

Product guide to commercial kitchen flooring



SPECTRA™
CONTRACT FLOORING

FIND THE RIGHT FLOOR FOR YOUR KITCHEN

Commercial kitchens have unique circumstances that make their floors a challenge. Kitchen floors see a large amount of wear and tear from unusual sources such as water, food waste and grease in addition to traditional factors like equipment and foot traffic.

Discover the best materials ideally suited for commercial kitchens

Consideration of the wear and tear commercial kitchens receive on a daily basis yields three materials ideally suited for kitchen floors – recycled PVC, quarry tile and epoxy flooring systems. In our experience, other flooring materials do not meet the requirements needed for a safe and effective commercial kitchen.



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DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

What considerations need to be weighed when choosing a flooring material for commercial kitchen spaces?

Given a commercial kitchen's unique set of circumstances, there are particular considerations that every designer should examine before choosing a flooring material.



Grease

The single biggest factor that limits the number of materials is grease. While there are many flooring materials, only a few can hold up to the wear and tear from grease, much less the cleaning chemicals and processes used to spruce up the floor and return to it to ideal conditions before the next shift.

Non-slip

Considering the grease, food materials and liquids that accumulate on a kitchen's floor over the course of a shift, a non-slip surface is paramount in maintaining employee safety and ensuring the reduction of shattered dinnerware and lost containers of food due to slippage.

Equipment

While kitchen equipment tends to stay stationary, most commercial kitchens like to have the ability to move equipment around as necessary. This equipment can have an impact on the durability of the floor due to its wide range of weight, shape and materials.

Maintenance

Every kitchen floor must be cleaned properly and regularly to maintain health code standards. Flooring materials must hold up to regular scrubbing and mopping with cleansers designed to remove grease and food.

Drains

Every kitchen utilizes drain sinks to collect excess liquids on the floor. The kitchen floors tend to slope toward the drain sinks to prevent any pooling, a common safety and health hazard. Drain sinks and their associated slopes must be accounted for, making some materials better to use than others.



RECYCLED PVC: THE RISING STAR

For many commercial kitchen projects, we have started using recycled PVC flooring, a composite material made from PVC fibers and micro-biocide used for the entire kitchen space. The product comes in 4'x 8' sheets that can be cut to shape for any room. The sheets are affixed to the substrate and cold-welded together for a seamless, groutless, waterproof seal. The sheets are anti-microbial and slip-resistant. Additionally, the material is softer compared to quarry tiles and epoxy. This allows for less breakage of dinnerware and improves worker fatigue.



Cost

Recycled PVC is slightly more expensive per square foot of material compared to quarry tile, but when considering labor for installation, maintenance, durability and repair costs, this flooring option is one of the most valuable flooring materials over the course of its lifespan.

Durability and maintenance

The dense material is resistant to abrasion, chemicals, grease and impact. This ensures a long life-span without shrinkage, separation or becoming brittle. Additionally, should the material get damaged, it can be cold-welded together or the damaged area can be cut out and replaced with a sheet the same size. This ease of replacement allows operations to continue outside of the affected area as opposed to other flooring options in which the whole floor needs to be replaced, effectively shutting down the kitchen. Maintenance is similar to other kitchen floors in that kitchens use a cleaner, scrub brush and mop to clean the floors. This flooring material does require a specialized cleaner designed to clean and maintain the integrity of the material.

Design and aesthetics

Aesthetics for recycled PVC are simple and to the point. There are seven different colors to choose from:

- *Slate*
- *Pewter*
- *Graphite*
- *Charcoal*
- *Terracotta*
- *Mesa*
- *Mocha*

The floor creates a seamless uniform look since there are no grout lines, bringing uniformity, simplicity and cohesion throughout the kitchen space.

Installation time investment

Recycled PVC is a much faster installation option compared to other flooring materials. There is less labor and wait time compared to tile and epoxy flooring systems due to less steps in the installation process and reduced task time for adhesives to set. Spectra Contract Flooring can easily float the perimeter of the composite flooring material, enabling the floor a small slope toward drain sinks.





