

THE BEST FLOOR PROTECTOR, AN EXPERT OPINION

Since furniture floor protector pads are on the floor continuously, they can quickly degrade. Like automobiles they require routine care and maintenance...

My travels take me to just about every kind of environment you can imagine...from assisted living facilities to aircraft carriers. The common link between facilities, where I have been involved in troubleshooting a flooring problem, is hard surface floors including VCT, LVT, linoleum, sheet vinyl, hardwood, laminate and the furniture glides being used on movable furniture items. I can assure you that if you discuss furniture glides, aka furniture floor protectors, with twenty people, you will get twenty different answers about which protector is best on a hard surface floor. In my expert opinion, there is only one choice, felt.



This opinion is based on my forty years of flooring industry experience, from sales and installation to manufacturer technical services and independent expert troubleshooter. In most cases of flooring failure problems, incorrect, damaged or uncared-for floor protectors contribute to the problem.

An end user who researches protector pads to use on furniture and equipment in their facility will find a variety of floor protector products. The three main types of pads they will find for tables and chairs are felt, plastic and metal.



Inspection of a metal glide reveals a metallic coating that becomes easily and permanently damaged by surface scratches leaving chards of metal protrusions that act like razor blades and slice into the floor's surface with every twist, shift or move of the chair or table. Moisture from routine cleaning further complicates the problem leaving permanent rust stains on the floor's surface when the cleaning water migrates under the protector and dwells for an extended period of time.



Plastic glides are hard and fragile resulting in broken remnants that contribute to severe flooring damage. Dirt and debris press into the surface of plastic protectors that can be more damaging than coarse sandpaper when the chair is repeatedly moved across the floor's surface.



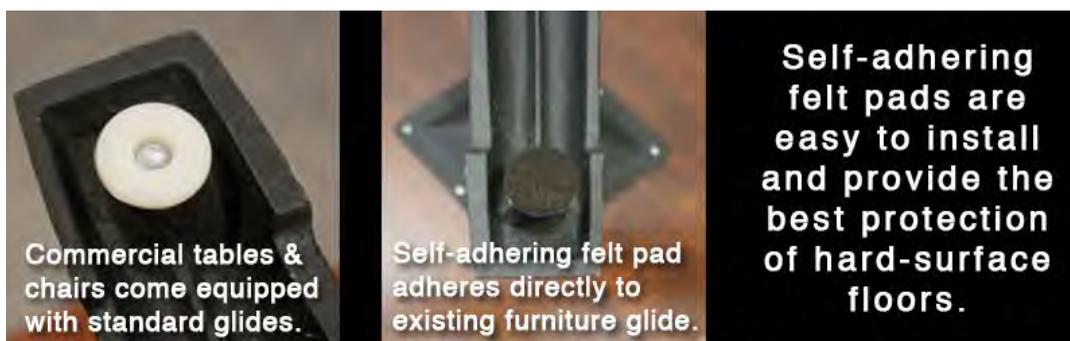
The rule for floor protector selection is simple: Hard floor protectors (plastic or metal) for soft-surface (carpeted) flooring and soft protectors (felt) for hard-surface floors.

Hard plastic and metal protectors quickly degrade resulting in permanent damage on hard surface floors that can seldom be reversed. In my opinion, neither of these are viable options. Felt is the best as it provides a soft material that glides easily across the floor and dirt and debris that becomes embedded in the felt, buries into the soft texture of the glide minimizing and often avoiding permanent or severe damage to the floor.

Since furniture floor protector pads are on the floor continuously, they can quickly degrade. Like automobiles they require routine care and maintenance to perform their best. Two situations arise with felt furniture floor protector pads that require ongoing attention from the end user.

First, embedded dirt and debris must be routinely removed and cleaned by vacuuming! Second, heavy moisture, as typically used for cleaning hard surface floors, becomes absorbed by felt protectors leaving the felt pads hard and coarse when dry. This coarse texture can scratch a hard surface floor. To avoid replacing felt furniture pads that become crusty due to moisture, take an extra step after vacuuming and briskly brush the pads with a small wire brush to soften the texture of the felt. These simple steps will add months of life to felt furniture pads before they require replacement.

Most important is a point person at the end user facility who is responsible for floor protector maintenance. This involves routinely checking felt pads and cleaning or replacing on a routine basis as needed. This schedule varies with the traffic and use in each, different, facility.



This article expresses my position on proper adequate floor protector pads for hard surface flooring and the required attention they need for optimal performance. I believe these pictures included clearly tell the story. Felt is the best and only choice material for minimizing the

risk of damage to a hard surface floor by movable furniture and equipment. Keep in mind that all felt pads are NOT created equal. Commercial use needs heavy-duty felt protector pads as discussed in my previous blog post series on Scratches, Gouges and Scrapes, Part 2-Preventive Measures.



Floor care and maintenance products mentioned in this, and other, post(s) are available at 1877floorguy.com or by calling 877-356-6748.