

## General Floor Care Guidelines

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**SAFETY FIRST! Wet floors may be slippery. Exercise caution when conducting wet cleaning procedures, especially in healthcare applications where protective footwear is worn. Always use proper signage and prohibit traffic until floors are thoroughly dry.**

### Color Selection

The color of a floor covering can play a significant role in the apparent cleanliness of the floor. Light colors tend to show dark colored soil and dark colors tend to show light colored soil. Patterned or marbled floor coverings generally have better soil concealing characteristics than plain floorcoverings.

In applications where regular floor care may not be possible, the color and pattern of the floor covering will influence how long the floor will retain an acceptable appearance level between cleaning procedures. In areas where there is a higher risk of staining, a color that will help to mask potential stains should be chosen.

### Entrance Systems

Because the majority of dirt (as high as 80%) entering any building comes in on people's footwear, it makes sense to incorporate an effective entrance system. An entrance system should extend far enough from the entrance so that the average person will take four to ten (4 – 10) steps while on the entrance system. Ten (10) feet of an entrance system removes up to 70% of the walked-in soil and moisture. Twenty (20) feet of an entrance system removes up to 90% of the walked-in soil and moisture.

It is also important that the entrance system be maintained correctly in order to ensure that it is fulfilling its function. A good entrance system will not totally prevent soil from entering a building, but it will substantially reduce soiling and moisture from being tracked throughout the building at the point of entry. A quality entrance system will also make floor care easier. Forbo offers two entrance system options – Coral® and Nuway®. Regardless of the type of entrance system in place, they should be cleaned and cared for on a regular basis.

### Petroleum and Anti-Oxidant Staining

Some rubber products, particularly dark colored ones, like tires, casters, floor mats and asphalt sealers that are commonly used in parking lots and walkways, contain chemicals that can permanently stain or discolor floor coverings. Although the discoloration is generally less noticeable with linoleum flooring than with vinyl flooring, precautions should always be taken in areas such as hospitals, supermarkets or automobile showrooms where potential discoloration is a concern. For example, staining from tires can be prevented in an automobile showroom by placing a small mat under each tire. In hospitals or supermarkets, non-staining wheels should be specified for rolling equipment. All mats or rugs should also be non-staining.

### Chemical Damage

All floorcovering materials are subject to damage or staining from certain chemicals. For applications where damage or staining may be a concern, a flooring product that offers the best resistance to the specific chemicals involved should be selected. A stain resistant chart for commonly used chemicals is available for all Forbo flooring products. Contact Forbo's Product Support & Education Services for additional information.

Chemical spills should always be cleaned as soon as possible in order to prevent or minimize damage to the floor covering. The application of a floor finish may be helpful in preventing permanent stains if the finish is removed before the stain has penetrated to the flooring material. The floor finish can then be restored with additional coats of finish.

### Spills

Spot clean spills as soon as possible. If necessary, rinse the area with clean cool water and allow the floor to dry thoroughly before permitting traffic. In addition to the possibility of damage or staining of the floor covering when spills occur, safety is also a concern. Make sure all floor care personnel are aware of the potential liability associated with spills, as well as the need for immediate attention.

### Heel Marks

Black heel marks can be removed using a fine nylon pad moistened with a neutral pH detergent. Rinse thoroughly with a clean cloth and water. Allow to dry thoroughly before allowing traffic.

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### Minor Surface Burns

Minor surface burns on Marmoleum® only char the surface, and the resulting mark can normally be removed by lightly rubbing the area with a fine grade steel wool (00 or 000 grade). After cleaning, the application of spray buff, mop on restorer or floor finish will protect the repaired spot. On a vinyl and textile floorcoverings, however, the heat of the cigarette will often melt the material and may leave a permanent mark on the floor.

NOTE: This is a repair to the flooring and by following the process above, it can change the surface of the material. Repairs are a fix, not a replacement of material and it needs to be viewed as just that. Contact Forbo's Product Support & Education Services for more information prior to doing any repairs.

### Gum

Gum can be removed with a smooth, plastic putty knife and Forbo Adhesive Remover.

### Physical Damage

All flooring materials are susceptible to physical damage. For example, concrete is one of the most durable flooring surfaces and it too can be scratched or cracked. For any flooring, these marks or scratches will become more visible as they start to hold soil. The soil can be removed from these marks, however soil will continue to collect in these areas, diminishing the overall appearance of the floor. The most common causes of physical damage are movable or rolling furniture that has insufficient or no furniture protectors and sliding heavy furniture or objects across the floor.

To reduce the chance of damage and to increase the overall appearance of the flooring, precautionary measures should be put in place. Newly installed floors must be protected from construction soil, traffic and damage. Floor protectors should be installed on all movable furniture. Rolling equipment should have broad, flat wheels with rounded edges and without ridges. Wheel locks should be disengaged prior to moving equipment. When moving heavy stationary objects, protecting the floor covering with sheets of Masonite or plywood is recommended. Failure to use adequate precautions may result in scratches, cuts or other severe damage to the floorcovering. For stationary objects, permanent indentations may occur if the pressure exerted by the object on the floor covering exceeds the floor covering's rated capacity.

For additional information on floor protection or to find a local supplier, contact Forbo's Product Support & Education Services and refer to the Contacts section of this guide.

### Disinfectants

Quaternary ammonium compounds are commonly used in hospital disinfection programs. Generally, when mixed and used properly, they will have little or no effect on the physical properties of most floorcoverings. Phenolic disinfectants are very caustic and pose a greater risk of damage to floorcoverings or other surfaces that they come into contact with. Potential damage includes discoloration or damage of the flooring surface, and leaving a slippery residue that may cause a hazardous condition. Where protective footwear is used, the chance of slipping is increased. If disinfectants are used, the floorcovering should be thoroughly rinsed with clean water after each application. After rinsing, the floor should be wet vacuumed. Following this recommendation will reduce the risk of slipperiness and damage to the floorcovering. Forbo's warranty does not cover damage caused by phenolic disinfectants.

### Proper Use of Floor Care Chemicals

The improper use of high pH cleaners and strippers may damage resilient flooring products. Frequent treatment or inadequate rinsing may cause cracking, shrinking and/or discoloration. Marmoleum® should NEVER be cleaned or stripped with high pH chemicals because permanent damage may occur. Abrasive powders or cleansers should not be used on Forbo floorcoverings.

**CAUTION!!** Follow the recommendations for each Forbo product on the following pages. Damage is not covered under Forbo's warranty.

### Floor Care Equipment

Keep all equipment clean and in good repair. Wash and rinse mops, pads, applicators, and brushes after each use. Use a dedicated mop for each procedure, i.e. one only used for cleaning, one only used for rinsing and another only used for finish application.

**CAUTION!!** Follow the recommendations for each Forbo product on the following pages. Damage is not covered under Forbo's warranty.

Forbo's Commercial Floor Care Guide contains additional information and is available for download at [www.forboflooringNA.com](http://www.forboflooringNA.com). For a hard copy, or for additional information, contact Forbo's Product Support & Education Services at 1-800-842-7839.