
Maintenance Guidelines

Rubber Tile, Rubber Stair Treads, & Seamless Step Stair Tread Maintenance Instructions

Community rubber flooring is one of the longest wearing and most durable flooring products available. This document addresses initial maintenance procedures, ongoing or more routine recommendations, as well as the special instructions that may call for procedures outside of normal maintenance recommendations. Community premium rubber flooring's built-in emerging waxes help release dirt, grime, gum and tobacco tars and allow it to produce a continuous luster for years without waxing. Tile that has not been cleaned in some time will quickly brighten when cleaned as instructed.

Proper and regular maintenance procedures are important to ensure maximum savings from our rubber flooring's self-waxing qualities. Rubber flooring's natural appearance with emerging waxes are much like the natural oils in your skin. Both Community rubber flooring and your skin work better with proper care to function efficiently. Strong cleaners used on Community rubber flooring can remove its emerging waxes temporarily.

This Maintenance Instruction Sheet is divided into three sections: Initial Maintenance for newly-installed tile during its 30 day break-in period, Routine or Ongoing maintenance and Special Maintenance Situations. Within each section, procedures needed to properly maintain small, medium and large areas are reviewed. All maintenance procedures recommended apply equally to Community rubber tiles and stair treads. Small to medium-sized areas usually require the most individual pieces of equipment and the most man hours per square foot. Automatic machines are available for medium and large installations, where one operator can quickly apply, scrub and remove cleaning solution in one operation.

MAINTENANCE FOR NEWLY-INSTALLED FLOORS

SECTION 1 - Maintenance for Newly-Installed Tile during Its 30 Day Break-In Period

During Community rubber flooring's break-in period (the 30 days immediately following its installation), the flooring undergoes a maturing process that makes it easier to maintain, produces less "tracking" and results in a brighter luster. During this time, tile and treads will not look as bright nor be as easy to maintain as when it has completely matured or cured. Community rubber flooring may tend to "track" dirt during this period. However, it will become brighter with each successive maintenance event. This is completely normal for new rubber tile and treads. Therefore, initially do not over clean or over scrub and do not apply waxes or coatings of any kind, except as discussed later. After the tile or treads have been installed, wait at least 72 hours for urethane, epoxy or one part adhesive to completely cure before initial cleaning.

Adhesive Removal: Excess adhesive should have been removed as Community rubber tiles or stair treads were being installed. If any dried, one-part adhesive residue is still evident, attempt to remove it with mineral spirits and wipe dry. (Note: Cured epoxy or urethane adhesive may not come off without causing surface damage, resulting in the need to replace any damaged tile.) For tile or tread installations of all sizes, begin by sweeping the tiles with a medium-soft bristle push broom or dry mop. A scrubbing machine not exceeding a speed of 350 rpm and equipped with a 22 gauge flagged nylon brush can be used on tile.

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Brushes: Appropriate wet cleaning brushes are available to fit most floor scrubbing machines. It is important to use a “flagged nylon” (split ends or sanded ends of fibers) cleaning brush with open spaces and flexible brush ends to clean the high and low surfaces of Community rubber tile without stripping the natural migrating waxes off of the studs.

Recommended wet cleaning brushes:

Carlisle Sanitary Maintenance Products; Phone: 608-269-2151 Flo Pac Brush; 800-277-3780 or 610-277-5070

Cleaner: Prepare the recommended neutral cleaner—the key to good maintenance. Neutral means a pH of 7 to 8 measured after the cleaner has been added to warm water.

For moderate construction soil during the first cleaning operation, dilute exactly 4 ounces of cleaner per gallon of water. Remember, more is not better. Apply the cleaning solution to Community rubber flooring with a rayon mop or with a deck brush or hand brush. Allow the solution to stand for between 5 and 10 minutes.

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On small installations, scrub the tile with the applied solution, using a hand brush, deck brush or scrubbing machine. Note that mopping alone will not work on rubber flooring. Brushing and scrubbing are an essential part of rubber floor maintenance. Wet vacuum or mop up the solution.

On large installations, for large newly-installed areas, automatic scrubbing machines of various sizes can be used with one operator to simultaneously apply, scrub and remove solution. Again a 22 gauge, “flagged nylon brush” should be used for scrubbing. Mix 4 ounces of the neutral floor cleaner per gallon of warm water (or as recommended) and pour this solution into the automatic scrubber. Apply the solution to the floor with a mop or with the scrubbing machine with its vacuum system “off”. Allow the cleaning solution to remain on the tile for 5 to 10 minutes. Scrub again, but this time use the vacuum system to remove the spent solution. Remember, during the first month, scrub new tile weekly or as needed. After the first scrub, use a cleaner mix of 2 ounces per gallon of water.

Cleaners: There may be other suitable sources of neutral cleaners. But Taski, a product from Johnson Diversey, who has been working with rubber flooring since the 1940's, seems to be the most suitable product we can recommend. They and their distributors are the current preferred source for flooring solutions and service. Taski can be secured through Johnson Diversey at 1-800-558-2332.

