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## INTERIOR CONCRETE FLOOR CARE GUIDE

### PREFACE

To achieve optimum appearance and proper film protection for your floor it is extremely important to use the right equipment for each task. The best floor finishes in the world will look bad and be less likely to hold up if laid with a dirty mop or applied from a bucket that has other chemical residue in it. There are many different kinds of equipment and products to maintain floors and it is critical that your equipment and products match the maintenance program you have established.

Floor finishes are applied to concrete floor for three reasons:

- 1) To protect the floor from wear, stains, and daily abuse.
- 2) For ease of maintenance allows spills and normal soil to be easily removed.
- 3) Appearance, well-maintained floors provide an image-enhancing aspect.

### How Cleaners Work

By conditioning the water so there is no additional soil added to surfaces and so that the effectiveness of the cleaner is not reduced by hardness in the water.

By penetrating the soil or wetting it with the water.

By dissolving as much of the soil as is possible by the use of an acid, alkali or solvent.

By dispersion or emulsification of the remaining soil.

By holding the soil in suspension until it is rinsed away.

**Factors Affecting Cleaners:** The performance of any selected cleaner may be altered significantly by any one or a combination of the following factors:

**Water Temperature** - Although most detergents are designed to work in hot or cold water, the performance of a cleaner can be enhanced by employing warm to hot water. Extremely hot water should not be used on highly finished floors.

**Time** - The length of time a cleaning solution is allowed to remain on the surface to be cleaned can affect the performance of that cleaner. Typically, the longer the contact time of a solution the better that solution performs. Never, however, allow a dirty cleaning solution to dry on a surface before it can be rinsed.

Chemical Strength - The optimum use dilution varies with different detergents. Also, the effect of a reduction in dilution is different with each detergent. It is Important that the proper dilution be maintained, and that you understand how this dilution can be changed for specific applications.

Mechanical Action - The type of agitation used may have a direct impact on the cleaners ability to perform and the use dilution employed. Machine scrubbing, pressure rinsing and abrasive pads can improve the cleaners ability to break up soils and reduce the amount of cleaner needed or the time to complete the job.

Procedures - The skill level of the user can also affect the choice of cleaner to be used. A properly trained staff may be able to use one cleaner in a variety of applications or more aggressive cleaners for special cleaning tasks.

Safety - You should also consider the safety of employees, equipment and surfaces to be cleaned in the choice of the cleaner to be used. For example, strong, acid or alkaline solutions may require safety precautions and equipment, as well as care when used on certain surfaces. Always read the product label and refer to the Material Safety Data Sheet before using a new product.

Neutral "Neutral" cleaners are not necessarily chemically neutral. Typically, they have a use solution pH in the range of 7-9.5. Neutral products are light duty cleaners designed for use on any water washable surface. **Floors coated with a floor finish must be maintained with a neutral cleaner.**

## **PERIODIC MAINTENANCE**

During all daily maintenance procedures it will be important to watch the floor for developing traffic pattern and respond to these situations accordingly.

### **Procedure #1** Cleaning the floor (with a wet mop).

1. Sweep the area if large debris is evident, otherwise a thorough pass with a dust mop treated with a water-based dust mop treatment is recommended to remove dry soil and dirt.
2. Always use a neutral detergent mixed according to the manufacturer's directions when cleaning highly finished floors. Alkaline cleaners can soften, damage and create an unsightly film causing additional maintenance.
3. When wet mopping a floor it is important to change the mopping solution when visible contamination occurs. There is nothing worse than mopping a floor with dirty water or using a soiled mop head! Start with clean equipment and be sure to clean it when you are done.
4. Apply mopping solution liberally (do not flood) allowing the solution to contact the floor for approximately 2-3 minutes and pick up excess with mop. Physical agitation with the mop may be necessary in badly soiled areas.
5. If using an alkaline cleaner, "Rinsing" is required.

Frequent dust mopping and immediate clean up of spills are critical to great looking floors. Use only clean dust mops with a good mop treatment.

Follow dilution instructions carefully to conserve cleaner and protect finish. Cleaners should be strong enough to remove soil without damaging your finish. The cleaner solution is too strong if your finish looks hazy and dull after cleaning.

Always use clean scrubbing pads or brushes on auto scrubbers and rotary machines, and clean cotton mops for hand mopping.

