

Anti-Slip Solutions: Is Vinyl Flooring Safe for Aged Care Facilities?



Alt Text: An elderly resident in an aged care facility

Meta Title: Is Vinyl Flooring Safe for Aged Care Facilities?

Meta Description: Learn how worn vinyl flooring affects safety in aged care and why non-slip coatings are a cost-effective alternative to full floor replacement.

Is your aged care facility's vinyl flooring still slip-resistant enough to ensure resident safety?

While vinyl flooring is widely used in aged care environments, its safety performance changes over time. Understanding how wear affects slip resistance is essential for maintaining compliance, preventing falls, and protecting both residents and staff.

Vinyl Floor Safety in Aged Care

[Vinyl flooring](#) has long been a popular choice in aged care facilities due to its durability, affordability, and ease of cleaning. However, as vinyl floors age, surface wear and coating degradation can significantly reduce slip resistance, increasing the risk of slips and falls among older residents.

With growing scrutiny around [slip resistance compliance](#), it is important to reassess whether existing floors remain fit for purpose. This article explores vinyl flooring lifespan, safety risks, and why non-slip coatings are an effective alternative to full replacement.

Key Takeaways

- Worn vinyl flooring increases the risk of slips for residents.
- Non-slip coatings provide a cost-effective, compliant alternative.
- Treatments restore safety and extend the lifespan of the floor.
- Regular testing and maintenance ensure ongoing safety.

What Is the Lifespan of Vinyl Floors?

Vinyl flooring typically has a lifespan of **10 to 20 years**, depending on the quality of the material, installation standards, and the level of foot traffic it experiences. This lifespan is often reduced in aged care settings because of continuous use, regular cleaning, and moisture exposure.

Over time, vinyl floors experience:

- Wear the protective top layer
- Loss of factory-applied slip-resistant finishes
- Surface smoothing from foot traffic and cleaning machines

Vinyl flooring may no longer meet safety regulations in terms of slip resistance, even if it appears to be in good condition. This makes regular assessment essential, particularly in high-risk areas such as bathrooms, dining rooms, corridors, and entryways.

Facility managers should note that visual inspection alone is not a reliable indicator of floor safety. Slip resistance must be measured using recognised testing methods such as those outlined in [AS 4586 and AS 4663](#).

How Worn Vinyl Impacts Elderly Safety

Vinyl flooring gets smoother and more dangerous as it ages, especially when it's wet. For elderly residents, this change significantly increases the risk of slips and falls.

Age-related factors that amplify this risk include:

- Reduced balance and slower reaction times
- Decreased muscle strength
- Mobility aids such as walkers or wheelchairs
- Cognitive impairment affecting hazard awareness

When slip resistance falls below acceptable levels, even routine activities like walking to the bathroom or dining area can result in serious injury. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), [Falls](#) are one of the leading causes of hospitalisation in older Australians, and aged care facilities are under increasing pressure to demonstrate proactive risk management.

Additionally, cleaning worn vinyl becomes more challenging. Cleaning agent residue can further reduce friction, resulting in a vicious cycle where more cleaning actually makes slip risk higher rather than reduced.

What Is the Safest Flooring for the Elderly?

The safest flooring for elderly residents is not defined by material alone, but by **measured slip resistance performance**, particularly in wet and high-traffic areas.

Key characteristics of safe flooring include:

- Certified slip resistance ratings
- Consistent performance in wet conditions
- Durability under constant foot traffic
- Ease of maintenance without degrading safety

Slip resistance is measured using the [Pendulum Test](#), which provides a **P-rating (P0–P5)**. In aged care facilities, many areas require a **P4 or P5 rating**, especially bathrooms, ramps, and entry points.

Some safe and proven flooring options for elderly bathrooms include rubber flooring, non-slip bathroom tiles, and non-slip vinyl tiles.

Rubber flooring offers strong slip resistance and cushioning that helps reduce injury from falls.

Non-slip bathroom tiles have textured or coated surfaces that improve grip in wet areas.

Non-slip vinyl tiles are water-resistant, slightly cushioned, affordable, and easy to maintain.

They are also durable enough to withstand frequent cleaning and moisture exposure. Overall, choosing the right flooring improves safety, comfort, and independence for elderly users.

Importantly, even flooring that was originally compliant could become non-compliant over time. This is why ongoing [slip resistance testing](#) and maintenance strategies are critical for aged care operators seeking to meet their duty of care obligations.

Best Alternative to Replacing Worn Vinyl Floors: Non-Slip Coatings

The High Cost of Flooring Replacement

Replacing vinyl flooring in an aged care facility is disruptive, expensive, and time-consuming. Full replacement typically involves:

- Removal and disposal of existing flooring
- Subfloor preparation
- New material and installation costs
- Temporary room closures or resident relocation

These projects can quickly escalate into **six-figure expenses**, particularly in large facilities, and often disrupt daily operations and resident routines.

Why Non-Slip Coatings Are a Smarter Solution

[Non-slip coatings](#) offer a cost-effective alternative that restores slip resistance **without replacing the existing vinyl floor**. These treatments are applied directly to the surface and are designed to improve traction while preserving the original appearance.

Key benefits include:

- Significantly lower cost than replacement
- Minimal disruption to residents and staff
- Rapid application and curing times
- Long-lasting slip resistance performance

For facility managers, this makes non-slip coatings an attractive option for extending the life of existing vinyl floors while addressing safety concerns.

Maintaining Slip Resistance Compliance

The ability of non-slip coatings to assist facilities in maintaining slip resistance compliance is one of their main benefits. These coatings can restore floors to Australian Standards-compliant [P-ratings](#) when applied and tested by professionals.

Non-slip treatments can be independently tested using **AS 4663** to verify performance in real-world conditions. This provides documented evidence of compliance, an important consideration during audits, incident investigations, or regulatory reviews.

Facilities using certified non-slip coatings demonstrate proactive risk management and a clear commitment to resident safety.

More information on compliant slip resistance solutions can be found at Stellmann:

<https://stellmann.com.au/>

FAQs

- **Is Vinyl Flooring Safe for Aged Care Facilities?**

Vinyl flooring can be safe in aged care facilities if it continues to meet slip resistance requirements. Over time, surface wear, polishing, and frequent cleaning can reduce traction, increasing the risk of slips and falls for residents. Regular assessment and slip resistance testing are essential to ensure floors remain compliant and suitable for high-risk environments.

- **Do Aged Care Facilities Need to Replace Worn Vinyl Flooring?**

Full replacement is not always necessary. If the vinyl flooring and subfloor remain structurally sound, applying a certified non-slip coating can restore surface traction and improve safety. This approach reduces disruption to residents and is often more cost-effective than removing and replacing the entire floor.

- **How can Aged Care Facilities Maintain Slip Resistance Compliance?**

Facilities can maintain compliance by using certified slip-resistant treatments, keeping documented slip test results, and following appropriate cleaning and maintenance practices. Clear records help demonstrate due diligence during audits, accreditation reviews, and incident investigations.

Conclusion

Worn vinyl flooring in aged care facilities poses a serious slip risk for residents, which facility managers cannot ignore. Applying certified non-slip coatings offers a cost-effective, compliant solution that restores floor safety and extends lifespan without costly renovations.

To protect residents, maintain compliance, and manage budgets, facility managers should prioritise regular testing, proactive maintenance, and the use of trusted non-slip solutions.