
The Care of Terrazzo



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- TERRAZZO FLOORS
- OWNER'S GUIDE FOR THE SUGGESTED MAINTENANCE OF TERRAZZO
- CUSTODIAN'S GUIDE TO THE PROPER MAINTENANCE OF TERRAZZO
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Terrazzo floors have *ease of maintenance*, but this does not mean that NO CARE IS REQUIRED. Once you understand the care requirements in the early stages of a new terrazzo floor, you lessen possible problems, and recognize the economy of care and the aesthetic values of this product. **NTMA terrazzo flooring specifications highly recommends a sealer applied to this surface immediately following the final polishing.**

Sealers help inhibit the penetration of spilled materials upon initial contact with the terrazzo floor. Spills must be cleaned up immediately in order to prevent stains caused by repeated or long term exposure. Even standing water can eventually dissolve some sealers.

As most sealers are low solids liquid material, they do not normally produce a high gloss sheen appearance to the floor surface. When a building is eventually occupied, the terrazzo temporary sealer can be stripped and the surface may be retreated as implemented by ownership. The eventual degree of gloss is determined by the particular products selected and the recommended application process.

TAKE THE NECESSARY TIME TO LEARN WHICH TERRAZZO SYSTEM YOU ARE MAINTAINING

There are three types of binders used to anchor marble chips or other aggregate in your terrazzo floor. Originally, and still used, is a Portland cement product; next a polyacrylate modified cement. The most common matrix today is epoxy resin.

All Terrazzo Systems contain marble or other types of aggregates materials that have surface exposure. Marble aggregates have a low porosity of absorption. Others aggregates types may have little or no porosity.

Portland Cement Systems: The portion of this floor system that most benefits from primary protection is the Portland cement binder. Sealers will also assist protecting the marble chips or other aggregates

Epoxy Resin Systems: The binder for this terrazzo system is fundamentally non-porous. Sealers assist protecting the aggregates and normally enhance aesthetics.

Although each system has the role of anchoring the aggregate into the topping, maintenance procedures are essentially common to all terrazzo installations.

OWNER'S GUIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF TERRAZZO

MAINTENANCE PRECAUTIONS: Harsh cleaners and sealers can damage terrazzo. Only materials that are neutral pH should be used when scrubbing or mopping floors. Sealers should achieve a slip resistance coefficient of friction rating applicable to code. Water based sealers are most commonly recommended and utilized today. Mop on, in one or more coats, in accordance with the instructions of the sealer manufacturer. This can also be followed by a water based finish (dressing) for daily or weekly buffing if a high sheen is desired.

CLEANING PROCEDURES: Neutral cleaners are designed to react only in solution with clean water, mixed in accordance to the manufacturer instructions, and allowed to remain on the floor surface for several minutes. This provides the necessary time for the grime-dissolving action to take place. Then rinse the dirt-laden solution from the surface by squeegee, vacuum or mopping. Rinse with ample clean water. It is important to keep the floor wet during this entire cleaning process so the dirt and cleaning residue does not dry on the surface.

FAQ "How often must we sweep or scrub this floor?" is answered by the amount of traffic that moves across the floor daily. Daily dust mopping is a requirement in most public buildings. Daily dust mopping removes both the dust and the grit tracked into the building.



NTMA®

The National Terrazzo & Mosaic Association, Inc.

CUSTODIAN'S GUIDE TO THE PROPER MAINTENANCE OF TERRAZZO

FOLLOWING THESE MINIMUM MAINTENANCE
SUGGESTIONS TO KEEP YOUR TERRAZZO FLOOR
CLEAN AND LONG-LASTING:

DAILY: DUST MOP Hand work stubborn stains and scuff marks with neutral cleaner diluted in warm water.

WEEKLY: DAMP MOP LIGHTLY SOILED FLOORS WITH NEUTRAL CLEANER
Heavily soiled floors should be scrubbed with a mechanical buffing machine and neutral cleaner. Mop up residue with clean water before it dries. Allow to dry and buff with a dry brush.

