 15 degrees Celsius in winter near the slab surface to 22 to 25 degrees in summer. Laminate's HDF core expands and contracts with humidity changes, and basements have different humidity patterns than main floors, creating additional stress on click-lock joints.

The one area where laminate wins is underfoot feel. Thicker laminate (12mm) feels more like real hardwood underfoot than most LVP products. If that tactile quality is important to you and your basement is confirmed dry with a calcium chloride moisture test showing less than 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet per 24 hours, laminate with a moisture-barrier underlayment is a workable option — just understand the risk you're accepting.

For your Airdrie basement project, get matched with experienced installers who know below-grade conditions through Calgary Floor Installers and the Calgary Construction Network.

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

- Dealtwith.
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- Greenstone landscaping solutions

- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc

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Q21

How do I fix laminate floor gaps that appeared after my first Calgary winter?

Laminate floor gaps that appear during your first Calgary winter are almost always caused by the extreme dryness of Calgary's heated indoor air, and the good news is that most of these gaps will close on their own when humidity rises in spring and summer. Before attempting any fix, wait until May or June to see if the gaps close naturally — rushing to fill gaps in January will likely create bigger problems when the planks expand.

Why this happens in Calgary specifically. Calgary's indoor relative humidity drops to 15 to 20 percent during winter — well below the 35 to 45 percent range that laminate manufacturers specify for optimal performance. When the furnace runs constantly from November through March, it drives moisture out of the indoor air and out of the HDF core in your laminate planks. As the core loses moisture, it shrinks, and because laminate is a floating floor connected by click-lock joints, this shrinkage creates visible gaps between planks. First-winter gaps are especially common because the laminate is reaching equilibrium with Calgary's indoor climate for the first time. If the material was stored in a warehouse with different humidity conditions or wasn't acclimated in the home long enough before installation, the first-winter shrinkage can be more dramatic.

If gaps close in spring, the fix is humidity management, not floor repair. Install a whole-home humidifier on your furnace, maintaining 35 to 45 percent relative humidity year-round. This costs \$400 to \$800 installed in Calgary and is the single most effective thing you can do to protect every wood-based product in your home — flooring, doors, trim, and cabinetry. With consistent humidity control, the seasonal gapping cycle will be minimal. Portable humidifiers in individual rooms are a budget alternative but won't maintain consistent humidity throughout the home.

If gaps persist into summer and don't fully close, the issue is likely installation-related. The most common causes are planks that weren't properly engaged during installation (the click-lock joint wasn't fully seated), insufficient acclimation before installation, or a subfloor that isn't flat enough, causing planks to sit at slightly different heights and stress the joints. For gaps caused by unseated joints, you may be able to fix individual planks by carefully tapping them back into engagement using a tapping block and pull bar — the same tools used during installation. Work from the nearest wall inward, removing the baseboard first to access the expansion gap.

Never fill laminate gaps with wood filler, caulk, or any other filler product. This is a common mistake that leads to worse problems. Laminate planks need to move freely with humidity changes. Filling the gaps prevents this movement, and when the planks expand in spring and summer, the filled gaps create pressure that causes buckling, peaking, or permanent joint damage. The gaps exist because the planks contracted — the fix is to address why they contracted (low humidity) or to re-engage loose joints, not to fill the symptom.

If the gaps are widespread (throughout the entire floor) and severe (more than 1 to 2mm), a professional assessment is warranted. The floor may need to be partially disassembled and reinstalled with proper joint engagement, or the subfloor may need levelling in specific areas. In the worst case, if the laminate was a budget product with loose click-lock tolerances, the joints may have permanently degraded from Calgary's chinook cycling, and replacement of the worst sections may be needed.

For a professional assessment of your gapping issue, find experienced flooring contractors through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

- Durable Decks
- Keystone Exteriors
- One OAK Flooring
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What is the total cost of laminate flooring including removal of old carpet in Calgary?

The total cost of laminate flooring including carpet removal in Calgary runs \$5 to \$10 per square foot all-in, covering every step from pulling up the old carpet to walking on a finished new floor. For a typical Calgary home with 1,000 to 1,500 square feet of carpet being replaced, that puts the complete project at \$5,000 to \$15,000 depending on laminate quality, subfloor condition, and whether you need new baseboards.

Here's a detailed line-by-line breakdown at Calgary market rates:

Carpet removal and disposal: \$1.00 to \$1.50 per square foot. This includes pulling up the carpet, removing the underpad, prying out tack strips, and hauling everything to the landfill. Carpet removal is one of the easier DIY tear-out jobs if you want to save \$1,000 to \$1,500 — cut it into strips with a utility knife, roll them up, and haul to a Calgary waste facility. Budget a half-day per 500 square feet.

Subfloor preparation: \$0 to \$6.00 per square foot. This is the wildcard in every flooring project. If the plywood subfloor under your carpet is in good shape — flat, dry, no squeaks — prep cost is minimal, just removing a few staples and checking for high spots. If the subfloor needs levelling with self-levelling compound, you're looking at \$2 to \$6 per square foot. In older Calgary homes, particularly those in established communities like Altadore, Killarney, or Ramsay, plywood subfloors may need sections replaced or joists addressed. For a newer home in Sage Hill, Auburn Bay, or Cityscape, subfloor condition is usually good.

