

**Section****Name** Industrial Floor Maintenance.**Last Updated** 11/14**Aim** Document general practices for maintaining industrial floors.**Scope** Covers good and bad practices.**References**

## Industrial Floor Maintenance

A floor is one of the most heavily used of all coated surfaces. Despite being one of the most demanding applications for coatings, they are rarely maintained to the standard required.

The major dangers for a floor are –

- Physical damage – via heavy traffic (forklifts, trucks), impact (gouging, point loads), walked in material (dirt, abrasives, aggressive footwear), dragged items (furniture, heavy appliances).
- Chemical damage – via spilt chemicals.

All floors are investments in the appearance, safety and/or longevity of a surface and should be viewed as assets worth maintaining. An effective floor maintenance program will not only keep the floor looking good, but also give it the best possible chance of performing and lasting as long as expected.

There are some basic good practices that can be followed to help prolong the life and aesthetics of an industrial floor.

Good practices include –

- Clean floors on a regular basis and multiple times per day if necessary.
- Smooth floors are best swept with large, soft-bristle brooms (commonly seen in shopping centres etc.) and cleaned with flat mops, which are available in packs from many hardware outlets. Sweep first with a flat dust mop and follow up with a wet flat mop using a pH neutral floor cleaner. For extra attention, a microfibre cloth can be used to gently remove scuff marks as they occur.
- Anti-slip floors, in particular, rely on regular cleaning to remove foreign material that can accumulate and nullify the anti-slip profile. Aggressive anti-slip surfaces can't be mopped and are generally scrubbed with a stiff bristle broom/brush and flushed with water (if using a water-blaster, pressure should not exceed 6.9 MPa/1000psi). The dilution of the residue using "spray mist" is discouraged as there is a danger of dissolved oils migrating back into the non-slip profile. On larger areas a mechanical scrubbing machine is probably more suited. Some residue will need to be disposed of correctly for environmental purposes, in which case a wet vacuum can be used to collect.

- There are many cleaners on the market, however pH neutral products are generally preferred over harsh caustic or acid-based cleaners, which can be overkill and rather hazardous to use. If these cleaners are used, they shouldn't be allowed to completely dry out at any stage as they can become concentrated and damage the floor.
- Preparing an efficient and effective clean-up procedure ensures exposure to spills is kept to a minimum. If the spill is of an aggressive chemical, an absorbant should be used to pick up the substance, followed by a chemical clean.
- Repair any damage to the floor as soon as possible. Consult manufacturer as soon as floor is damaged or prior to any planned, potentially damaging exposure (chemical exposure, unusual traffic demands etc.).
- When moving heavy equipment, be sure to lift and not drag these items. Sharp edges on heavy equipment can gouge the hardest of surfaces.

Of course there are practices that are damaging to the upkeep of the floor. Don't do the following –

- Don't use steam cleaners or boiling water as this may soften the coating. It is generally not necessary to clean with water above 60°C/140°F.
- Don't wear footwear with abrasive or aggressive soles.
- Don't use tyres on vehicles that mark easily. Use tyres that don't mark or can have their tyre marks removed. Drive carefully and avoid spinning.