



# AC Rating | What Laminate Rating is Best for Your Home?

Outside of appearance, what is the #1 thing people want in their flooring? Durability. This is why every [type of flooring](#) has specifications that indicate durability. Some floors require you to look at multiple specifications; others have a single specification. Some floors durability indicators are trustworthy; others are misleading. For laminate, this **durability rating is the AC rating**. But is the AC rating something you can put your money on? In most cases, yes. But there are other factors that come into play. Here's what I'll cover to make sure you know everything you need (and nothing you don't need) about AC ratings:

- what is an AC rating?
- can it be trusted?
- what AC rating do I need?
- do I need to look at anything else?

## So, what is an AC rating?

AC rating is a 1-6 rating that indicates a laminate floor's durability. The rating is performed by an independent company, and all reputable manufacturers use this rating for their laminate floors. AC stands for abrasion coefficient, but the testing includes many different tests that represent everyday wear. What are the tests? Rubbing sandpaper back and forth. Moving furniture legs and chair wheels. Exposure to heat/burns. Exposure to moisture. Impact resistance. Staining and more. Every laminate goes through each test performed by an unbiased third party. A 1-6 grade is given for each test, and the final 1-5 score is **based on the lowest score the laminate receives**. In other words, if a laminate received a score of 4 on every test except moving furniture on it was a score of 2, you would see the laminate rated as an AC2.







## Can the AC rating be trusted to determine durability?

Yes. There aren't many single scores I like for flooring. Many are biased or just inaccurate. The AC rating covers so many different ways that a laminate can wear, that the grade gives you a great idea of how durable your laminate will be. This doesn't always mean you should go for the highest score. I'll cover more on that in the breakdown of rankings

## Comparison of AC ratings

When shopping for laminate, the higher the AC rating, the more durable the laminate. If you're a homeowner, you'll want laminate with a 1-3 rating. If you're a commercial building owner, you'll want 3-5. Here's a breakdown:

**VAF TEXAS**  
LAMINATE AC RATING EXPLAINED

Rating <b>AC1</b>		Residential, moderate traffic. Suitable for bedrooms or guest rooms.
Rating <b>AC2</b>		Residential, general traffic. Suitable for living rooms or dining rooms.
Rating <b>AC3</b>	 	Residential, heavy traffic. Suitable for all areas. Light commercial, moderate traffic. Suitable for hotel rooms or small office.
Rating <b>AC4</b>		Commercial, general traffic. Suitable for office, boutiques or dining cafes.
Rating <b>AC5</b>		Commercial, heavy traffic. Suitable for public buildings or department stores.

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### AC1 rating

AC1 rated laminate is designated for the lightest homeowner traffic. This laminate can save you money, but only should be used in rooms without much traffic. Good examples are closets, rarely used dining rooms, guest bedrooms (that kids don't play in), and possibly adult bedrooms if you don't move furniture often.

### AC2 rating

AC2 rated laminate can take some traffic but shouldn't be used in high-traffic areas. This might include family rooms that aren't the main play area but do see some activity. Or a bedroom that gets walked on more than just when you're going to bed.

### AC3 rating

AC3 rated laminate is the highest rating for homeowners and the lowest for commercial use. Homeowners can use AC3 rating to hold up in main living areas, hallways, and stairs. In some cases, AC3 may be acceptable for lighter commercial use, but I would receive it more for an office setting and not a store that gets daily public traffic.

### AC4 rating

AC4 rated laminate is the first level designated for commercial use. Stores that receive public traffic or busy offices can use AC4 rated laminate to hold up to daily shoppers.

### **AC5 rating**

AC5 rated laminate is the highest durability rating. It's intended to be used in high-traffic commercial buildings: think busy restaurants, department stores, and large corporation traffic areas.

### **AC6 rating**

AC6 rated laminate is rare, but you might see it. It's a step up for extreme commercial use.

## **Can AC4 and AC5 rated laminates be used in homes?**

You might be wondering, "If AC4 and AC5 can hold up to commercial use, why not use it in my home and have it last forever?" I don't recommend AC5 in homes for a couple of reasons. One is that you are likely overpaying. Yes, AC5 is durable, but it's overkill for home settings. The second is that AC5 is often high-pressure laminate that has a rough texture. And when I say rough, it puts holes in some people's socks and doesn't feel great on bare feet (not a problem in stores because people have shoes on). Our product is can't-beat price on AC4, and not rough feel great on bare feet.