



Tech Tips by Thomas

This is the **second article** in my series of technical tips and tricks that I would like to share with our customers, installers, factory reps, or anyone else that is looking for that special edge to make their rubber installation a success.

In this article I will cover basic substrate preparation and how to identify a sealed concrete slab. There are many factors that can contribute to a successful installation but, without a doubt, preparation of the substrate is at the top of my list. There are many things to consider when bonding our products to a concrete slab including moisture, pH, cleanliness, surface profile, sealers, curing agents, temperature, humidity, and others that I will cover in later articles.

ECORE's recommendation has always been to prepare concrete substrates according to ASTM F-710 standards. We recommend it be clean, dry, smooth, level, and structurally sound. The surface should be free of dust, solvents, paint, wax, oil and grease, curing and hardening compounds, sealers, alkaline salts, old adhesive residue and any other extraneous materials that may affect the adhesive bond.

The concrete should be smooth to prevent irregularities from telegraphing through to the top surface of the rubber. The surface should be flat to the equivalent of 3/16" in 10 feet and be free of all surface undulations. Although we recommend the concrete be smooth, it should still have a slight surface profile so that the adhesive can develop a strong bond. If the surface has been polished or overworked with Helo units using curing agents, it must first be scarified mechanically by grinding or shot blasting.

When inspecting the concrete, regardless of the visual, you will more than likely be told by most that a sealer was not used on the concrete surface. To put your mind at ease some general contractors may spout off ASTM standards to try to impress you or, if you are not familiar with these standards, silence you to avoid confrontation. Keep in mind how important doing the job correctly the first time is in avoiding costly repairs down the road. My advice to you is to obtain a copy of the ASTM F-710 standard for preparing concrete floors to receive resilient flooring. This standard should be committed to memory and become part of your standard vocabulary.

Anyone can quickly check the concrete for sealers. To do this, simply perform a water bead test. This method can be conducted by pouring a small amount of water, about ¼ cup or less, on the surface of the concrete. If the water soaks in within 60 seconds then the concrete is free of surface sealants. If the water beads up longer than 3-5 minutes, other actions must be taken. When a sealer is present, Ecore recommends mechanical scarification by means of grinding or shot blasting. These procedures are generally followed up with a feather finish or cementitious self leveling product.

Other things to watch out for are high pH levels, moisture, temperature, humidity, and old adhesive residues. These things are all important factors to consider and will be covered in other technical tips in the coming months.

In my next article I will be covering moisture vapor emissions, acceptable limits, testing, and how to correct them. Stay tuned for a very important announcement by ECORE on vapor emissions in the next article. **You don't want to miss this one!**

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 would 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 questions 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 team and thank you for choosing ECORE for your flooring needs.

Best Regards,

Thomas Utley
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