TECHNICAL BULLETIN
Substrate

Cutback Adhesive and Residues

Vinyl (PVC) products such as tile, plank, sheet flooring and vinyl back carpet and tiles should never be installed directly over cutback residues. Black asphalt-based cutback adhesive is highly reactive to vinyl back flooring and must be completely removed until there are no remaining continuous film or trowel ridges. Any remaining residue or stain must also be encapsulated.

1. It is the responsibility of the installer to determine whether the floor covering is approved for use over existing cutback residue. Do not install any floor covering over cutback adhesive residues if it is not approved by the flooring manufacturer.
2. See precautions for removing existing adhesives below. Use wet scraping methods to prevent formation of dangerous dust particles in the air that may also contain asbestos.
3. Do not use solvent adhesive removers or surfactants to remove any existing adhesive. These products may trap residuals in the concrete that can cause subsequent installation problems with odors and adverse effects on the adhesive bond.
4. Do not use solvent-based adhesives over existing cutback residues.
5. Cutback adhesive residues tend to seal the surface of substrates, and thus will extend drying time and curing of adhesives. The presence of resilient flooring installed with cutback adhesive may also conceal an underlying moisture level in the substrate.

If vinyl backed flooring is placed over cutback adhesives, plasticizer can migrate from the vinyl backing into the cutback, causing it to become soft or liquid. The adhesive bond will be lost, and the cutback may bleed to the flooring surface. See photo of cutback bleed-through with vinyl-backed carpet tiles.

Before beginning any abatement procedures, it must be determined if asbestos is present. If asbestos is present in the existing adhesive residue and/or flooring, the abatement procedures must comply with federal, state and local government regulations for the removal and disposal of asbestos-containing materials. Avoid sanding, bead-blasting or any procedure for removal that may create asbestos-containing dust. It may be noted that even after removal of cutback residues, concrete often remains stained or discolored.

Abatement of cutback adhesive residue may also be accomplished by encapsulation. Cementitious, epoxy, or other aqueous polymer based compounds are sometimes used to form an isolation barrier between the cutback adhesive residue and new adhesive and flooring.

Where no asbestos is present, remove existing cutback adhesives by wet scraping, grinding or bead-blasting, avoiding the use of solvents. In all cases, cutback residues should be reduced to the least amount possible. XL Brands/Bostik does not recommend the use of liquid solvent or surfactant adhesive removers, as they can be absorbed into the concrete and cause problems with subsequent flooring installations.

If moisture abatement is also required, complete removal of all cutback and other existing adhesives will be required. After wet scraping, the surface of the substrate should be bead-blasted (using wet process) to reduce the profile of the surface until no cutback or adhesive residue is present. More uneven surfaces should first be repaired with an appropriate cementitious underlayment.

Refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI) article, Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings", ASTM F-710, "Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring", and CRI 104, Section 7, for more information on floor preparations.

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Bostik, Inc.
198 Nexus Drive
Dalton, GA 30721
706-508-5907

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