

Bellingham Floor Pros

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Hardwood floor installation in Bellingham

Costs, moisture rules and bid checks for Whatcom County homes

WHAT IT RUNS HERE

Hardwood floor installation in Bellingham runs \$8.80 to \$15.40 per square foot installed, or \$13,200 to \$30,800 for a typical 1,500 to 1,800 square foot home. Species, board width and subfloor condition set where you land. In Whatcom County the moisture readings matter as much as the material, because the wood and the subfloor need to be within 4 percent of each other before a single board goes down.

Free estimate, written scope

<https://bellinghamfloorpros.com/guides/hardwood-installation>

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What matters most

- Installed hardwood runs \$8.80 to \$15.40 per square foot in Bellingham, or \$13,200 to \$30,800 on a 1,500 to 1,800 square foot home.
- NWFA guidelines cap the moisture difference between flooring and subfloor at 4 percent.
- Washington code requires six mil black polyethylene over crawl space soil, lapped 6 inches at the joints.
- Hickory moves roughly 1.5 times as much as Douglas fir for the same humidity swing.
- Washington contractors carry a \$15,000 specialty bond or \$30,000 general bond, checkable at secure.lni.wa.gov/verify.

THE NUMBERS

Hardwood installation in Bellingham and the work that often rides along with it

SCOPE	WHAT IT COVERS	BELLINGHAM RANGE
Hardwood installed	Material, delivery, acclimation, layout, fastening or adhesive, transitions and shoe molding	\$8.80 to \$15.40 per square foot
Whole home, 1,500 to 1,800 square feet	Living areas, halls and bedrooms run as one continuous floor	\$13,200 to \$30,800
Subfloor repair and flattening	Sistering joists, replacing soft sheathing, plywood overlay, leveling to NWFA flatness tolerance	\$5.50 to \$13.20 per square foot
Moisture mitigation	Crawl space ground cover and drainage work, or a slab moisture control system before flooring	\$880 to \$2,750
Board repair on the existing floor	Cutting out and replacing damaged boards instead of replacing the whole floor	\$330 to \$1,650 per project
Refinishing what you already have	Sanding to bare wood and recoating rather than buying new material	\$3.85 to \$6.60 per square foot, or \$2,000 to \$4,950 per project
LVP where hardwood is the wrong call	Laundry rooms, bathrooms, daylight basements and slab additions	\$4.40 to \$11 per square foot

Species, board width and how far out of flat the subfloor sits move the number more than anything else on the list.

What it costs

Installed hardwood in Bellingham runs \$8.80 to \$15.40 per square foot, or \$13,200 to \$30,800 on a 1,500 to 1,800 square foot home. Demo and subfloor work price separately.

- Subfloor repair: \$5.50 to \$13.20 per square foot
- Moisture mitigation: \$880 to \$2,750
- Refinishing instead of replacing: \$3.85 to \$6.60 per square foot

The moisture rules

Flooring ships at 6 to 9 percent moisture content and settles to match the air in your house. NWFA allows no more than 4 percent difference between the flooring and the subfloor at install.

- Keep indoor relative humidity at 30 to 50 percent
- Install at 60 to 80 degrees
- Get meter readings in writing with dates

Crawl spaces

Washington code requires six mil black polyethylene over crawl space soil, lapped 6 inches at joints and run to the foundation wall. NWFA asks for full coverage plus 18 inches of ground clearance.

- Vent area 1 square foot per 300 square feet of crawl space
- Reduced to 1 in 1,500 with an approved Class I vapor retarder
- Fix torn ground cover before flooring, not after

Picking material

Ask for wear layer thickness on engineered flooring. A 2mm face takes one sanding, a 4mm to 6mm sawn face behaves like solid wood.

- Plainsawn moves about twice as much as quartersawn
- Plywood core beats a fiberboard core in a wet climate
- Hickory 0.00411 versus Douglas fir 0.00267 dimensional change

Reading a bid

Washington registers contractors rather than testing them. Verify bond and insurance yourself, then check the scope for the items most often left off.

- \$15,000 specialty bond, \$30,000 general bond
- \$200,000 public liability and \$50,000 property damage minimum
- Pre-1978 painted floors need a certified renovator and certified firm

Install sequence

Acclimation, demo, flatness prep, layout, felt, then flooring. Expect about a week of crew time on a typical home, plus acclimation days ahead of it.

- Flatness 1/4 inch in 10 feet for nail-down, 3/16 inch in 10 feet for glue-down
- 3/4 inch expansion space at walls and obstructions
- End joints stagger at least 6 inches between rows

Failure modes

Cupping, gapping and hollow spots all trace back to moisture that was not measured or not fixed. A cupped floor should not be sanded until the wood and subfloor stabilize.

- Slab wood installs need ASTM F2170 at 75 percent RH or below
- ASTM F1869 calcium chloride at 3 lbs per 1,000 sq ft or less
- Minimum 5/8 inch CDX subfloor over joists at 16 inches on center

After install

Buy a hygrometer and hold 30 to 50 percent relative humidity. With 168 rainy days a year here, walk-off mats at every door protect the finish more than anything else.

- Felt pads under furniture, replaced yearly
- No steam mops, no vinegar, no oil soap
- Screen and recoat before the wear layer is gone

Check these before you sign a hardwood installation contract

- ☐ Registration, bond and insurance verified at secure.ini.wa.gov/verify, not just claimed on the estimate.
- ☐ Subfloor and flooring moisture readings written on the estimate as numbers with dates.
- ☐ Acclimation stated in days, with the material sitting in the rooms where it will be installed.
- ☐ Crawl space ground cover inspected, with torn or missing six mil poly priced before flooring goes down.
- ☐ Subfloor flatness prep named, with the tolerance the crew is working to.
- ☐ Underlayment specified, 15 lb asphalt saturated felt meeting ASTM D4869 or an equal permeance building paper.
- ☐ Demo and haul-away priced as their own line, not folded into a blended rate.
- ☐ A written subfloor allowance with the unit price that applies if the crew finds rot.
- ☐ Wear layer thickness in millimeters if the floor is engineered, so you know how many sandings you own.
- ☐ Slab test results on file if any of the floor sits on concrete, ASTM F2170 at 75 percent or below.
- ☐ Transitions, stair noses and shoe molding listed, with who paints them spelled out.
- ☐ Warranty terms in writing, both the manufacturer material warranty and the labor warranty.

Want a real number for your place?

We walk the job, measure it, and put the scope in writing. Free, and there is no pressure attached.

(360) 873-5667

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Full guide: <https://bellinghamfloorpros.com/guides/hardwood-installation>

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