

SUCCESS WITH SPRAY, TAPE AND BACK ROLLED ADHESIVES

Floor prep is critical and the rules are different for a successful glued down resilient flooring installation when using a spray, tape or back-rolled adhesive system instead of the tried and true trowel spread liquid broom method.



It's interesting that people are reluctant to change in a world where change is fast and constant. The flooring industry is no different in their reluctance to embrace new flooring products and installation methods. I am the first to admit that change is hard and I am often reluctant to alter my way of doing things, but part of my job is to clearly understand and test new resilient flooring materials, adhesives and tools to find both good and bad attributes, then develop procedures to best prepare installers for success using new resilient flooring materials and procedures.



Spray, tape- factory and field applied, and back-rolled adhesive systems were introduced to the resilient flooring market several years ago as a cleaner, easier way to install sheet flooring. Reduced mess and faster flooring install time for these new glue-down methods attracted flooring installers and facility owners alike but after a brief run at working with this new category of adhesives, most flooring installers became frustrated, despite the benefits of the new adhesive, when they encountered telegraphing or bond problems they didn't face with trowel applied wet adhesives to lay new sheet vinyl. Instead of trying to figure out how to work with this new generation of adhesives, end users and general contractors, along with flooring technicians, began to push away from these products because the finished LVT or rubber flooring didn't turn out as expected.



There is always a trade-off when a new product, like quick-dry spray adhesive, is introduced as a new way to lay glue-down resilient flooring. Adjustments need to be made to routines to accommodate the nuances of the new adhesive systems and an understanding gained of when and where to use these adhesives for flooring installations. The systems we are discussing- adhesive tape, spray, and the process of back-rolling traditional adhesive- have a variety of features that make them advantageous in some situations but not all.



VCT Installation with Spray Adhesive



Correct spray adhesive pattern

Dry time for these methods is shorter than wet adhesive making it an excellent option for facilities such as hospitals when a renovation space needs to quickly be ready for use or when a floor requires heat welding at the seams that can be done right after the floor is in place, saving time for the flooring contractor by allowing more work to be completed in a day. A new flooring installation can be done and in-use by the owner of the facility quicker than normal with a roll-back, spray or, tape-on adhesive process.

When vapor emissions from the concrete slab exceed the limits dictated by conventional flooring adhesive that are trowel-applied to the subfloor, these newer ways to apply adhesive will often perform well despite the higher vapor emissions. These limits will be specified on each brand of flooring adhesive so read the detailed information prior to use.

Excessive moisture is another condition in which performance for this new generation of flooring adhesives excels. If moisture in a porous concrete substrate exceeds the limits for traditional adhesives this new group of adhesives can often withstand these limits and bond the floor securely to the substrate. Again, read product specifications and adhere to the adhesive manufacturer's guidelines.

Clearly understanding the features & benefits of back rolled, taped or sprayed adhesive is critical

to a flooring installer's success with these products. Trying to ignore these newer adhesive options is futile so for all resilient flooring installers- you have no choice but to add these systems to your arsenal of flooring installation systems.

If you haven't worked with tape, spray or rolled adhesives, you may be wondering what to look out for and how to use these newer adhesives for a successful VCT or LVT installation. Standard floor covering adhesives are spread with a trowel and have earned the industry nickname "liquid broom". This has led to a lack of clean up prep before applying adhesive to the sub floor that is not as critical with the traditional application of wet adhesives where bits of debris can be broken up and mixed right into the fresh adhesive. With the new generation of adhesive materials, vacuuming-up dust, especially at the edges of the room, is a must for proper adhesion of the flooring sheet, tile or planks. End results without removing dust will be a failed floor bond so clean up is critical.



Bumps & blemishes in finished floor due to lack of prep work

The welcomed "click" of a metal trowel that easily identifies protrusion on the underfloor such as dried clumps of drywall compound is appreciated by any hard surface flooring installer. It affords the installer the luxury of removing that protruding obstacle with a quick scrape using the back of his sturdy trowel. A couple of passes with the trowel using a liquid broom adhesive will quickly roll the dislodged material into the spreading puddle of adhesive. Not the case with the neater application of tape, spray or when back-rolling adhesive. These adhesive applications behave differently so prior removal of stuck-on construction debris from the subfloor is a must otherwise the result will be dimples, bumps and blemishes that show through the finished floor once it's fully cured and in use by the end user. This will lead to call-backs and claims that any contractor wants to avoid so taking the time to do thorough clean up on the front end of the flooring installation will save time on the back end and you'll have a happy customer.

Set a new floor prep protocol to achieve a successful resilient floor installation with roll-on, tape and spray adhesives. Use a smoother-tool or spatula as you methodically walk the floor to identify obstructions on the sub floor and with a putty knife remove them as you go. For eliminating loose dirt and dust, a back pac vacuum is ideal for unencumbered ease of getting around the room, especially at the edges and into corners that harbor dust and debris, but any strong vacuum will work with that can reach into corners. Then before rolling out or spraying down adhesive

to glue the floor in place, use a damp mop to latch onto any latent dust that can easily become a bond breaker. Use a two-bucket system to make quick work of this step and to always using clean water to best remove dirt. Remember, there is no liquid broom associated with these new generation adhesive systems.



Spray adhesives are easy to handle but do require some finesse so practice before you are on the job to apply the sprayed liquid evenly and in a thin layer. Uneven overspray will show through on the finished floor as bulges and bumps. Too little spray and bond won't hold. See if the brand you are working with has a visual sample that you can reference for the correct amount of adhesive per resilient tile or per square inch. When back rolling adhesive that is typically applied with a trowel, consistency of thickness and coverage is key as well as open time so be prepared to apply adhesive at a steady pace then roll the sheet vinyl into place right away. For tape style adhesives, applying tape in a uniform layer doesn't bunch up which will telegraph through on the finished floor.

If a smoother or two-bucket system is not part of your installer arsenal, you will soon be able to find these flooring install tools at <http://www.1877floorguy.com/into>. Changing techniques for installing resilient flooring is a bit easier when Reggie does his job and runs to tell it!