

FLOOR FINISHES

Floors are both functional and decorative and play an important part in the cleaning and maintenance program of any hotel. They cover a large area and are subjected to a great deal of wear and tear. Clean and well-kept floors indicate the standard of cleanliness throughout the establishment. Only in rare cases is the type of flooring chosen solely for luxury.

Common considerations while choosing a flooring are: -

- Appearance – colour, design, cold, warm
- Resistance to spills – water, grease, food, acid, etc.
- Ease of cleaning in relation to the type and amount of soiling
- Sound and heat insulation
- Nature and condition of sub floor.

Hard floors are usually sealed to give a non-absorbent, semi permanent gloss or finish which will wear off in time. Seal is applied on clean and dry floor. Before re-sealing any remaining seal has to be striped off. This is done with a chemical stripper, except in the case of wood and cork where sanding is done.

In order to preserve the seal, polish should be applied to sealed flooring. Polishes are usually spirit or water based. Spirit based floor polishes may be paste or liquid and require buffing when dry to produce a shine. Water based polishes are liquid and dries after application to give a shiny surface.

SUBFLOORS

In large modern buildings the subfloor is often made of concrete, but in older and smaller buildings it consists of soft wooden boards, nailed to wooden joints.

HARD FINISHES

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Granolithic

Granolithic is hard floor finish of graded granite chips set in cement. It is used for basement corridors, storerooms, stairways and laundry. It is usually laid in tile form.

Terrazzo

This is also a hard floor finish, consisting of a mixture of marble and other decorative chipping set in fine cement that can be coloured. Marble is a rock (limestone) mainly found in Italy, and maybe white, black, green or brown. When used as a flooring it is laid in slabs. Marble is very expensive; terrazzo being only chips of marble is much cheaper. To prevent slipperiness self-polishing emulsions are applied. Terrazzo is used in foyers, cloakrooms and kitchens.

Advantages of granolithic and terrazzo floorings: -

1. Removable pre-cast slabs can be made to cover service pipes for ease of maintenance.
2. Coven edges facilitate cleaning.
3. Not effected by water and may have a drain incorporated.
4. Very durable.
5. They are vermin proof, impervious to dry rot, and fire resistant.
6. Cleaning is relatively easy
7. Initial cost of granolithic is lower than terrazzo.
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Disadvantages: -

1. Hard and noisy
2. Cold in appearance
3. Terrazzo is slippery when wet.
4. Cracks may appear.
5. Granolithic will chip, especially on stairs. In terrazzo, marble chipping may become loose.
6. Acids and strong alkalis adversely effect terrazzo.

Care and cleaning: -

1. Clean regularly
2. Avoid strong alkalis on terrazzo.
3. Attend to cracks and loose chipping immediately.

Magnesite

Magnesite flooring consists of wood floor and other fillers mixed with burnt magnesite, and laid in site (on the spot) or in form of small blocks. This finish is extremely porous and washing should be avoided as much as possible. It maybe sealed and /or polished to prevent the penetration of water and dirt, but then it becomes very slippery.

Advantages: -

1. Moderately warm
2. Good appearance
3. Cleaning is relatively easy
4. Initial cost is low

Disadvantages: -

1. Hard and rather noisy
2. Little choice of colour
3. Becomes slippery when polished
4. Easily harmed by water, acids, alkalis and abrasives.

Care and cleaning: -

1. Clean regularly
2. Avoid frequent washing

Bitumastic

This is a type of asphalt rolled on to a solid subfloor, in a hot plastic state. Conventionally found in black, red or brown colours only, it may have other colours rolled in, or surface maybe painted. It is used mainly in bathrooms to protect the floor from dampness.

Advantages: -

1. Coven edges facilitate cleaning
2. Not effected by water and may have a drain incorporated.
3. Very durable.
4. It is vermin proof and impervious to dry rot.
5. Initial cost is low.
6. Non-slippery.

