

Better Environments Equal Better Experiences

As one of the most abundant finishes in the built environment, flooring has great potential to improve residents' safety and well-being, positively impact caregiver productivity and help limit liability and costs for owners and operators.

The most common flooring-associated safety issue for seniors is falling.

Consider the case of an 85-year-old resident living in a senior living community in central Illinois. She suffers from dementia and while still mobile, doesn't pick up her feet when she walks. Her daughter fears she will trip and fall. The resident's spouse, who is still her primary caretaker, doesn't think much about the impact of the environment on her health.

The area rugs on top of the carpet in their apartment are a huge tripping hazard. As someone who has worked in the healthcare design field, their daughter knows that smooth transitions and flooring that is less cushy are also important to her mom's safety.

According to facts gathered by the National Council for Aging Care, one in four Americans over the age of 65 falls each year. Between 30-50 percent of falls are due to environmental causes, such as poor lighting, slippery floors and uneven surfaces.

Fall-related costs to residential care facility owners and operators have been estimated at \$6,200 per resident per year.

Safety & Design Factors for Flooring

The most important safety and design factors to consider when choosing flooring for senior living environments are slip resistance, rolling mobility, transitions, patterns and glare.

Slip Resistance

Hard-surface flooring is often used in residential care facilities due to the misconception that polished flooring is clean. However, highly polished flooring may create a visual and tripping hazard.

Rolling Mobility

Initial rolling resistance refers to the amount of force needed to push a bed, wheelchair, food service cart, or other wheeled object forward from a stopped position. This is important for staff caring for residents in assisted care, skilled nursing or memory care as well as for residents using walkers or wheelchairs in any type of senior living environment.

Transitions, Patterns & Glare

Flooring transitions can be problematic when different flooring types are installed in the same environment. Differences in the height of the products require a transition strip, creating a possible trip hazard.

Busy floorcovering patterns and colors can also trigger confusion and agitation, particularly for those with dementia, increasing the risk of tripping and falling.

In addition, reflections and glare from windows on hard surface floors can also cause visual confusion. Matte finishes may help reduce this hazard.

Staff Health & Wellbeing

According to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, injury and illness case rates among staff at nursing and residential care facilities is more than triple the U.S. average for all industries – costing employers thousands of dollars per year.

Specifying flooring with anti-fatigue properties can help alleviate foot pain or discomfort for staff who are on their feet most of the day.

For more information on how J+J Flooring Group's products can improve safety and well-being for residents and staff, visit www.jjflooringgroup.com/senior-living.