

MAINTENANCE

1. INTRODUCTION TO MAINTENANCE

1.1 Why is floorcare necessary?

Floorcoverings are selected for many reasons including their colour, design and sometimes specialist properties such as static control or slip resistance. Without regular maintenance, dust and soiling would soon build up, making the colour and design indistinguishable and the specialist properties practically useless. Dirt and soiling can also harbour bacteria, making the floorcovering a health hazard e.g. in hospitals or food processing areas. Dust and grit underfoot can also act as an abrasive, which, if left uncontrolled, would shorten the life of a floorcovering, causing premature replacement. Regular and well planned maintenance keeps the floorcovering in pristine condition and can enhance the original appearance. Maintenance can also reduce wear and ultimately improve the life expectancy of the floorcovering.

1.2 What is maintenance?

Maintenance means many things to many people. To some, it is an army of operatives using modern powered machines working to a comprehensive maintenance programme.

To others, it is someone who comes in three evenings a week to dust and mop the floors. In each case, the requirement for cleanliness and gloss can be completely different.

It is this variability in what is considered normal that makes it impracticable in this manual to give precise

maintenance instructions to suit specific end user locations. The instructions given are intended to be used as a guide. They are based on general experience using established methods and cleaning materials. Polyflor recommends that the instructions are followed initially and, as traffic patterns become established, the frequency is tailored to suit.

1.3 Tailored Maintenance

Reducing maintenance costs is not difficult; what takes much more skill is reducing these costs without cutting the effectiveness of the maintenance system. By tailoring a maintenance programme, real savings can be made without compromising standards of appearance, hygiene and cleanliness.

A tailored maintenance programme is simple to apply, with the effort (and thus the cost), concentrated where each location demands. This produces definite savings and considerable return on a floorcovering investment.

Certain Polyflor ranges benefit from enhanced formulations in relation to maintenance. The PUR or Supratec families provide long term maintenance benefits. The PU family facilitates a reduction in the intensity of the construction clean and provides the foundation for the ongoing maintenance regime.

In our experience, a tailored maintenance approach is the best solution for all types of floorcoverings.

1.4 The Polyflor in-depth approach

We begin by looking at the many variables which have a part to play in maintenance. These include

floor location, type and quantity of traffic, and the existence or otherwise of dirt barriers. Armed with this information, a solution which gives real savings without affecting the floor's appearance, hygiene or cleanliness can be developed.

2. POINTS TO CONSIDER

Before establishing a maintenance programme, there are some points which should be considered, as they can affect the method and frequency - and hence the cost - of maintenance.

2.1 Dirt Barrier Systems

Evidence from a wide range of studies indicates that up to 80% of all dirt, grit and moisture is carried into a building by the people using it. One of the easiest ways to reduce maintenance costs must therefore be to reduce the amount of dirt, grit and moisture they bring in. Not only would this cut the cost of its removal, but it would also cause less abrasive action on the floorcovering, which in turn would ensure a longer useful life. With less moisture, there would also be less potential for slipping.

Unfortunately, notices asking people to thoroughly wipe their feet rarely work. What is needed is an effective "passive" dirt barrier system. At first, these systems can seem expensive but the savings they provide over the long term are substantial.

An effective dirt barrier system has both scraping and absorbing qualities and is sufficiently large to perform these actions on both feet during normal walking - hence "passive". Dirt barrier systems should be considered early in the specification stage. They should not be an afterthought, when there are rarely sufficient funds or space to do the job properly.

2.2 The Ideal Dirt Barrier



Figure 1 An exterior scraper mat at least two paces wide, set into a matwell. The choice of materials is varied. Clearance should be sufficient to allow grit and debris to fall below. Also allowances must be made for the wearers of various types of shoes e.g. stiletto heels.



Figure 2 An interior grade combination scraper/moisture mat of two to three metres in length. This will remove the majority of moisture and any fine abrasive particles. This can also be set into a matwell. Again, the choice of materials is wide and often the barrier will be a composite of several materials.

Note: To maintain the effectiveness of dirt barrier systems, they must be cleaned regularly, otherwise they can actually increase the soil intake by creating a "soil reservoir" at the entrance to the building.

3. ASSESSING THE LOCATION

As mentioned earlier, by tailoring the maintenance programme, real and achievable savings can be made without compromising standards of appearance, hygiene and cleanliness. The first part of this process is to break down areas to be cleaned into a series of independent locations. Each location should then be assessed before a particular maintenance regime is employed.

This should provide a clear indication as to where the effort and therefore the cost should best be applied.

These assessments should be reviewed periodically, to ensure that standards are to the level expected by the client and that cost savings are being achieved wherever this is possible.

3.1 Points to consider

The assessment should consider the following points:

1

Location

Position of the location in the building. Entrance areas and

receptions will require more intensive, frequent cleaning than upper floor, low circulation corridors.

2

Soiling

Type of soiling which is likely to be found in the location. Dirt and grit from an outside car park will require a different treatment from chemical spillage in a laboratory.

3

Traffic

Traffic types, density and frequency in the given location. The type of footwear used by children in school corridors provides a different situation from that where soft soled trainers or pumps are used in the school sports hall.

4

Client expectations

The expectation of the client for that particular location plays an important part. Obviously, if a high shine is required, the maintenance regime must be able to provide this.