Disadvantages: -

1. Poor appearance
2. Dents with heavy weight
3. Softens to heat
4. Harmed by spirits, oils and acids.

Care and cleaning: -

1. Clean regularly
2. Use special floor paint to restore colour whenever necessary.

Ceramic tiles

Ceramics are clayware and it's floor tiles are available in variety of qualities, colour and sizes. Tiles with a particularly hard glaze are used as more decorative floorings. A wide range of colours is available to harmonise with wall tiles. Tessellated tiles are small ceramic tiles often used as mosaic, giving highly decorative floor.

Advantages: -

1. Removable pre-cast slabs can be made to cover service pipes for ease of maintenance.
2. Coven edges facilitate cleaning.
3. They are not affected by water and may have a drain incorporated.
4. Available in many qualities, colours and size.
5. Ridged and abrasive surfaced tiles can be used for a less slippery floor.
6. Very durable. One loose tile may be replaced or reset.
7. Not affected by acids, alkalis or grease.
8. They are vermin proof, impervious to dry rot and fire resistant.
9. Cleaning is very easy.

Disadvantages: -

1. Hard and noisy
2. Cold in appearance
3. Slippery when wet or greasy.
4. Under heavy weight, they crack or break easily
5. Marks are difficult to remove

6. Initial cost is average.

Care and cleaning: -

1. Clean regularly
2. Attend to loose and broken tiles.

Wood

Wood finishes of good quality are among the most beautiful flooring, provided the variety of wood and size of the unit are chosen for effect. As floorings are to be laid bare and are subject to tremendous wear and tear, only hard wood must be used.

Strip wood flooring

A strip wood flooring consists of lengths of narrow strips (under 4"wide) of hard wood of good appearance. E.g. Maple. The boards are fixed to joists or to timber insets in concrete. This construction together with the length of strips, gives the floor its resilience properties and makes it suitable for dance floors. A sprung floor has springs under the joists to increase the resilience.

Wood block flooring

A wood block flooring consists of rectangular blocks (e.g. 9"x3" or 12"x2") laid with an adhesive on a level concrete base. Blocks are generally laid to form a pattern. Wood used is generally oak, teak, jarrah, missanda, etc. When used in linen rooms, store rooms or staff halls, it is chosen for its durability and insulation rather than for their appearance.

Parquet flooring

In appearance parquet flooring resembles wood block flooring. It also consists of rectangular pieces of wood but the blocks are much thinner (less than 3/8" in thickness) and are pinned and glued to a wooden subfloor, often in a herring bone pattern. It is used in foyers and lounges in conjunction with rugs. Cheaper parquet flooring may only have a veneer of a good quality wood on the surface and thus form a much less hardwearing surface.

Wood mosaics

Wood mosaics are generally made up in panels (18"sq formed of four 1/2"squares in basket pattern). It is backed with felt or aluminium. It is laid directly on concrete with an adhesive or as an overlay on an existing floor.

Advantages of wooden floorings: -

1. Available in varying colours and grains
2. Give a good appearance when used in strips or parquet.
3. Hardwearing and does not require frequent repairs.
4. Surface can be sanded and fresh surface exposed.
5. Very good as heat insulator.

Disadvantages: -

1. Noisy
2. Inflammable and susceptible to dry rot.
3. Splinters if heavy item is dragged on it
4. If not sealed, they are absorbent and cleaning can become laborious and expensive
5. Initial cost is high

Care and cleaning: -

1. Clean regularly and polish with wax polish.
2. Attend to loose blocks and splinters.
3. Resurface by sanding when necessary

SEMI-HARD FINISHES

Thermoplastic floor finish

Thermoplastic floor tiles are made from a variety of asphalt binders with inert fillers and pigments. The tiles are usually 9”square, and are laid on a clean, smooth, rigid surface, set as closely together as possible with the help of an adhesive. They are laid in warm pliable state (thermoplastic) but harden on cooling and may be carried up to the wall to form a small coven skirting. They are polished with water based polish, and are used in bathrooms, cloakrooms, corridors, offices, etc.

