

Refinishing Your Hardwood Floors

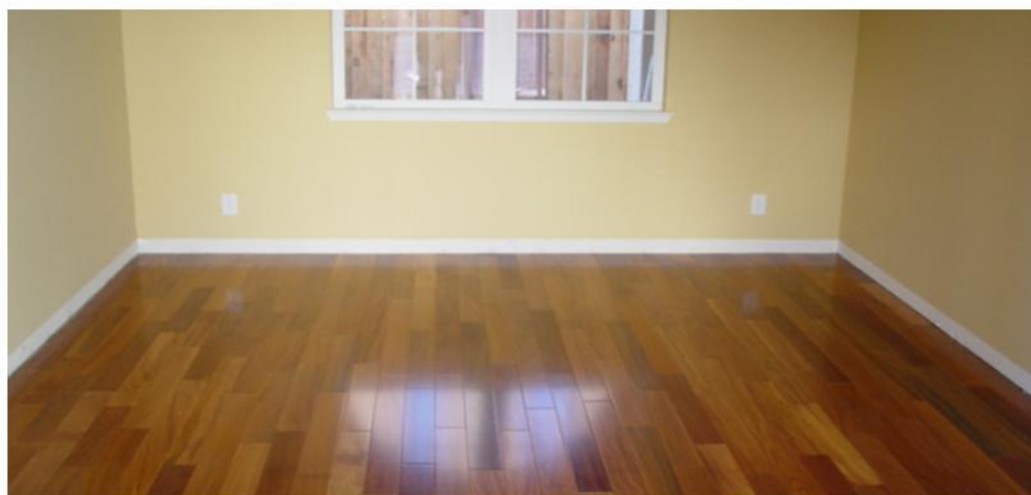
Sanding and refinishing wood floors can make them beautiful. It can also be dangerous!

Fires can start from

- Flammable products, which can include solvents, stains, finishes, or sealers
- Rags used with solvents, stains or finishes — they can catch fire from heat or sparks
- Wood dust that can catch fire from heat or sparks
- Sparks or pilot lights that ignite solvent vapors, which can travel through a house

Some floor finishing products have ingredients that cause dizziness or headaches, or irritate your nose and throat. Exposures to certain ingredients can cause allergies and other health problems in people who work with these products over long periods of time.

Inhaling wood dust itself can cause irritation or asthma.



If you choose to refinish your wood floors

1. Choose all products with **flash points** that are **higher** than 100°F (38°C). This means that they will not easily catch on fire at low temperatures. You can find the flash point on the label or material safety data sheet or by calling the manufacturer.
2. Keep wood dust and used rags away from direct sunlight, hot closed vehicles, sparks, flames, and hot rooms or sheds.
3. Turn off gas pilot lights (water heaters, stoves) before applying finishes. Avoid turning electric appliances on or off while finishing the floor.
4. Choose products that contain safer ingredients. You can get information from Green Seal www.greenseal.org/recommendations/CGR_wood_finish.pdf or telephone (202) 872-6400.
5. Follow manufacturers' instructions for all products. Use all recommended safety equipment. Use NIOSH-certified, 2-strap dust masks while sanding wood.
6. If a floor is painted with old paint that might contain lead, **don't sand it!** Consult a professional lead remover.

For more information

www.woodfloordoctor.com • www.finishingwoodfloors.com • www.woodfloorsonline.com

"Guide to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)": www.lehigh.edu/~kaf3/guides/msds.html

To learn about DOHI's work to make floor finishing safer, call MassCOSH at 617-825-SAFE or Viet-AID at 617-822-3717.