Stair Treads: Cleaning newly-installed Community rubber stair treads, whether round, square, safety or diamond designs, requires essentially the same procedures as for new rubber tile. First, remove excess installation adhesive with mineral spirits and wipe dry. Sweep the treads with a medium-soft bristle broom or dry mop. Next, prepare the recommended neutral cleaner, with a pH of 7 to 8, by diluting 4 ounces of cleaner per gallon of water. Apply the cleaner solution to the stair treads with a rayon mop or with a deck brush or hand brush. Allow the solution to stand for between 5 and 10 minutes. Scrub the treads with the applied solution, using a hand brush or a small portable scrubber. Then, remove the solution with a wet vacuum machine. Finally, wipe the treads down with a soft, absorbent hand towel. Wait 3 days until treads have finally cured before attempting to brush the tiles or treads for added luster.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

SECTION 2 - Ongoing Maintenance After Its 30 Day Break-In Period

Ongoing wet cleaning is virtually the same process as cleaning newly installed tiles and treads, except that Community rubber flooring is much easier to clean and will be more forgiving. Begin ongoing maintenance by thoroughly sweeping the tiles or treads with a push broom or mopping it with a dry mop. Mix a neutral floor cleaner with warm water. The dilution rate for light soil is only 2 ounces per gallon of water. For heavily soiled flooring, use only 3 to 4 ounces per gallon of water. Keep these measurements accurate. Remember, more is not better.

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Small and Medium Sized Installations: Apply cleaning solution with a deck brush or with a rayon mop. Let the solution stand for approximately 5 to 10 minutes before scrubbing. Do not allow it to dry. After 5 to 10 minutes, scrub the surface with a deck brush or single-disk scrubbing machine. Then remove the solution with a mop or wet vacuum.

Large Installations: Use an automatic scrubber with a 22 gauge flagged nylon brush. An automatic machine reduces labor costs by using one operator to simultaneously apply, scrub then wet vacuum the solution. Apply cleaning solution with the machine, using vacuum and scrub operations simultaneously.

Cleaning machines specifically designed for use on rubber flooring feature very powerful wet vacuums needed for three-dimensional flooring surfaces. Cleaning machines with strong vacuuming capabilities will help remove all traces of wetness. When using an automatic scrubber in heavily soiled areas, apply the solution and scrub with the machine in "vacuum-off" position. Let the solution stand for 5 to 10 minutes. Then, using no additional solution, re-scrub with the vacuum "on". Let the floor dry, and then check the luster level. Community rubber flooring should be clean and, when dry, have good luster. In succeeding weeks of cleaning, its luster will increase if the correct pH-balanced cleaner solution has been used and the tiles have been properly scrubbed and wet-vacuumed.

After Community rubber flooring's 30 day break-in period, our natural migrating waxes will have emerged. Dry brushing is normally not necessary. However, if added luster is desired, dry brush with a natural bassine bristle brush. Dry polishing brushes include "union fiber," Tampico or bassine bristle brushes.

Small Area Polishing: For polishing small areas, hand-towel, using a soft bath towel wrapped around a push broom, or a small single-disk polishing machine with a bassine brush.

Medium Area Polishing: Brush or dry-polish medium-sized areas with a single disk polishing machine of up to 350 rpm's equipped with a bassine natural bristle brush. This brush is specifically designed to be used dry.

Large Area Polishing: For polishing larger areas, use an automatic scrubbing machine equipped with a dry bassine natural bristle brush.

Precautions:

Do not use gasoline, turpentine or acetone for spot removal.

Do not use abrasive scrubbing or buffing pads or steel wool.

Do not use non-flagged brushes, which are too stiff for rubber tiles.

Do not apply waxes or acrylics, except as instructed.

Do not use strong solvent cleaners such as Lestoil, Top Job, Pine Sol, Spic 'n Span or similar products.

SPECIAL NEEDS

SECTION 3 - Special Maintenance Needs

If Community rubber flooring has been subjected to improper maintenance procedures, the tiles and treads will look dull because their accumulated surface wax deposits have been stripped away. Tiles and treads in this condition will show "tracking" because Community rubber flooring's soil-releasing surface waxes have been removed by excessive scrubbing or chemical over concentration. Fortunately, our natural waxes will resurface within 30 days.

To help restore Community rubber tile to its normal luster and condition, first dry-brush the tiles with a bassine natural bristle brush. However, if all of Community rubber flooring's surface wax has been removed, brush polishing will be nearly impossible because of brush resistance to the rubber tile. If this accidental over-cleaning has left the tiles stripped, or even dull and sticky, they will track soil. Use one application of Taski Wi-Wax and Taski Ombra. Both products are an acrylic, medium-luster reconditioning surface solution with a luster similar to Community rubber

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flooring. The products are resilient and will not flake off, unless the tile was not thoroughly cleaned. This surface reconditioning process will allow Community rubber flooring's natural waxes to automatically resurface in about 30 days. A coating of Wi-Wax or Ombra will wear off with normal foot traffic in 30 days and no further coatings should be needed.

