



Tech Tips by Thomas

This is the first in a series of technical information articles that I would like to share with our reps, customers, installers and anyone interested in that special edge to make their rubber installation a success.

There are without a doubt many factors that can contribute to a successful installation, or an installation that leaves you scratching your head and wondering what now? One of the hottest topics I often address here at ECORE is how to handle seams. There are special techniques used to seam rubber that when used correctly can leave your installers and customers with a feeling of positive fulfillment and accomplishment. We're going to look at the most common technique that will ensure your installation is a success.

ECORE manufactures a number of different thicknesses. For the thinner thicknesses, 3.2mm and 6mm, a process called **Double Cutting** should be used for installation. Double cutting a seam is simply a process of overlapping the two roll widths and cutting down the center of the overlap using a sharp utility knife with the aid of a straight edge. For more detailed information on this procedure, please reference our technical and installation manual found at www.ecoreintl.com or www.everlastsportssurfacing.com.

I am often asked to address the setbacks if the procedure is not implemented and why this procedure is necessary. There are three main reasons why this procedure is used which are memory, discoloration and straight matching seams.

The first topic is **memory**. ECORE recommends storing the rubber lying down rather than on end. Standing rolls on end will result in memory curl which if not cut out prior to installation will result in a seam that is peaked. Rubber roll material should be laid out and allowed to relax for a minimum of two hours prior to the installation. Many contractors lay the rubber across the room and allow it to relax overnight before beginning the cutting in process. This extra time will allow the rubber to relax prior to making end or side cuts. Keep in mind that the rubber is stretched slightly at the factory when re-rolling onto the cores and must be allowed to bounce back before making a cut.

Discoloration on seam edges is dependant on how long the material has been stored and also the type of environment that it is stored in. Although we use organic UV resistant pigment in our EPDM process, the color can still be slightly affected by UV rays or certain types of lighting. Some lighter colors will show this more than others and is often seen as a darker shaded area approximately ¼" in on the seam edge. In addition to UV exposure, there has also been

discussion that propane from forklifts can cause a darkening on the seam edge, however this topic is still under review for validity purposes.

The last topic is **straight matching seams**. Our machines at the factory can make a very straight cut but it should be noted that rubber is a natural product and when cut in long lengths can result in a slight width variance. Ecore's standard width tolerance on this product is plus $\frac{3}{4}$ " and minus 0.0". On larger jobs you may experience one roll with a width of $48 - \frac{1}{4}$ " and another that is $48 - \frac{3}{4}$ ". Trying to compress or stretch the material to make it fit at this variance can cause a seam that peaks or separates creating a cumbersome fix or costly replacement of the product.

The second group of thicknesses I will address are the thicker 8mm and 9mm material. I have heard of this material being overlapped and double cut, however I have also heard horror stories of installers losing the tip of their thumbs using this same process.

Ecore recommends that this thicker material be straight edge cut rather than double cut. As I mentioned above, our material has a width variance of plus $\frac{3}{4}$ " and minus 0.0". Straight edging the thicker material is recommended however not always necessary in all situations. For example, say you have a room that is 22 feet wide by 60 feet in length. Our standard 25-foot roll will span the entire width of the room. If you have one roll that is 48" and another that is $48 \frac{3}{4}$ " you can butt them side by side without the fear of a head seam being thinner or wider than the previous roll.

8mm and 9mm material is a little more forgiving when it comes to the seam and can be overlapped and compression fitted. Care must be taken, however, to not over compress the seam. An over compressed seam can result in peaking as the adhesive is wet set and can allow the rubber to release from its bond before curing. Ecore's recommendation is to overlap the rubber about $\frac{1}{16}$ " or $\frac{1}{8}$ " and push the rubber back in after troweling the adhesive. This will leave a tight seam that is not over compressed.

With any thickness of rubber it may be necessary to both tape and/or weight the seam until the adhesive develops a firm set. Ecore's recommendation when taping is to use a good quality blue painter's tape or masking tape. Duct tape should always be avoided! Duct tape will leave a residue on the rubber that is extremely difficult to remove.

Weighing down the seam may be necessary with any thickness of rubber. Generally, boxes of cove base or VCT work well for this. Many manufactures recommend bricking both sides of the seam although this generally is not necessary with our products.

These articles are designed for each of you to learn and to help you through the technical questions when installing Ecore products. If you have a successful "real world" tip or story, we'd love to hear about it. Please email me at Thomas.Utley@ecoreintl.com. Ecore's technical department is available from 8am-5pm, Eastern Standard Time, to answer question on installation or substrate preparation. We welcome, your questions, concerns and comments and look forward to helping you achieve an installation that falls within the standards of

excellence. Until next time, best of luck to you and your crew and thank you for choosing ECORE for your flooring needs.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Utley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Utley".

Thomas Utley
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Thomas Utley, Technical Services Director, with ECORE International has been with ECORE for over three years. He has been installing floors since 1995 for a number of different types of flooring including rubber, hardwood, marble, ceramic and laminates.