

Bellingham Floor Pros

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Hardwood refinishing in Bellingham

Wear layer, finish choice, containment and timing for Whatcom County homes

WHAT IT RUNS HERE

Hardwood refinishing in Bellingham runs \$3.85 to \$6.60 per square foot, or \$2,000 to \$4,950 on a typical project. Floor size, edge work, stain and finish choice set where you land. Before pricing anything, check the wear layer: NWFA guidance says a floor with less than 3/32 inch of wood above the tongue should not be sanded at all.

Free estimate, written scope

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

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What matters most

- Refinishing runs \$3.85 to \$6.60 per square foot in Bellingham, or \$2,000 to \$4,950 on a typical project.
- NWFA guidance says a floor should not be sanded once wear thickness drops below 3/32 inch.
- Three sanding cuts with no more than one grit skipped between them is the NWFA standard.
- Federal rules cap floor coatings at 400 grams of VOC per liter and clear wood varnishes at 450.
- A cupped floor should not be sanded until the flooring and subfloor moisture content have stabilized.

THE NUMBERS

Refinishing in Bellingham and the work that often has to happen around it

SCOPE	WHAT IT COVERS	BELLINGHAM RANGE
Refinishing and recoating	Sanding, edging, buffing, vacuum and tack, sealer and topcoats	\$3.85 to \$6.60 per square foot
Typical refinishing project	A main floor or a few connected rooms taken to bare wood and refinished	\$2,000 to \$4,950
Board repairs before sanding	Cutting out damaged boards, patching old register cuts, replacing a water-stained run	\$330 to \$1,650 per project
Subfloor repair under a failed floor	Sistering joists, replacing soft sheathing, flattening before the floor goes back	\$5.50 to \$13.20 per square foot
Moisture mitigation	Crawl space ground cover and drainage work, or slab moisture control	\$880 to \$2,750
Replacement when the wear layer is gone	New material, acclimation and installation instead of sanding	\$8.80 to \$15.40 per square foot, or \$13,200 to \$30,800 whole home

Floor size does more to the per square foot price than anything else, because setup and cure time cost the same on a small floor as on a large one.

What it costs

Refinishing runs \$3.85 to \$6.60 per square foot in Bellingham, with a typical project at \$2,000 to \$4,950. Small single rooms price near the top of the range because setup costs the same either way.

- Board repairs first: \$330 to \$1,650 per project
- Moisture mitigation: \$880 to \$2,750
- Full replacement instead: \$8.80 to \$15.40 per square foot

Check the wear layer first

A 3/4 inch solid floor starts with roughly 1/4 inch of wood above the tongue and loses about 1/32 inch per sanding. Pull a floor register to measure what is left.

- NWFA: do not sand below 3/32 inch wear thickness
- Exposed nail heads mean the floor is done
- Engineered under 2mm wear layer is recoat only

Finish options

Oil-modified ambers and keeps ambering. Waterborne stays clear. Two-component waterborne holds up best in kitchens and entries. Hardwax oil spot-repairs but wants regular maintenance.

- Federal cap: floor coatings 400 g/L, clear varnish 450 g/L
- Oil-modified typically 275 to 550 g/L
- Waterborne ranges 0 to 450 g/L

Dust containment

Ask what the sander and the edger are connected to. A HEPA-filtered containment vacuum keeps most dust out of the air rather than chasing it afterward.

- HVAC sealed or shut down during sanding
- Registers, returns, cabinets and fireplaces covered
- Dust bags emptied at half full, never stored on site

The sanding sequence

Three cuts with no more than one grit skipped, for example 36 then 50 then 80. The edger follows every cut at the same grit or you get a halo around every room.

- Set every protruding fastener before the first cut
- Water pop only when staining, and measure moisture before and after
- Tack with the solvent the finish maker specifies

Old fir floors

Much of Bellingham's older housing has vertical grain Douglas fir underfoot. It sands beautifully and it punishes an aggressive operator.

- Douglas fir is about 660 Janka against red oak near 1,290
- Square-cut nails have to be found and set first
- Painted fir floors fall under the lead rule

Why refinishes fail

Most failures are moisture, skipped grits or contamination. A do-over costs another full refinish plus another 1/32 inch of floor.

- Never sand a cupped floor before it stabilizes
- Wax, oil soap and silicone block adhesion
- Finish wants 60 to 80 degrees to cure properly

After the finish

Dry is not cured. Foot traffic first, furniture later, area rugs last. On waterborne rugs stay off about two weeks, on oil-modified closer to three.

- Hold indoor humidity at 30 to 50 percent
- Felt pads under everything, no rubber-backed rug pads
- Recoat before the finish wears through to bare wood

Work through this before you book a refinish

- ☐ Wear layer measured at a floor register, with at least 3/32 inch of wood above the tongue.
- ☐ No exposed nail heads anywhere in the field of the floor.
- ☐ Any cupping traced to a source and the source fixed, with the floor dried and stable before sanding.
- ☐ Loose or hollow boards and old patches priced as repairs ahead of sanding.
- ☐ Grit sequence written on the estimate, three cuts with no more than one grit skipped.
- ☐ Finish named by product, not just called water-based or oil-based.
- ☐ Containment scope listed, including HVAC sealing, register covers and a HEPA vacuum on the edger.
- ☐ Cure schedule in writing, with separate dates for foot traffic, furniture and area rugs.
- ☐ Lead certification confirmed if the house predates 1978 and any painted surface is in scope.
- ☐ Stain color approved on a sample board in your own light, not from a fan deck.
- ☐ Shoe molding removal and reinstallation stated, with who paints it.
- ☐ Warranty terms in writing for both the finish and the labor.

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

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