

Installation Expertise with Tim McAdoo

Steam Cleaners, Steam Mops and Swiffer Cleaners



We have all seen the commercials on TV showing Steam Cleaners or Steam Mops being used on Hardwood, Laminate, and Vinyl floors. Consumers have bought into these TV ads and are only setting themselves up for a major disappointment should their flooring fails or they have a maintenance issue. I have been in flooring stores and heard consumers say that the Steam Cleaner manufacturer says they can be used on all kinds of flooring. My response is, “are they going to cover the flooring warranty when your floor fails?” Of course they are telling consumers this. They want to sell their Steam Cleaners.

I have contacted our Hardwood, Laminate, Luxury Vinyl Tile, and Vinyl flooring manufacturers about this topic and the answer is always no, do not use Steam Cleaners on our floors.

I have researched warranties on these flooring product categories and was shocked that only one manufacturer (a competitor) had a statement on do not use Steam Cleaners. But, all manufacturers did have some kind of the following statement;

This warranty does not cover damage caused by improper installation, negligence, water erosion, abrasion, extreme heat or temperature, cleaning care or maintenance contrary to written instructions provided. In other words, your warranty is voided if you use a Steam Cleaner.

I have looked into what some of the Steam Cleaner manufacturers say you may use these products on. This is what Shark says;

Engineered for premium performance exclusively on hard floor surfaces. It can be used on all sealed hard floor surfaces – including sealed hardwood, linoleum, ceramic tile, or marble and other stone floors. Note that we do not suggest use of this product on unsealed surfaces, such as unfinished hardwood, unglazed ceramic floors, or unsealed stone floors. On surfaces that have been treated with wax or some no wax floors, the sheen may be removed by the heat and steam action. We

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recommend testing an isolated area of the surface to be cleaned before proceeding. **We recommend that you check the use and care instructions from the floor manufacturer. I read this as; If your floor fails, the Steam Cleaners are not picking up your flooring warranty either.**

Since the Steam Cleaner recommends that you check the use and care instructions from the flooring manufacturer, I have contacted the flooring manufacturers and got their response;

Anderson Hardwood; Never wet-mop, damp-mop, or clean your Anderson Hardwood floor with water or other products. This can severely damage the flooring and will void the warranties. Do not use hardwood floor cleaning machines or steam cleaners.

Armstrong/Bruce Hardwood & Laminate Flooring; NEVER CLEAN WITH STEAM CLEANERS. This may permanently damage the floor.

Armstrong Alterna, LUXE, and Sheet flooring & Tile; If you choose to use a non-Armstrong maintenance or cleaning product and you have an issue, we recommend contacting the manufacturer of that product for recommendations on how to resolve it. Floors damaged by excessive moisture are not covered by warranty.

Avaire Floating Porcelain Tile; Avaire does Not Recommend the use of steam cleaners. The high heat associated with steam may temporarily soften grout lines. We do not recommend repeated softening and hardening of the grout lines. Additionally, any dirt not removed from the grout lines and left on softened grout may become hardened into the grout line when cooled.

Chesapeake Hardwood; We do not recommend steam cleaners on our flooring.

Columbia Hardwood & Laminate; WET MAINTENANCE IS ENTIRELY FORBIDDEN! Never wet mop or use wet or steam cleaners on your floor.

DuChateau Floors; We do not allow steam cleaners on DuChateau Floors.

Indusparquet Hardwood; We do not recommend steam cleaners on our flooring.

LM Flooring; LM's stance on steam cleaners is "DO NOT USE THEM". We have found that they cause all kinds of problems with engineered floors.

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Metroflor; Does not warrant the use of steam cleaners on any of our products.

Engage, Konecto and Starloc Flooring; “DO NOT USE THEM”. They are not recommended.

Laminique; “DO NOT USE THEM”. They are not recommended.

Mirage; Steam cleaners are not recommended for use on Mirage floors. Mirage floors are created by installing a number of individually sealed boards. Moisture from the cleaning machine could potentially get between the boards and damage the floor.

Tarkett Laminate and Vinyl Flooring; Not Recommended. Tarkett is not responsible for damage caused by extreme heat or temperatures from cleaning care or maintenance.

Timbercreek Hardwood; We do not recommend steam cleaners on our flooring.

Triangulo Hardwood; Not Recommended. Wood, water, and Steam are not a good combination.

We Cork; Not Recommended. This will void product warranty.

Wellmade Bamboo; NEVER CLEAN WITH STEAM CLEANERS. Moisture problems such as wet mopping, and Steam Cleaning will void product warranty.

National Wood Floor Association (NWFA); NWFA Technical Publication No. C100 Maintenance and Recoating of Hardwood Floors 2010, states on page 5, 7th point,” Using steam or excessive water may damage a wood floor”.

National Laminate Flooring Association (NLFA); Does not endorse the use of Steam Cleaning machines on Laminate flooring.

World Floor Covering Association (WFCA); We cannot find a manufacturer of either laminate flooring or hardwood flooring that will recommend the use of Steam Cleaning equipment on their floors. To clean and maintain your hardwood or laminate flooring, sweeping and/or using a vacuum cleaner (**without** the beater bar used for vacuuming carpet) should be sufficient. Occasionally clean with a mop (micro-fiber or terrycloth hooded for laminate floors) slightly moistened with a cleaning product recommended by the flooring manufacturer.

I also contacted several of our Ceramic suppliers. Ceramic Tile is the only flooring category where the manufacturer says the use of Steam Cleaners is acceptable. However, I was warned that

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if the grout has a sealer on it, extended use of a Steam Cleaner may remove the grout sealer. Note; Some Steam Cleaners are pressurized, and can reach pressures up to 70 PSI. This pressure is injecting a hot water solution onto and into any joints of your flooring, which is not recommended.

The use of a **Swiffer Cleaner** on your floors is also not a recommended cleaning product by flooring manufacturers. Most manufacturers have or recommend a specific cleaner for their products. They have tested these products and know how they will perform with their products. The Swiffer WetJet now has a cleaning agent with the cleaning power of the Mr. Clean Magic Eraser which has 2 times the cleaning power. Possibly even more damaging to the flooring finish. All manufacturers have some kind of statement to cover themselves in case some other cleaning product has been used and there is an issue. Here are a few statements from various manufacturers that have a **What is not Covered** section in their warranty;

What is not Covered

Dissatisfaction due to improper maintenance

Discoloration or damage caused by adhesives or floor care products not recommended

Dissatisfaction or damage due to improper installation or maintenance

Use of non-recommended maintenance and floor-care products

Improper Maintenance. Maintenance instructions must be followed and in particular

The bottom line is that if consumers choose to use these types of products, they are then responsible for the effects or damage these products may have on their flooring investment.

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About Tim McAdoo:

Tim is a certified instructor for Armstrong, Avaire, Konecto and Starloc products and has been a member of the Armstrong Installation Training Team since 1984. Tim has highly developed installation skills and qualifications that have been combined over his 32 years in the floor covering industry. Tim is privy to all the latest innovations and techniques used in the installation of their products.

We are sure you will find your skills improved after attending one of his installation courses.




To view a complete list and register for one of Tim's installation trainings, click here on the QR or visit: <http://www.jjhaines.com/for-customers/installation-training/>



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