NOTE: ALLOW YOUR NEUTRAL CLEANER, ONCE APPLIED TO THE TERRAZZO SURFACE, TIME TO REACT. IT IS DESIGNED TO LOOSEN FOREIGN MATTER. SEVERAL MINUTES SHOULD BE ADEQUATE, BUT DO NOT ALLOW SOLUTION TO DRY ON THE SURFACE.

AS REQUIRED: Strip all old sealer and any finish coats. Reseal clean floor.

CAUTION: Before deviation from the instructions, contact your local Terrazzo Contractor for advice. ALWAYS KEEP RINSE WATER, MOPS & PAILS CLEAN!

DO'S FOR MAINTENANCE OF TERRAZZO FLOORING

DO dust mop your floors daily, this not only picks up the dust, but also the grit tracked into your building. The grit acts as an abrasive on your hard surface floor.

DO use maintenance products designed specifically for terrazzo.

DO where a new terrazzo floor has been installed, scrub your floors approximately once or twice a week for the initial two to three months, as the new construction dust will still be in the air and will eventually be deposited on your floor.

DO after this period, once per week, depending on the amount of foot traffic, keep your floor clean in appearance. Always rinse your floors well to prevent a build-up of cleaner residue. Use a dry cotton or microfiber cloth to dry the terrazzo floor surface.

DO allow your neutral cleaner, once applied to the terrazzo surface, time to react as designed to loosen foreign matter. Several minutes should be adequate, but DO NOT allow the solution to dry on surface.

DO seal your floors with a water-based sealer in accordance to the sealer manufacturer's instructions.



SUBJECT

Protection and Maintenance of Tnemec Polymer Floorings

PURPOSE

To instruct facility personnel on the recommended procedure for maintenance cleaning of polymer floors.

GENERAL

Tnemec flooring systems will benefit from a regular maintenance program. All floors will show wear, becoming less attractive by physical and chemical abuse over a period of time. However, a regular maintenance schedule that removes dirt and chemical residue will prolong the life of the floor. In addition to thorough cleaning, the periodic application of waxes, acrylics or polishes will tend to isolate the flooring system from physical attack and maintain the performance of the floor.

Initial Procedure:

Polymer flooring systems typically require five or more days at 75°F. before becoming fully cured. Optimum physical strength and chemical resistance depend upon the drying or curing conditions. During this curing period the surface should be protected by limiting traffic exposure or by covering with protective paper or plywood.

General Maintenance:

The frequency of the maintenance procedure is dependent upon the volume and type of traffic. The following is a guide for establishing a general maintenance program:

- Frequently sweep or dust utilizing a commercial sweeping compound.
- At regular intervals, wash floor using warm/hot potable water with mild cleaning solutions containing ammonia or alcohol bases, or detergents such as tri-sodium phosphate. Avoid abrasives. Cleaning may be done with pressure washing equipment (max. 1,000 psi, 2 gpm delivery), or by hand scrubbing with soft bristled brushes or sponges. For heavy stains, a floor buffing machine afixed with a soft bristle or soft scrub pad may be used.

- Rinse the entire area with clean running water whenever possible. Squeegee to drain or pick up with a wet vacuum to remove all residual contaminants.
- If gloss level is to be restored after use, apply a water-based non-ambering liquid floor finish (acrylic or urethane). To remove the finish, apply an ammoniated heavy-duty stripper-rinse and allow to dry before refinishing. Local janitorial supply houses may recommend systems. Select a reputable manufacturer. Dubois, Hillyard or Oakite® are well-known.
- Epoxy and urethane finishes are not affected by the cleaning operation, however epoxies tend not to retain their gloss levels as well as urethanes. The need to apply sealer coats for gloss rejuvenation is totally dependent upon the owner's preference.

Recoating/Refinishing:

Uniformly scarify the entire surface to be coated with a medium-grit sandpaper (120-150 grit). Reapply specified system in accordance with manufacturer's application recommendations. If practical, use a break in the surface plane as a stopping point for the repair, i.e., seams, expansion joints, control joints, etc. Use the product literature as a reference for proper mixing, application and handling.

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