

Maintenance Application Guide

Commercial Project Considerations for Resilient Floor Covering

Introduction

Appropriate maintenance for resilient floor covering is essential in prolonging the life of the flooring product and protecting indoor environmental quality (IEQ). During the specifying process, it is important to consider the general maintenance for selected flooring products in all project applications, including other types of flooring adjacent to resilient flooring product being installed. This document is intended to be utilized by design professionals, sales and marketing representatives, contractors, facility management departments, and any others that are responsible for the cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and ongoing maintenance of resilient floor covering in commercial settings.

Pre-Design / Programming Phase: Establishing Owner Project Requirements (OPR)

Prior to the project design and product specification, the pre-design or programming phase includes the development of Owner Project Requirements (OPR) and should include the following based on the scope and scale of the project space(s):

- 1) Create an interdisciplinary project team that will be responsible for the selection, specifying, provision, installation, initial maintenance, on-going maintenance, and occupancy of the project space(s).
- 2) Identify performance criteria for product selection beyond aesthetics.
 - a. Review floor plans or conduct site surveys with the team to understand all aspects of the project space(s), including usage, the amount and type of traffic, traffic patterns, adjacent flooring types and transitions, etc.
 - b. Document the anticipated product service life for the application.
 - i. Assess and document the total life cycle cost, based on the anticipated resilient flooring service life required for an application.
 1. Equipment, cleaning products, and cleaning supplies should be included in the evaluation.
 2. Single-use products will create more waste, but laundered or reusable supplies may use more water and require additional chemicals to be used.
 - ii. If complying with building rating systems, a green cleaning policy could include options for reduction of waste and water usage, low-energy equipment, and lowest chemical impact based on efficacy required.
 - c. Ensure the project will have sufficient infrastructure in place for initial and on-going maintenance.
 - i. Housekeeping or maintenance closets should be easily accessible, have mop or floor sinks with hot and cold water, and be sized adequately to accommodate necessary equipment, supplies, and storage.
 - ii. Entryways into the building should utilize walk-off mats.
 - iii. Verify that the amount of and required storage space for attic stock is sufficient for each resilient floor type.

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- 3) Understand resilient flooring manufacturers' maintenance methods and requirements, including the recommended maintenance products, appropriate chemicals, and equipment to be used.
 - a. Special maintenance, such as adherence to infection control policies or utilization of green cleaning policies should be identified for project space(s) and compared to the manufacturer's maintenance recommendations. Identify any gaps or questions to be resolved by the team with the assistance of the resilient flooring manufacturer, prior to final product selection or installation/initial maintenance.
 - b. Account for the quantity and proficiency of staff required to provide proper maintenance.
- 4) To maintain manufacturers' warranties, follow manufacturers' recommendations. See Appendix A – Owner Project Requirements flow chart used to collect and organize information and evaluation of the maintenance requirements for resilient floor covering(s).

Design Phases and Details

Though aesthetics is important in most settings, flooring transition details need to be considered carefully. The means and methods of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting various types of flooring and transition products can be problematic. For example, when carpet is installed adjacent to resilient flooring product, both products will require different maintenance procedures, (e.g., types of equipment, cleaning products, etc.). In addition, two similar resilient flooring products may require different cleaning and maintenance chemistry, equipment, and processes if the two products are manufactured by different companies. Aesthetics can be compromised if one or both adjacent surfaces are not adequately maintained and/or damaged by using one universal cleaning procedure for all products.

Evaluating the conceptual and schematic designs with the environmental services team and the floor covering manufacturers during the pre-design/programming, design, and specification phases provides stakeholder input to agree on a solution that is functional, aesthetic, and maintainable. Conducting a pre-construction meeting with flooring installers, flooring manufacturers, and the environmental services team is recommended. A mock-up may be used to review the project conditions and requirements before flooring installation. Prior to occupancy, environmental services should review the recommended manufacturer maintenance requirements with the flooring manufacturer to assure the initial maintenance is completed properly.

Project Schedule and Occupancy

Ensuring appropriate equipment is onsite once resilient flooring is installed is crucial to providing correct maintenance, from initial maintenance to on-going regular maintenance. Providing suitable equipment coupled with training, following the cleaning, sanitizing, and/or disinfecting recommendations, and collaborating with the environmental services team is the best approach for meeting or extending the desired product service life. Addressing on-going policies and procedures for environmental services includes the care of the housekeeping closets, as the maintenance of clean and sanitary conditions at the source is important for the success of maintenance programs.