Advantages: -

1. Available in variety of colours.
2. Very durable.
3. Easy cleaning.

Disadvantages: -

1. Hard and hence noisy.
2. Cold in appearance.
3. Slippery when wet.
4. Easily harmed by spirits, grease and coarse abrasives.
5. Dent with heavy weights and soften with heat.
6. Scratches occur with grit and sharp edges.
7. Gets badly marked, especially with rubber heels.

Care and cleaning: -

1. Clean regularly.
2. Use water base polish, not spirit based ones.
3. Replace loose or broken tiles as soon as possible.

Vinyl

They are available in two main types.

Vinyl asbestos, which is obtained only in tile form, is slightly flexible and is manufactured from PVC or similar synthetic resins, inert fillers including short fiber asbestos, and pigments. It is available in wide

range of colours and the tiles can be stuck to a solid subfloor with a suitable adhesive.

A flexible form is based on PVC or similar synthetic resins, inert fillers, pigments and plasticisers. It is available in tiles, or sheet form when it is sometimes mounted on canvas or other suitable backing material. There is coven skirting available and the sheet material can be used as a protective skirting.

Both types maybe used in bathrooms, cloakrooms, canteens, offices, etc.

Advantages: -

1. Relatively non-slip.
2. Have great resistance to wear and tear, especially the flexible type.
3. Generally grease and oil resistant.
4. Resistant to acids and alkalis.
5. More resistant to point load than thermoplastic tiles.
6. Not easily scratched.
7. Can be easily washed and polished.

FLOOR CARE AND CLEANING AGENTS

Type	Cleaning agent	Polishes	Caution	Daily maintenance	Periodic care
Epoxy, heavy duty	Damp mopping	Not required		Sweep and dampen or scrub	Does not require sealing
Cement or concrete	Detergents or neutral soap	Not required		Damp mop	Scrub on regular basis
Wood	Liquid solvent	Solvent based wax or polish	Avoid water	Dust mop, heavy powered machine buff, damp mop only if necessary	Buff with no.0 steel wool or rebuffer with nylon padspot. Clean with dilute detergent

Terrazzo	Non-alkaline synthetic detergent	Can be waxed, avoid build-up	Avoid alkaline or acid cleaner. Soap will not stain	Sweep or dust mop. Use non-oily compound	Buff with synthetic or fiber(not steelwool). If worn grind down and reseal
Cork	Soap or detergent (after sealing)		Avoid excess water		
Vinyl asbestos	Soap or detergent	Emulsions or resinous or polymeric	Avoid abrasives	Drymop with non-oily mop or sweep, damp mop with dilute syndet	Buff to remove marks, strip to remove buildup(1-6times/yr) , keep sufficient wax on floor
Asphalt	Dilute solutions of neutral or synthetic detergent	Buffable polish	Avoid heat and cold	Sweep and dry mop, damp mop with dilute, neutral cleaner, buff to remove marks	Touch up with water based polish. Strip, rinse and polish as in new installation
Rubber	Synthetic detergent	Wax with polymer type water emulsion	Consult manufacturer, avoid grease and oil	Sweep or dry mop with treated mop that leaves no oil. Damp mop with dilute syndet	Spot clean at heavy traffic, use safe-for-rubber de-waxed and repeat initial care
Quarry tile and ceramic	syndet	Water emulsion polish or wax with	Avoid abrasives	Sweep or dust mop, damp mop	

		non-slip			
Linoleum	Neutral soap or syndet	Water emulsion and solvent based wax	Avoid excess water and wax in seams. Avoid ammonia, alkaline and acid cleaners	Sweep with chemically treated non-oily mops, damp mop	Scrub lightly and repeat initial care. Do not remove polish. Apply polymeric coating. Strip 1 or 2 times in a yr.
Marble or brick slate	neutral	Wax or polymer	Stains, avoid excess water	Damp mop	Polish by buffing if sealed.