



# TILE DOCTOR GUIDE TO:

## SEALING A FLOOR

### WHY SEAL A FLOOR:

- Floors require sealing in order to prevent permanent staining from destroying their aesthetic appeal.
- Some flooring materials are susceptible to chemical attack from household cleaners and acids in food, e.g. vinegar, wine, cool drinks, and therefore need protection.
- Other floors are sensitive to abrasion and need a surface sealer to protect them.

### WHICH FLOOR TYPES NEED SEALING:

Porous surfaces such as:

- Quarry tiles
- Clay tiles
- Terracotta
- Terrazzo
- Marble
- Natural Stone
- Cement
- Vinyl
- Wood
- Cork

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE STARTING:

- The type of floor one is trying to seal, e.g. terracotta, cork, vinyl, etc.
- Whether the floor has previously been sealed or treated.
- If the previous sealer or polish needs to be removed. (Note - if this is the case, see Tile Doctor's Guide: How to Strip a Floor).
- The rate at which the surface to be sealed absorbs liquids.
- The type of sealer required.

### SEALER SELECTION:

If an unsealed floor is wet, one will notice that as the floor absorbs water, it becomes darker. This is the type of effect that will result from the application of a penetrating, colour enhancing sealer. Certain sealers can show up blemishes that may previously have been unobserved. Remember that if any blemishes on the floor became evident when the floor is wet, these may remain after the floor has been sealed. Penetrating sealers are available that do not colour enhance the surface. Those sealers that do not change the colour of the floor will not hide blemishes. Sometimes it is more practical to choose a sealer which will hide blemishes than it is to attempt to remove all old stains before sealing. The proper function of a sealer is to protect a floor against staining and to make the floor easier to maintain. For this reason it is advisable that a penetrating sealer is used which protects the floor against abrasion and wear and tear. This will provide a maintenance-free seal, with long lasting protection. If a gloss finish is required or a surface sealer is selected for surface protection, then a self-shine product would be required. This will require regular maintenance applications.

Gloss finishes are not recommended for outside areas as they are prone to peeling or flaking and are slippery when wet.

Only those surfaces that require surface protection against wear and abrasion should have a surface sealer applied to them.

#### **CHECKLIST FOR SEALING A FLOOR:**

- Suitable Tile Doctor Sealer
- Lint free cloth or lambswool block applicator
- Masking tape
- Water to clean water based sealer off tools after use
- Suitable solvent to clean solvent sealer off tools
- Protective gloves, clothing and appropriate breathing apparatus

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF SEALING A FLOOR:**

- Read the instructions on the container.
- Terracotta floors newly laid must not be sealed for at least 10 days of dry weather so that the adhesive and grout can cure and dry properly before sealing.
- Tiles laid in cement must have at least 4-6 weeks drying time before sealing.
- Efflorescence (whitish salts which sometimes appear on the surface of terracotta and quarry tiles) must be dealt with before attempting to seal. This usually required a daily mopping with water for several weeks. The sealer selection may also be part of the cure, depending on the type of efflorescence.
- Ensure that the surface to be sealed is perfectly clean and completely dry before sealing begins. If a porous floor has been stripped, allow one to three days for complete drying before sealing.
- If a lambswool applicator is to be used to apply a sealer, remember to brush the applicator out thoroughly with a wire or other stiff brush to remove excess hairs. If this is not done, the hairs will stick to the sealed floor, giving an unsatisfactory result.
- Most sealers give better results if they are applied thinly in even layers without allowing pooling, especially in grout lines. Some sealers, e.g. Miracle Seal are applied as a flood coat and the floor is allowed to "drink" as much as possible in a period of 3 - 5 minutes.
- Work in straight lines using the grout as a guide and do not allow overlapping whilst applying the sealer. Do not over brush! If a first coat of sealer appears uneven because of different absorption rates in different areas of a porous substrate, do not attempt to even it out by going over and over the same area with the applicator. Allow the first coat to dry according to the instructions before applying a further coat. This usually takes 3-4 hours, but check the instructions as this can vary from sealer to sealer.
- Apply second and third coats of sealer at right angles to the direction in which the previous coat was applied.
- Do not allow surface build-up to occur unless you are sealing a soft floor where the intended function of the sealer is to protect the floor from physical damage and abrasion, e.g. with vinyl or cement tiles. If the floor has absorbed one or two coats of the sealer and you are uncertain whether another coat is required, allow the last coat dry properly and then test a small section to see if the floor will absorb another coat. If the sealer soaks away, then another coat would be advisable, but if the sealer remains on the surface, then do not reapply.
- When applying Tile Doctor Uro Seal do not be concerned if a slight surface build up occurs in patches and is visible as slightly shiny areas because these will disappear with a little traffic. If surface build up is excessive because the sealer has been over applied and there is an overall shiny appearance, this can be removed with lacquer thinners if removed within 4 hours. If Tile Doctor Uro Seal becomes wet after applying and before it has cured, and white marks appear, these can be removed with lacquer thinners within 24 hours.

#### **SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS**

- Never apply sealers in full sunlight and do not attempt to seal damp tiles.
- Do not seal outdoors if rain is expected within 48 hours.
- Some sealers are flammable.
- Use in well ventilated areas with no naked flame or unprotected electrical equipment nearby.
- Do not mix with other chemical products.

**STORAGE:**

- Keep product out of the reach of children, pets and uninformed persons.
- Store in a cool, dry place 8°C-25°C away from heat, flames and sparks.
- Keep container closed when not in use, to prevent drying out. Check the product for any leakages.

**HEALTH & SAFETY:**

- In case of accidental contact with eyes or skin, wash the affected area with plenty of water and seek medical advice.
- This product is harmful if swallowed. Do not induce vomiting; call your local poison centre or doctor.

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