5

Type of cleaning equipment

Manual methods can be time consuming in large areas and may be incompatible with the frequency requirement. However, large machines used in confined spaces can take longer than manual methods.

6

Colour of Floorcovering

In general, light colours show soiling more easily, dark colours show loss of gloss more easily. Mid range colours will give a balance between the two extremes.

7

Prevailing Weather

In icy conditions, grit and salt are sometimes used outside building entrances. In dry conditions, dust and sand can also be found outside buildings. In both instances, soiling and abrasion can be accelerated if effective measures are not taken to prevent them being trafficked into the building.

3.2 The Assessment should establish the following:

1

The type of cleaning needed

2

The frequency of cleaning

3

The cleaning products and equipment needed

4

The level of labour required

5

The time to be allocated

4. INDIVIDUAL PRODUCT MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

Polyflor have developed individual floorcare procedures to provide guidance for the end user or maintenance staff. This information is available via the website or can be requested from Polyflor in hard copy format.

5. TIPS, HINTS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

The main objective of the tailored maintenance programme is to provide cost savings without any compromise in cleanliness and hygiene.

Bearing this in mind, the most important tip is to regularly assess the various locations and be flexible about the maintenance employed in them. If the floor in a particular location needs more attention, then ensure that it gets it sooner rather than later. If some areas seem over-maintained (with polish build-up, perhaps, in the non-trafficked areas), then pull back the maintenance level, but always monitor the situation to ensure that it remains within control. In addition, there are certain precautions which can be taken.

5.1 Asphalt and Tarmacadam

Where asphalt or tarmacadam is present immediately outside an entrance and there is not a sufficient dirt barrier system in place, use non-rubber traffic mats at least two paces wide. Staining of the floor may occur if traffic mats are not used.

5.2 Gravel Paths and Roadways

Traffic mats should also be considered when gravel paths or roadways are immediately outside an entrance. Mats must always be cleaned frequently.

5.3 Rubber Tyres etc

Antioxidants used in the manufacture of rubber can cause staining. Non-rubber traffic mats are

recommended, as are tyre trays for car showrooms. Using black or dark brown floorcoverings will not prevent staining but will disguise it. Lighter coloured rubber can also be specified for appliance feet, trolley wheels etc.

5.4 Points to Note

1

Regular light maintenance is more cost effective than periodic heavy maintenance and more beneficial to the floorcovering.

2

Always sweep, mop sweep or dry vacuum the floor regularly.

3

Always use clean equipment - dirty equipment only redistributes the dirt.

4

Do not mix cleaning products from different manufacturers -they may not be compatible.

5

Always remove any spillage immediately.

Always remove excess water. It is not only dangerous but, on unwelded tile floors, the water can attack the adhesive and break the bond.

6

Do not use products containing pine gel or phenolic acid on Polyflor vinyl flooring. These can soften the vinyl surface and increase the possibility of scuffing. Shrinkage of the vinyl can also occur in the long term.

7

Never apply a floor dressing which cannot easily be removed - such as polyurethane or acrylic sealers - unless approved by Polyflor.

8

Never deviate from the manufacturer's recommended dilution rates.

9

Always take precautions to prevent dark rubber from coming into contact with the flooring. If this cannot be avoided, select darker colours of floorcovering.

10

Never use black nylon carborundum abrasive pads on the flooring.

11

Only use water based floor maintenance products.

5.5 Problem Solving

It is our experience that most floorcare complaints arise from a general comment that the floor is not as clean as expected. The most common reason is usually that the maintenance method being applied is not compatible with the type and level of traffic found. The table in figure 3 below contains more specific problems with their causes and our recommended actions.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

When using cleaning machines, polishes and chemicals, always follow the health and safety advice given by the relevant manufacturers.

When maintaining floors, wherever possible cordon off the area. This is much safer and will ensure that the job can be completed quicker.

Always use warning signs to advise that cleaning is in progress, especially in heavily trafficked areas and where wet cleaning methods are used.

Powdering of polish/excess of white dust.	Breakdown of polish due to either excessive use of alkaline cleansers, inadequate rinsing, use of bleaches or other harsh chemicals.	Strip off polish, thoroughly rinse and when dry, reapply.
Poor gloss, streaks or patchy finish.	Polish could be applied to a dirty floor. Polish could have been applied with dirty equipment. A residue of alkaline cleanser is on the floor.	Strip off polish, thoroughly rinse and when dry, reapply.
Polished floor is slippery.	Incorrect polish type applied. Application of too much or too little polish. Polish build up. Surface contaminants such as water or dust are not being removed. Cross trafficking of wax from other areas.	If polish is identified as the problem, strip off and reapply. Ensure daily maintenance to remove dust and other surface contaminants. If cross trafficking is a problem, use walk off mats.
Sticky floors.	Polish may not be dry. There may be a detergent build up.	Strip off polish and reapply. Ensure adequate rinsing after use of detergent to avoid build up.
Fading colour.	Equipment contaminated with bleach or bleach based products used.	Ensure all cleaning equipment is clean before use.

Figure 3

We strongly advise that a reputable professional maintenance company is used to provide chemicals and equipment. Always ask for help and advice sooner rather than later. A problem solved sooner is a problem solved cheaper.