

TWO BUCKET SYSTEM...HUH?

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Most of my travels focus on two phases of resilient hard surface flooring installation— 1. while the floor is being installed; 2. after the installation is complete and the floor is in use. The later, which involves a review of maintenance procedures, is where I spend more than 70 percent of my time on troubleshooting issues related to flooring performance. More often than not, the big problem is dirty floors that are perceived, by the owner, as damaged or defective. If I am asked to be on-site, I know that the manager of the facility is quite unhappy so my goal is to see where improvements can be made to create a satisfied customer.



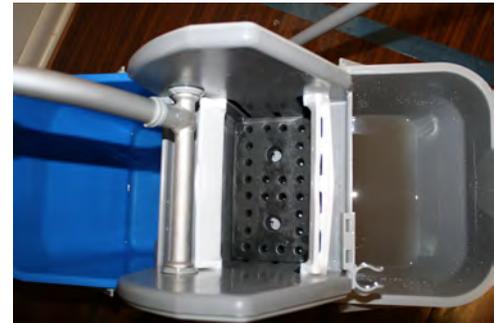
When the floor is just dirty and not being properly cleaned with a mop and bucket, the most effective change is a switch from a single janitorial bucket with wringer to a two bucket mopping system however, when faced with a dilemma such as this, I review a list of criteria to determine if the floor is being cleaned according to flooring industry protocol and, more specifically, flooring manufacturer directions.

Criteria to review for a floor that just won't come clean:

- Use of entry mats at exterior doors
- Amount and aggressiveness of traffic on the floor
- Frequency of current cleaning routine
- Method of cleaning- ie: broom, vacuum, mop and bucket, auto-scrub



- Type of mop- microfiber or cotton mop
- Bucket being used - one or two section bucket
- Condition of equipment
- Floor cleaner product- brand, category of cleaner, dilution ratio in use
- Flooring manufacturer's printed instructions for compliance



If it is determined that the maintenance staff is not using a two bucket system, with either two independent buckets or one complete trolley system that holds two individual buckets, stop here and institute a change before getting too involved in the other criteria. Dirty water and dirt particles sit in a lone bucket and are slopped onto the floor over and over again. Without a separate bucket for clean cleaning solution, tiny bits of debris build up and entangle in the mop which puts the dirt back onto the floor with the each slather. Repeatedly cleaning with murky water will not get any floor clean. What's worse is that it may cause damage. Over time the dirty water migrates into the pores, seams, texture and joints of installed resilient flooring, depositing small dirt particles into cracks, crevices and seams. Eventually streamlined joints fill with dirt causing pressure to push apart seams revealing unsightly grunge and allowing water to penetrate into the flooring joints. Over time this will cause adhesive, used to secure resilient flooring such as sheet vinyl or LVT, to fail as water and dirt migrate into the compromised seam or joint. This embedded slurry of dirt and moisture creates a haven for germs, bacteria and infectious disease, which is a huge problem, especially in health care environments.

Using a two-bucket system and changing out soiled water for clean water frequently will greatly improve cleaning results and can save resilient sheet flooring or LVT floors from failing due to dirty slurry buildup. For best results, pair a 2-sided bucket with a microfiber mops, that are changed and washed routinely.



Microfiber works harder than cotton mops with greater ability to absorb water and hold dirt during mopping and the washable microfiber mop heads are easier to get clean than cotton. You will find that the floor lives happily ever after and everyone in the facility with the floor is healthier and happier when initiative is taken to institute a successful two-bucket mopping system.