QUARRY TILE: THE INDUSTRY STANDARD

Simple, natural and common for a reason, [quarry tile](#) has been an industry standard for kitchen spaces for decades. This sustainable flooring option is durable and slip resistant. Quarry tiles are manufactured using a mixture of clay, shale and feldspar. They are extruded and cut before being hard-fired in a kiln. This process increases density and improves mortar adhesion. There is a reason quarry tile has been around for a while –it’s tried and true. While the floor is slip resistant, many restaurants still put down rubber mats to improve slip resistance and help with employee fatigue.

Cost

Quarry tiles are the cheapest per square foot of the flooring material options for commercial kitchens. Their durability and lifespan make them a valuable choice. The issue of cost becomes apparent when replacement and repair is needed in addition to regular grout work.

Durability and maintenance

Because of their manufacturing process, quarry tiles are durable. They can hold up to kitchen equipment and foot traffic. They also are one of the few cleanable options when it comes to resisting grease and moisture. Standard scrubbing and mopping with appropriate cleaners will restore the tile after every shift. The biggest challenge associated with quarry tile are the grout lines. If the grout lines aren't sealed, they





become susceptible to bacteria growth. Unsealed grout lines need to be replaced on a yearly basis, which effectively shuts down the entire kitchen until replacement is completed. While hardened and durable, quarry tiles can chip over time. This chipping is only an aesthetic effect and does not hurt its performance. Should the tile crack or break, the affected area will need to be replaced.

Design and aesthetics

Quarry tile comes in multiple shades of red and brown hues. Quarry tile can come in a few different shapes and be laid in patterns but for effectiveness and ease, they are generally a simple square and laid in straight lines.

Installation time investment

The installation timeline is longer when compared with recycled PVC. Along with the labor hours involved with prepping the substrate, cutting tile, mapping layout, applying adhesives, setting the tiles and grouting the joints, there are also hours of waiting between some of the steps to ensure proper task time and preparation. Despite the time commitment, flooring professionals have been installing quarry tiles for decades. Professionals are efficient and the installation process has been perfected.

Installation and replacement

Ceramic tile is one of the easier flooring types to install and requires relatively minimal maintenance. Because it's installed in tiles, it's possible to replace one section at a time relatively quickly and inexpensively.



EPOXY FLOORING: THE CURVEBALL

Epoxy flooring systems are a [thermosetting resin](#) often applied as a protective and decorative coating on concrete flooring. This flooring system is strong and durable. Epoxy is abrasion, impact and chemical resistant. There are slip-resistant epoxy flooring options as well.



Cost

[Epoxy flooring](#) systems are relatively inexpensive to install, but it is imperative for a flooring expert to do the installation. Improperly installed epoxy flooring will chip and peel prematurely resulting in additional repair costs and business downtime. Given the longevity and durability of epoxy flooring, it is one of the best values available for lifetime cost.

Durability and maintenance

When properly installed, epoxy flooring systems can hold up to heavy foot traffic, kitchen equipment, drops, spills and more. While non-slip epoxy materials exist, most opt to still use rubber mats. Maintenance is a breeze as a simple sweep, scrub and mop with diluted ammonia will keep the floor clean and sparkling. Should the floor need repair, the entire kitchen space gets shut down for preparation and to ensure the epoxy has set properly once applied. This can often be difficult for business owners since operations are shut down until the floor is set.

Design and aesthetics

Epoxy flooring systems come in a wide range of stain and color options. Additionally, colored microchips can be added with a range of gloss levels. This versatility in design, combined with the industrial appeal of concrete flooring can have a dramatic effect on the aesthetics of any commercial kitchen.

Installation time investment

Epoxy flooring takes time and patience to install. The resinous material is quick to apply but must sit, undisturbed to set properly. An important factor in achieving a proper set is preparing the substrate properly. Additionally, flooring experts must slope the flooring toward drain sinks. This process involves laying a grout layer on the substrate to create the slope. This grout layer must set before the epoxy resin can be applied. Lastly, the resinous material needs time to properly set before seeing use.



CONSULTATIONS TO EVALUATE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

More about Spectra Contract Flooring

Spectra Contract Flooring is a Berkshire Hathaway company and is the largest commercial flooring contractor in the U.S. We have dozens of locations nationwide and have completed more than 350,000 flooring installations for clients in every industry. We provide start-to-finish flooring project management to save you time and money while making flooring installation easy for you.

If you have any flooring questions, [request a consultation](#) with our flooring experts or call any of our [locations](#).