

## Choosing the Right LVT for Your Project

With LVT you can have it all. Aesthetics. Performance. Low maintenance. Long life-cycle. With so many reasons to love luxury vinyl tile (LVT), it is becoming the product of choice for commercial spaces ranging from retail, healthcare and education to hospitality and office. And while some LVTs are tailor-made for commercial use, others are geared for homeowners. How to make sense of the thousands of options, let alone which may be the best solution for your project? Your Starnet member has the expertise to help you navigate the world of LVT.



### Virtually Endless Designs

**Luxury styling** – Thanks to advances in manufacturing technology, today’s LVT realistically emulates the look, texture and character of natural hardwood, ceramic, stone and cement. The visuals rival the real McCoy; so much so that it’s often hard to tell if the Floorcovering underfoot is LVT. And, true to the natural materials they mimic, the formats complement the visuals. Modular “stone” tiles come in a multitude of sizes and shapes, while planks are styled in an array of widths and lengths. The tiles and planks are generally offered in uniform thicknesses, so it’s easy to combine different visuals and sizes together for creating unique end user experiences.

For designers looking for something out of the ordinary, look no further than LVT’s broad assortment of abstract looks, geometric patterns, florals and weaves. Unlike many other vinyl products, LVT’s almost limitless patterns facilitate multi-flooring design solutions paired with other Floorcoverings like broadloom carpet and carpet tile.

### Wear Layers are Critical

**Thicker is better** – The key consideration for selecting a commercial LVT product is the transparent wear layer. If it is damaged or worn off, there is no easy way to replace it or refinish the underlying design. While you might be tempted by the lower price of thinner, 3- and 6-mil wear layer products, the downside is their performance. Investing in a superior product reduces overall life-cycle costs by extending wear life and reducing the need for costly, time-consuming repairs or replacements.

At a minimum, choose a 20-mil wear layer product for satisfactory commercial performance. If you’re looking for optimum durability plus the lowest overall life-cycle costs, consider a thicker wear layer, especially for areas with heavy foot traffic.

**Additional protection** – Most manufactures apply a tough, UV-cured urethane coating on top of the wear layer to further protect your investment. These coatings typically increase the floors performance characteristics including resistance to scratches, stains, indents, and scuffs. Your local Starnet member can help you assess which wear layer thickness and coating provide the best performance and value for your project.

### Wear Layer Options

| THICKNESS   | PERFORMANCE                  | PRICE    | COMMERCIAL WARRANTY |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 3 & 6 MIL   | RESIDENTIAL                  | \$       | NO                  |
| 12 MIL      | RESIDENTIAL/LIGHT COMMERCIAL | \$\$     | 5 – 10 YEARS        |
| 20 MIL      | COMMERCIAL                   | \$\$\$   | 10 – 20 YEARS       |
| 30 & 40 MIL | COMMERCIAL                   | \$\$\$\$ | 20 + YEARS          |

Commercial warranty levels vary by manufacturer

## Flexible Installation

The latest installation method for LVT products is a tile-to-tile locking system, also known as a “floating floor,” requiring no adhesives. The major advantage, especially for spaces where time is of the essence, is that installations can be completed in about half the time and at half the cost of glue-down products.

The original adhesive installation system is still widely used. It's a proven performer, creating durable floor-to-substrate bonds that last for the life of the installation. In fact, two-part epoxy adhesives are considered the ultimate bond. They're recommended for LVT floors subjected to heavy static or dynamic loads.

**Deceptively simple** – Because LVT is resilient and flexible, a common misconception is that installation is literally “a snap” over any subfloor. The truth is, both the floating and glue-down installation products require a substantial amount of pre-installation prep to ensure a quality result. Working with a flooring expert like your local Starnet member is the best way to guarantee the installation you envisioned is the installation you get.



## Installation Considerations:

- **Manufacturer-recommended installation materials and methods**
- **Installation grade level**
- **Subfloor moisture conditions**
- **Substrate composition and condition**
- **Residual adhesives or other subfloor substances and imperfections**

## Sound Decisions

Even though resilient LVT does a better job of reducing footfall sounds than VCT or laminate, some customers may want to improve on acoustical performance. As with wear layers, thicker is better, both for sound properties and for durability. Acoustical membranes are typically made from PUR foam, cork granules or other materials ideally suited for controlling sound. But, choosing the wrong acoustical solution may be ineffective, or even discolor the floor and affect the floor-to-substrate bond. Seek out your local Starnet member to help you choose the best LVT/underlayment pairing.

## Partner with Starnet to Make a Superior LVT Choice

It's easy to get sold on LVT. Its luxurious looks and outstanding performance attributes are redefining what's possible in a resilient floor. Even so, you'll want to partner with a Starnet member to help you sort through all the possible choices and to ensure your installation provides years of customer satisfaction.

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One in a series of bulletins from your Commercial Floorcovering Professionals at:



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