

In accordance with both the flooring and adhesive industry standards, a clean, well-prepared substrate is crucial to any flooring installation. Following current guidelines of the Carpet & Rug Institute Carpet Installation Guide, and in accordance with information provided by ASTM F710, as well as flooring manufacturers' installation instructions, the importance of a clean, well-prepared substrate is highly emphasized. The substrate is supposed to be free of any incompatible sealers and curing agents, old adhesives, paint, dirt, dust, oil or grease, plaster, or anything else that could interfere with the adhesive bond. If not removed, these residues and coatings become the substrate onto which the new flooring will be adhered.

Note that if an adhesive is applied over a painted surface that is brittle, peeling or flaking, or not otherwise physically sound or well bonded to the substrate, the entire installation is compromised.

Painted Floors

Concrete and wood floors may have been painted for various reasons, most commonly using epoxy, oil-based or acrylic based paints. It is not easily determined by simple methods which type of paint was applied.

When considering installing broadloom carpets, securing a stable bond is the primary consideration. Therefore, if the paint is loose or peeling, it will need to be mechanically removed in order for the adhesive to bond to a secure surface. In addition, if the floor has a glossy finish, the surface may also need to be abraded in order for the adhesive to achieve a secure bond and reduce slippage. Also, a painted substrate is essentially non-porous, which requires adjustments to the methods of installation, since the adhesive will likely require longer open time. Carpets of non-permeable construction should be installed in strict compliance with the manufacturer's guidelines for substrate preparations and adhesive application.

Resilient flooring manufacturers generally require painted surfaces to be completely removed mechanically as part of the substrate preparations in order to avoid adhesive application issues, and to allow the flooring to be installed and bonded directly to the underlying solid substrate. Solvent and chemical adhesive removers should not be used for cleaning any substrate prior to a flooring installation.

Paint Contamination

Additional issues arise when encountering substrates with contamination from paint spills, drips, overspray, construction markings, colored chalk lines, permanent markers, crayons and greased markers, etc. These markings may be capable of bleeding or migrating up into vinyl and other resilient flooring and causing permanent stains or discoloration. These contaminants should always be considered as potential staining agents and must be mechanically removed before installing resilient flooring. Cement patching or skim coatings and applied sealers should not be relied upon to prevent these stains from migrating into the resilient flooring.

Note: After mechanically removing contaminants from concrete substrates, the exposed surface will most likely have a high pH that will need to be corrected by applying a primer.

Warning—Certain paints may contain lead. Exposure to excessive amounts of lead dust presents a health hazard. Refer to applicable federal, state, and local laws and guidelines for hazard identification and abatement of lead-based paint published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding appropriate methods for identifying lead-based paint and removing such paint, and any licensing, certification, and training requirements for persons performing lead abatement work. ASTM F710-11, 7.1.2.

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