Laminate material: \$1.50 to \$5.00 per square foot. This range covers everything from basic AC3 budget laminate to premium AC5 water-resistant products. For most Calgary family homes, the sweet spot is \$2.50 to \$4.00 per square foot for a quality AC4 product with realistic appearance and tight click-lock joints that handle Calgary's humidity extremes. Always buy 10 percent extra for cuts, waste, and future repair stock.

Underlayment: \$0.50 to \$1.50 per square foot. Standard foam underlayment with vapour barrier is fine for main floors over plywood subfloor. If you're over concrete, spend more on a combination vapour-barrier-and-foam product.

Professional installation labour: \$1.50 to \$3.00 per square foot. This covers layout planning, cutting, installation, and cleanup. Open-concept layouts and rooms with many angles, closets, and transitions tend toward the higher end.

Baseboards and trim: \$3 to \$8 per linear foot. If your existing baseboards can be carefully removed and reinstalled, this cost drops to \$1 to \$3 per linear foot for labour only. New MDF baseboards are the more common approach and provide a clean, finished look. A 1,200-square-foot home typically has 250 to 400 linear feet of

baseboard, so this line item can easily reach \$1,000 to \$2,400.

Transition strips: \$15 to \$40 each installed at doorways and flooring material changes. A typical home needs 5 to 10 transitions.

Furniture moving: \$200 to \$500 for a full home, or free if you move it yourself.

Sample total for a 1,200-square-foot Calgary home: Carpet removal (\$1,500) + mid-range laminate material (\$3,600) + underlayment (\$900) + installation labour (\$2,400) + new baseboards (\$2,000) + transitions (\$200) + furniture (\$300) = **approximately \$10,900**. Actual quotes will vary based on your specific home and material choices.

Get free estimates for your project from local Calgary installers through the Calgary Construction Network at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com.

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

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- Turnbull masonry
- Universal Slate International Inc.
- Quality count construction Ltd.
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Can I reuse laminate flooring after a Calgary basement flood or does it need replacing?

In almost every case, laminate flooring that has been exposed to a basement flood needs to be completely replaced — it cannot be dried out and reused. This is one of the harsh realities of laminate flooring in Calgary basements, where floods from sump pump failures, sewer backups, spring snowmelt intrusion, and burst pipes are not uncommon events.

The reason laminate cannot survive a flood comes down to its construction. The core of every laminate plank is HDF — high-density fibreboard made from compressed wood fibres. When HDF absorbs water, it swells irreversibly. Unlike solid wood that can sometimes be dried and returned to roughly its original dimensions, HDF that has swelled from water absorption does not shrink back. The fibres permanently expand, the plank warps and buckles, the click-lock joints separate, and the decorative wear layer delaminates from the core. Even if the laminate looks relatively intact after the water is removed, the edges of the planks will have swelled, creating visible ridges at every joint, and the structural integrity of the click-lock system is compromised.

How long the water sat matters, but not as much as you'd hope. Standing water for even a few hours is typically enough to cause irreversible swelling at the plank edges where the HDF core is most exposed. Water wicks into the HDF through the joints, the cut edges at walls, and any chip or scratch in the surface. If your basement had standing water for 12 hours or more — which is common during overnight sump pump failures — the damage is almost certainly total. Even if some planks in higher areas of the floor avoided direct water contact, the humidity from the flood event (trapped under the floating floor) is enough to cause swelling across the entire installation.

The priority after a basement flood is drying the subfloor, not saving the laminate. Remove the laminate as quickly as possible to expose the concrete slab and allow it to dry. Every hour that wet laminate sits on the slab increases the risk of mould growth between the flooring and the concrete. Run dehumidifiers and fans continuously for at least 48 to 72 hours, and ideally a full week, to bring the slab's moisture levels back to acceptable range. If the flood involved sewer water (Category 3 or "black water"), professional remediation is strongly recommended — the concrete slab and any exposed framing may need antimicrobial treatment.

Insurance considerations for Calgary homeowners. Most home insurance policies in Alberta cover sudden and accidental water damage (burst pipe, sump pump failure) but not gradual seepage or groundwater intrusion. Document the damage thoroughly with photos and contact your insurance adjuster before disposing of the damaged laminate — they may need to inspect it. Laminate replacement including removal, subfloor prep, new material, and installation typically runs \$5 to \$10 per square foot in Calgary.

After a flood, strongly consider replacing laminate with LVP or SPC flooring at \$4 to \$9 per square foot installed. These products are 100 percent waterproof — if your basement floods again, you can pull up the planks, dry the subfloor, and reinstall the same material. Given that the average Calgary homeowner with a finished basement will likely deal with at least one water event over the life of the home, the small cost premium for waterproof flooring is genuine insurance.

For help with post-flood flooring replacement, Calgary Floor Installers can match you with experienced contractors through the Calgary Construction Network.

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