Telegraphing on Resilient Flooring

"Telegraphing" is the term used to refer to visible swirls or patterns on the surface of resilient flooring (vinyl sheet, tile, VCT, etc.) caused by the impression of some unevenness of the substrate underneath it. Telegraphing is more visible with backlighting, and is accentuated when the flooring is polished. It is much less visible on floorings that have a matte finish.

Telegraphing occurs when the resilient flooring conforms to substrate features or textures, coatings, adhesives, debris or other structures over which it is laid. The flooring eventually conforms to the substrate and the topography becomes visibly distinguishable on the flooring surface. High speed buffing and polishing warms, softens and molds the flooring which in turn speeds up and accentuates this process.

Flooring adhesives should be applied in accordance with the flooring manufacturer's installation guidelines using the specified method and spread rate. Once spread, the adhesive should be given the proper drying time and the flooring installed within the adhesive working time. Loss of adhesion can result if the flooring is not installed within the working time of the adhesive. Also, if the adhesive is allowed to dry too long, it may not transfer evenly between the substrate and the applied flooring. Roll the finished flooring installation immediately using an appropriate 75 – 100 lbs. 3-section roller to ensure sufficient adhesive transfer and to flatten the installation before the adhesive becomes overly dried and less malleable.

When installing thin gauge flooring, or those that are to be highly polished, the adhesive may be metered and applied with a trowel, and then back rolled using a 3/8" nap paint roller to eliminate any possible trowel ridges. The porosity and texture of the substrate will affect the spread rate of the adhesive and subsequent drying time and working time. A porous floor and drier ambient conditions can cause the adhesive to dry quickly and set firmly. Flooring installed over firmly dried adhesive ridges will not flatten out properly when rolled. Generally, however, telegraphing from troweled adhesive is expected to be more problematic over non-porous, smoother substrates. In these cases, a lighter adhesive application is usually advised. 140416