

Understanding Rubber Flooring Maintenance Requirements

This document is intended to provide additional information or a deeper dive into the maintenance requirements of Rubber Flooring. We are attempting to provide an understanding of how and why proper care & maintenance of Rubber Flooring arrives at the stated performance benefits. In other words, it has been selected, here is how to get the most out of it.

Rubber flooring care & maintenance recommendations are based on standard production runs of product and the recommended chemistry installed in a commercial environment. As everyone is aware of, manufacturing will contain some variances. Also, not all chemistry within the categories of our recommended products will work in the same manner. Finally, depending upon the stage of the construction project and the protection utilized after installation will change the conditions of the flooring surface being initially maintained. We state this information to provide guidance and a starting point to maintain the rubber flooring.

There is a difference between cleaning and maintenance.

- ***cleaning*** is meant to be understood as the process of removing unwanted substances, such as dirt and other impurities, from flooring and/or service environment.
- ***Maintenance*** is meant to be understood as the routine recurring work required to keep flooring in such condition that it may be continuously used, at its original or designed capacity and efficiency for its intended purpose.

One of the greatest benefits of using rubber flooring products is they do not need or require a floor finish, commonly referred to as a 'wax,' 'sealer,' or 'finish,' within the parameters of a maintenance program. Rubber flooring products are commonly referred to as low maintenance products since they do not require such a finish. Even with a naturally durable surface, daily and routine cleaning must still be performed after the proper post installation maintenance to maintain the appearance of the product.

We define low maintenance as "No Finish Required" which leads to subsequent removal and reapplication of the finish.

APPROPRIATE MAINTENANCE CHEMISTRY

Selecting the proper maintenance chemistry to perform the task of daily cleaning and then routine maintenance is critical to the success of the flooring installation. Our recommendations are made of products that we sell or provide based upon testing and consistency of those products. While we also are aware that situations vary and that the recommended products that are listed in our care & maintenance documents may not be used, we want to provide a description of those products and provide a few listed alternatives to our recommendations. These alternatives would be utilized in the same manner as the recommended, regarding dilution ratios, rinse recommendations, etc.

Resilient flooring is a flooring product tending or able to recover from strain or deformation caused especially by compressive stress as defined by ASTM. Similar products in this category are cork, linoleum, vinyl, etc. It is not similar in nature to "Hard Surface" products such as glazed ceramic, terrazzo, porcelain, quarry tile, polished or stained concrete, etc.

Cleaning chemistry that is designed specifically for Hard Surface flooring or flooring with finishes should not be utilized to clean & maintain rubber flooring. Similarly, products designed for Multi-Surface cleaning such as glass, counters, bathrooms, etc. should not be utilized to clean & maintain rubber flooring.

Hard Surface and Multi-Surface cleaners are not the same as neutral pH floor cleaners as they typically contain either hydrogen peroxide or citric acid chemistry and they may not be appropriate to use in place of these products.

Industry standards for pH neutral cleaners do vary, we consider pH neutral to be within a pH range of 6.5 - 8.0 at time of use with proper dilution per manufactures instructions. Using the incorrect maintenance chemistry or using the correct maintenance chemistry incorrectly can and will cause damage to the product that is not covered by the product warranty.

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD MAINTENANCE PRACTICES FROM THE BEGINNING

To provide a flooring surface that does not need a floor finish, it is necessary from the start to perform the necessary post installation, prior to service maintenance process. This process closes the surface pores of the flooring to create a more sealed, non-porous surface making it less likely to become heavily soiled, as quickly, from normal foot traffic. Without performing the proper post installation, prior to service maintenance, the flooring can have poor visual appearance, become soiled quicker, scuff more, and therefore harder to clean due to the surface of the flooring not being conditioned properly for use.

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After the post installation maintenance and the product placed into service, these products, like all flooring, also require daily cleaning and routine maintenance with cleaning equipment to maintain the desired appearance. The frequency of cleaning and routine maintenance will depend upon the amount and type of traffic in the area; however, maintenance may be more frequent within the first year of installation. Over time, rubber flooring products will see a reduced frequency of the scrubbing portions of the routine maintenance and ease into removal of scuffs due to the maturation of the product surface.

