

STRIPPING (LINOLEUM) FLOORS

Our field service personnel are regularly asked for advice about stripping or thoroughly cleaning linoleum or marmoleum floors in particular. The most frequently asked question is what must be taken into consideration before stripping these kinds of floors.

It's almost impossible to answer all the questions in one go. However, if the instructions given below are followed carefully, this procedure usually presents no problems.

Check before starting

- On what type of floor surface has the protective layer been applied?
- What does the protective layer that must be removed consist of?
- Was a primer or something similar used in the past?
- What is the condition of the floor and what is the condition of the joins in the flooring, if there are any?
- What is the condition of the old protective layer?
- Is there any chance that the stripper solution could accidentally spill under the linoleum, on the skirting-boards or on any furniture which cannot be removed from the room?



The stripper solution

Most floors cannot bear stripper solutions with a pH value above 10.5. As such, we recommend the use of a solution of at most 5 – 10 % of a light alkaline cleaner, such as Cetemax BL – 2 for example. Use lukewarm water (approx. 40 °C) to increase the cleaning effect. If the floors are very dirty and the type of floor is suitable (tiles etc.), a solution of about 5 – 10 % of a strong alkaline cleaner such as Cetemax IR may be used.

Precautions

- Prevent the stripper solution from seeping under the floor covering. This can happen for example where there is a linoleum floor on which the joins have (still) not been sealed (welded) or where the joins have come apart.
- Ensure that the stripper solution can't flow anywhere it shouldn't be; this can be achieved easily by using a piece of (masking) tape folded up to create a rim.
- Remove as much furniture, plants etc. as possible from the room that must be stripped and use a vacuum cleaner or brush to remove any loose dirt and dust.
- Furniture which cannot be moved and skirting boards which do not join neatly should be covered using waterproof tape.
- Place a mat or a sheet of plastic, which is large enough for standing machines and other equipment on, next to the area that must be stripped. Place cloths on this mat which can be used for cleaning the soles of shoes, etc. Secure the mat or sheet of plastic to the floor using tape so that it cannot slip.
- Place warning signs around the working area or close off the room that must be stripped to passers-by.

Procedure

- Soak the floor with the stripper solution, from a place where it possible to use a liquid vacuum cleaner without walking in the stripper solution or without the wheels of the vacuum cleaner being in the stripper solution. Usually this is at a door.
- Wet an area of not more than 50 m², divide bigger areas into sections. Do not let the surface dry before being treated.
- Scrub the free surface with a massaging motion and vacuum in the wake of the scrubbing machine so that the floor is thoroughly dry. If there are still (shiny) spots where the protective layer is present, then wet these spots with the stripper solution and scrub the spots again. Follow the same route with the machine and the liquid vacuum cleaner as was followed when soaking the floor, to prevent sections drying.
- After the old protective layer has been removed, the floor must be rinsed one or more times with (preferably warm) clean water. It's best to use a scrubbing brush and the cleaned out liquid tank for doing this. Then measure the pH of the surface using pH paper (or a pH meter). The pH value measured must be neutral (pH 6 – 8.5). If the pH is still too high, then the floor must be rinsed again and the pH must then be measured again. This must be repeated until the pH value measured is neutral.
- Then, using the liquid vacuum cleaner, vacuum the floor until it is thoroughly dry and apply a new protective layer (for example the product Cetemax SGE-H-Extra).
- As time passes, if required, any small bits of damage in the protective layer can be repaired by cleaning with a preserving cleaner (such as the product Cetemax Eupalin).



Floor after cleaning and conservation

Author: Ing. J.P. Lange (Research & Development)
Reactions and/or questions: e-mail: tb@vecom.nl