Application: After the tiles have dried thoroughly, use a rayon mop to apply one even coat of Taski Wi-Wax or Ombra and then let dry.

For other Special Maintenance Situations, such as spot cleaning, gum, tar, black heel and scuff mark removal, and unneeded waxing, the following procedures are recommended.

Spot Cleaning (water-soluble stains, milk, coffee, food, etc.): Spray-mist the tiles or treads with a gentle glass cleaner, such as Windex or Glass-Plus. When dry, buff the area with a soft dry towel to help restore luster.

Gum Removal: To remove gum in large installations, use a hot water, high pressure washer, then vacuum the excess solution. For small areas, apply a gum remover, such as De-Solv-It by Castex or Citrus Express. After the gum has softened, remove it with a wood, plastic or Teflon spatula. Wipe clean with an absorbent cloth. Some temporary dulling may result. If so, spray-apply a small amount of Ombra to the dulled area. Remove excess Ombra with just one wipe of a soft, absorbent towel. Community rubber flooring's built-in waxes in cleaned area will re-emerge within 30 days. Buff the dulled area to match Community rubber flooring's luster.

Scuff and Black Heel Mark Removal: Black heel marks may appear on Community rubber tiles, usually when they are new or under 30 days old. Such marks can be removed with mineral spirits, leaving the cleaned spot temporarily duller on the surface. Spray or wipe Ombra on the spot, but use sparingly. Remove excess with one wipe of a soft, absorbent towel. Remember, new Community rubber flooring's built-in waxes will re-emerge within 30 days after installation, at which time it will be far less susceptible to black heel marks and scuffs.

Tar Stain Removal: Tar can be particularly harmful to all rubber tile. It will permanently stain or yellow Community rubber flooring if not removed quickly with a soft, absorbent towel dampened with mineral spirits. Some temporary dulling may result. If so, apply a small amount of Ombra to the dulled area.

Top Coating or Waxing: Applying floor finishes to Community rubber flooring to produce an artificial shine is unnecessary and generally ineffective. Community rubber flooring's natural internal migrating waxes will prevent ordinary acrylic waxes or top coatings from sticking to its surface. The cracked acrylic wax coating will look terrible and trap dirt.

Stripping: If despite all instructions, an incompatible acrylic has been applied to Community rubber flooring, the top-coating should be removed using an appropriate stripper diluted for light or medium wax removal. A product called Taski Ice-It or similar stripper should be used. Apply the stripper to Community rubber flooring with a rayon mop and let stand for 5 to 10 minutes. Scrub with a deck scrub brush or a single-disk or automatic scrubbing machine equipped with a flagged 22 gauge nylon bristle brush. As an alternative, anything less in abrasiveness than a pink or beige pad can be used. Check results in a small area before proceeding. Remove spent solution with a wet vacuum. Then rinse with clean water. Once thoroughly dry, if tiles show some luster, as can be seen with older installations, dry brush the tile with a bassine natural bristle brush. If the tiles look clean, but are dull and sticky, apply one coat of Taski's Ombra with a rayon mop. The Ombra coating will slowly disappear with normal cleaning, and Community rubber flooring's waxes will soon re-emerge. Remember, Community rubber flooring does not need waxing of any kind. With patience, the flooring's natural luster will develop over time.

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Community rubber flooring in restrooms can be cleaned by applying 2 ounces of Profi cleaner per gallon of water with a single-disk scrubbing machine or deck brush, then hosing down the spent solution into a drain. Remove surplus solution by squeegeeing or wet-vacuuming.

Quick High Luster Shortcut: Community rubber flooring cures in 30 days, at which time it becomes easier to brush and maintain its bright, natural luster. In some cases, a bright luster is needed immediately after installation. Use a standard nylon scrubbing brush, apply Profi cleaner at 6 ounces per gallon of warm water, scrub the tile, rinse with fresh water and let dry. Then, apply two coats of Taski Ombra on the tile with a rayon mop, letting the first coat dry before applying the second.

High luster speed buffing of Community rubber flooring is possible, but only on the low vibration square profile (LVS), Simply Smooth or Sculptured profiles. This process uses a special tricycle style carriage for a high speed burnishing machine with a single disk. The machine is fitted with a soft white pad and is raised off the floor slightly so that the pad just “kisses” the tiles. It operates at speeds of up to 1100 rpm, versus the normal maximum of 350 rpm. This method provides a higher luster than with other buffing methods. Spray small amounts of water on the tiles if you feel it helps to develop luster. Remember, this process can be used only on the profiles listed above.

SUMMARY

All of these maintenance recommendations are based on the best available data obtained through years of testing and field experience. However, because of variations in actual cleaners, equipment, applications or site conditions, the results may vary. Following these guidelines and recommendations will give you a good starting point. From there, your own experience and knowledge will help bring out the best results. It is our aim to help you maintain Community rubber flooring's luster through years of service without waxing.