Rubber flooring continually evolves once placed into service and this is a natural occurrence and a good thing. Once the material goes through the press cycle during manufacturing, the material starts a crosslinking action that vulcanizes the rubber with the other ingredients so they cannot be changed. Once installed in the service environment, UV Light, atmospheric conditions, foot traffic and maintenance cycles will continue to age the surface. This aged surface will be more responsive to maintenance treatments such as buffing or burnishing and can be broken back down with more aggressive maintenance to revive the appearance of the flooring.

An aged surface will be more scuff resistant, have less ability to hold soil, and produce the natural luster desired. Treating a rubber floor to additional maintenance cycles in the first year of its life will improve the ability to clean and restore the flooring later if necessary. ***It is better to clean a rubber floor once a day for 10 days straight than it is to clean a rubber floor 10 ten times in one day!*** Yes, this can and should be interpreted as the more time we spend with our new rubber floor with maintenance cycles the better the floor will respond to cleaning and maintenance in the future and will lead to decreased routine maintenance procedures later in the life cycle of the rubber flooring.

Routine maintenance is seen as something that needs to be done on a regular basis. Routine could be twice a week, weekly, etc. Given that each installation is different, the frequency of the routine will be determined by the following factors: type of soil or debris, type of facility, location within the facility, and use of the facility. It is likely the routine can and will change depending on factors such as time of year, increased or decreased use, etc. With the application of the sealer, this routine should be done at a minimum of twice a month, if possible, to maintain the desired look of the flooring.

Restoration maintenance is required once the flooring is not staying clean or cannot be cleaned using the routine or periodic maintenance processes, normally utilized as a deep clean or to repair an area with multiple scratches or minor flooring damage.

SHOULD I FINISH MY RUBBER FLOORING

Finally, we are aware that each facility has unique needs, wants, and desires for its flooring products and sometimes it is necessary to help with the break in period or to speed this process up. While the rubber flooring does not require a finish to maintain the flooring, that doesn't mean there are not times when it a finish should be part of the care & maintenance program.

If the flooring is in an area that cannot or will not be maintained using a rotary floor machine or auto scrubber, we recommend the application of a site applied finish. This application can be a one-time application and allow normal maintenance procedures to remove the surface finish or a continued application to make regular cleaning easier.

A single application of finish will help with the break in period of the rubber flooring by helping to prevent dirt from being ground into the surface. Utilizing a cleaner / maintainer product such as Excelsior CM-910 will help as well during this period, especially if an application of finish is applied.

Should you decide to apply a finish to your rubber flooring, please see the document ***Rubber Flooring Care & Maintenance, Application of Floor Finish***. This document will guide you through the preparation, application, and subsequent removal of the finish process.

WHEN SHOULD I NOT FINISH MY RUBBER FLOORING

The only time we would not recommend a finish is when it comes to our ESD Rubber Flooring products. Improper maintenance or the application of a finish not designed for ESD Flooring will inhibit the flooring from performing as intended regarding Static Electricity Control.

While there are ESD Finishes available for the maintenance of ESD Rubber Tiles, we do not recommend them as they are required to be maintained to achieve consistent ESD properties. If you desire to use an ESD Finish, please contact Technical Services for assistance.

If a finish is applied, the electrical readings of our ESD Rubber Tile are no longer valid and the performance of the ESD Rubber Tile is now dependent upon finish manufacturer's warranty.

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The use of the incorrect maintenance chemistry or the incorrect use of the correct chemistry for the maintenance of Resilient Flooring can and will cause damage to the product that is not covered by the product warranty. If you have a question about the fitness of use of other products, please contact customer service or technical services.

As with any maintenance program, be sure to use proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) according to the cleaning product SDS and ensure all maintenance procedures are conducted per the cleaning products instructions. The use of Caution Tape and/or Wet Floor Signs is recommended to prevent slips and falls.

RHC Technical Bulletin Number	002
Original Release Date	January 4, 2024
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