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Project Conditions to Protect Installed Product

The designer should include the floor protection requirements in the specifications. When construction projects install flooring early in the construction process, specifications should ensure that flooring protection remains in place until full service and occupancy is achieved.

Project conditions for new floor installations require careful coordination with the general contractor and other trades throughout construction. After resilient flooring is installed, the floor needs to be free of debris and dirt before floor protection is installed over the product. The type of floor protection should be selected based on manufacturer recommendations and the location of the installed products, considering the amount and type of traffic anticipated (e.g., heavy rolling loads, dirt, grit, exterior weather conditions and access, etc.). The integrity of the floor protection should be evaluated throughout the entire construction process. If protection is removed for inspection during the construction process, it is important that it be replaced until the owner takes occupancy of the building to avoid damage to the installed flooring product.

Cleaning and Maintaining Resilient Floor Covering Product

The party responsible for completing the initial cleaning process should be identified prior to completion. The initial cleaning process should be performed by a qualified floor care service provider or trained in-house technician, and reviewed with the interdisciplinary team to verify it meets manufacturer recommendations. Installers or laborers are often requested to complete the initial cleaning process, but may not have the credentialing, experience with equipment and required cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting chemicals, or expertise to successfully perform these processes. Therefore, providing a specification that requires a qualified floor care specialist or trained in-house technician is important. Once the team agrees, and responsibility has been assigned, there is much less likelihood of having maintenance issues arise.

It is important to correct two misconceptions regarding the maintenance of resilient flooring: 1) “low maintenance” does not mean “maintenance-free” or “no maintenance”; and 2) a shiny floor does *not* necessarily indicate the floor is clean. As a practical matter, Owner and Maintenance (O&M) manuals or project close-out documents often do not reach the end user. To successfully achieve appropriate and desired maintenance outcomes for the specified flooring solution, it is important to discuss and provide accurate and adequate documentation that conveys proper cleaning and maintenance information.

Part of long-term maintenance of a resilient floor covering product includes appropriate storage and inventory tracking of attic stock per the product specification for the project. Accessible storage and tagging, including date, location, and application of cartons and rolls of attic stock material, needs to be a part of the facility storage discussions, and must be conveyed to those responsible for maintaining the flooring.

Conclusion

All products require a maintenance program within the built environment. Manufacturers of resilient flooring all have technical departments that can assist designers with product selections and specifications that are both aesthetically appealing and maintainable for the

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application being considered. Not only can manufacturer recommendations be referenced and utilized during the development of the OPR, but the resilient floor covering manufacturer can also be a part of the interdisciplinary team, partake in pre-construction meetings, respond to installation questions, and assist with the instruction of recommended initial and on-going maintenance programs. Think of your manufacturer as a valued partner and resource to assist in maintaining a beautiful, long lasting flooring solution!

Resources

[ASTM F06 Standards Committee on Resilient Floor Coverings](#)

Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI): [Resource Hub](#)

Responsible Purchasing Network: [Cleaners: Pollution Prevention Calculator](#)

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#)

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): [Safer Choice Program](#)

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): [Design for the Environment \(DfE\) Certification](#)

US General Services Administration (GSA) Sustainable Facilities Tool (SF Tool): [Green Procurement Compilation \(GPC\) for Cleaning Products](#)

Note the following use of terms:

Low Maintenance – typically requires initial maintenance prior to starting operations within unoccupied space, on-going daily, monthly, and annual maintenance based on manufacturer recommendations. The goal is to maintain flooring utilizing the least amount of chemical to be effectively maintained based on the application.

Shiny – a shiny floor does not necessarily mean that a floor is clean. Shiny can create glare and show telegraphing and subfloor imperfections. A matte finish can be effectively maintained, reduces glare, and improves ambulation within a space.

Site Survey – evaluation of site and/or floor plans to identify areas of transitions and project conditions, such as traffic level, adjacent spaces, weather exposure, etc., including space to space and material to material transitions to assist with informing appropriate flooring product selections and specifications.

Prepared by: Resilient Floor Covering Institute: General Maintenance Guidance Task Group and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

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Owner Project Requirements



 Create Interdisciplinary Project Team

 Identify Product Performance Characteristics

