

## HOW TO MAINTAIN STAINED AND SEALED CONCRETE FLOORS

Before you begin to maintain your floors, it is very important that you know your floor.

Is your concrete acid stained or water-borne stained?

Is the sealer on your floor solvent acrylic, water-based acrylic, water-based epoxy, polyurethane, or something else?

Different types of stains, sealers, guards and coatings require different products for maintenance. When it comes to floor cleaning products, there are so many different possibilities, cleaners are definitely not “one size fits all”. What works for one type of floor may not be compatible with another, and may even make it more difficult to maintain.

Most sealed surfaces should be maintained at a neutral pH of 6.5-7.0 for best performance and to look their cleanest. Therefore, a cleaner which is 6.5-7.0 (neutral) pH should be used for sealed surfaces. Pine-Sol, Clorox products (bleach), Vinegar, and many popular cleaning products are not acceptable neutral pH cleaners. They can dull and/or strip your floor and make it even harder to maintain.

Most mistakes that are made with cleaning and maintaining stained concrete floors are made by using the wrong: cleaner, mop, application techniques, machinery, and equipment.

1. Vacuum: Dust mops are okay for daily quick cleaning, but a good dry vac, such as a backpack or canister vac with a horsehair brush attachment on the wand is the best tool to use in loosening and removing any dust and dirt on the floor surface. It should always be your first step when cleaning your concrete floor. In fact, many people vacuum their floor on a daily basis and only mop once per week. Do not use vacuum with beater bar/brush (carpet attachment)! This will scratch your surface.

2. Mops: Cotton mop heads are okay for general cleaning, but may leave a film, lint, or streaks. A blended mop with cotton and rayon, will last longer and is less likely to leave streaks. When applying wax, a rayon only or microfiber finish mop (lint-free) is best for streak-free application.

3. Mop Buckets: A large mop bucket with a 4-gallon wave brake with a compressive wringer is paramount to ensure the proper amount of cleaning solution is applied. Too much water will cause a soft (easier to scratch) floor. High moisture will soften your protective sealer and moisture may get trapped under the sealer. Discolorations or white spots may occur. Not enough water will cause a dirty film to remain on the floor.

4. Mopping Intervals: Most neutral cleaners can be used once a day. However, with proper daily vacuuming, most clients only have to mop once per week.

5. Proper dilution of Cleaner: (Using too much or too little cleaner.) Most neutral cleaners are highly concentrated and require only 1 ounce of water per gallon of fresh water for routine maintenance. If the concentration is too strong, it may leave a detergent film on the floor. If the concentration is too weak, it may leave a dirt film on the floor. Either way, the floor will not appear as clean or shiny as it should. One gallon of cleaner will make 128 gallons of cleaning solution. Therefore, one concentrated gallon of cleaner on the average floor, will last for several months.

6. Dry time: Cleaning your floor at the right time is also very important. Consider cleaning at times when no one will be on the floor for several hours in order to allow it to dry properly to maintain its hardness and durability before foot traffic. Allowing foot traffic on a damp or wet floor will certainly cause scratches and increase the amount of maintenance required to properly maintain your floor and its appearance.

### Waxing your floors (Interior use only)

Waxing your floor will help add more layers of protection and help maintain the shine. Sealer is designed to protect the stain and its color. Wax is designed to help protect the sealer. Scratches in the sealer will be harder to touch-up and maintain.

Make sure your stain and sealer has had time to properly cure before adding wax. Never apply wax when it has been raining, or when the humidity level is above 70%, in order to avoid trapping moisture between your layers of stain, sealer and wax.

Before applying any wax to the floor, ensure that the floor is 100% as clean as possible. Vacuum thoroughly, mop with a neutral pH cleaner, and allow it to dry completely to avoid trapping dust or dirt under the wax (alternate heat and a/c to speed drying time).

We recommend 5-8 thin coats of wax for the ideal sacrificial layer (each thin layer will dry in about 30-45 minutes). Wax will also make your floor easier to clean, and keeps dirt from sticking to the floor as easily.

If you see scratches in existing wax, the floor can be burnished (1500 rpm high speed) as long as you have several layers built on top of the sealer. Each time your floor is burnished, you will need to add 2-3 thin coats of wax to rebuild that sacrificial layer. Burnishing without several layers of wax on your floor will result in scratches in the sealer.

When a stained and sealed concrete floor is properly maintained by vacuuming, mopping, and applying good sacrificial coats of wax, it will help maintain its shine and be easier to keep clean.