### **Procedure #2 (with an automatic scrubber).**

1. Sweep the area if large debris is evident, otherwise a thorough pass with a dust mop treated with a water-based dust mop treatment is recommended to remove dry soil and dirt.
2. Perform pre-operation checks on the scrubber as described by the manufacturer or recommended by the distributor ( batteries, brushes/ pads, squeegee blade, etc.).
3. Always use a neutral detergent mixed according to the manufacturer's directions when cleaning highly finished floors. Alkaline cleaners can soften, damage and create an unsightly film, which is even more apparent when using an automatic scrubber. By causing more agitation than a mop, an automatic scrubber can leave side trails of solution.
4. Fill the scrubber solution tank with water first, then add the proper amount of chemical.
5. Choose an appropriate pattern that will assure full coverage and lay down, scrub and pick up the mopping solution using the automatic scrubber. Be sure to use a damp mop to pick up any trails that may be left.

### **FLOOR FINISH APPLICATION**

To test finish adhesive, apply one coat to a small area and let dry. Apply masking or cellophane tape to the finish and pull up quickly. If the finish comes off with the tape, you have poor adhesion. This is especially important to do when stripping the old finish from the floor.

1. Always use a clean mop head designed for applying floor finishes and mark the mop handle appropriately so that this mop is not used for any other purpose!
2. Soak mop head in warm water and wring out thoroughly. Water will fill the mop fibers, thus saving finish.
3. Put a plastic garbage can liner in your mop bucket to assure that your finish will not become contaminated from previous chemical that may have been used in the mop bucket. This will also assist you in faster cleanup later.
4. Dip mop in the bucket of finish and damp the mop head lightly in the wringer. You want the mop to be full of finish but never dripping. A gentle twisting of the mop handle will also cause excess finish to be removed.
5. Start applying the finish in a corner of the area furthest from your exit point and begin by outlining along baseboards. When doing larger areas where the finish may have an opportunity to dry before you can return for a parallel run-see to establish an outline that will be consistent with the floor design.

6. Fill in the area between the outlined edges, applying finish with a smooth overlapping stroke. We recommend that all finishes be applied in medium to thin coatings. Wet the mop with finish as necessary and make sure that the finish is being applied evenly.
7. Continue applying finish, covering each area before the adjoining area is dry. A smooth and even application will assure that all the pores in the floor are properly filled for lasting protection.
8. After the first coat has dried (normally 15 to 25 minutes, but this will depend heavily on the humidity and air flow) apply a second coat in the opposite direction, following the procedure outlined above.
  
9. Subsequent coatings should be applied as above. Be sure to allow proper drying time between coats. If multiple coats are to be applied at one time, the first two coats should be applied 6 to 8 inches away from walls, partitions display cases, etc. Successive coats are then applied to the entire floor.

Always use laundered rayon-blend mop heads for waxing. Soiled or new cotton mops can turn the finish brown. Before use, soak mops in water and wring out tightly, so they absorb less finish and are easier to clean.

Coat traffic lanes more than other areas. On the first application, stay at least 12 to 14 inches away from baseboards and corners. Gradually work closer to the edges with each subsequent coat. To prevent edge buildup, apply one coat to non-trafficked edges for every three coats applied in traffic lanes.

Periodically renew your floors with a restore product; this will help to minimize wax buildup. Purchase and use walk off mats at all entrance and exits.

The effects of humidity on the drying and performance of a floor finish is very important. High humidity retards the evaporation of water from the polish film, leaving the film soft, incompletely dry, and easy to scuff. Floor finish films, like latex paints, dry (harden) from the surface inward towards the flooring. Thus a floor finish which appears to be dry and feels dry to touch can in fact be wet and soft down close to the floor. Adequate ventilation during and after applying a floor finish is very important. If the air in the area being finished is high in humidity, close the windows and run the air conditioner to lower the humidity. In the winter, turn up the heat to dry the air and also warm-up the substrate (flooring).

Problems caused by high humidity are:

1. Excessive scuffing and black marking from traffic until finish dries hard.
2. Poor detergent and water resistance due to the delay in finish cross-linking.
3. The threat and reality of "gluing" furniture to the floor.
4. Streaking and mop drag created by the coat being applied "biting" into preceding coats. (This phenomenon is caused by the applied coat re-emulsifying the previous coating that has not yet cured.)

Another important aspect in the drying of floor finish is the correlation between drying time and solids of the finish. Higher solids result in a thicker film developing on the floor and thus, a greater period of dry time being required between coats (sometimes in excess of one hour).