

## Installation Frequently Asked Questions

### **Subfloor Preparation**

#### **Should I use an adhesive remover to remove adhesive residue from a subfloor before installing a new floor?**

Many adhesive removal products contain solvents that leave a residue within the subfloor. This residue can negatively affect the new adhesive and bleed through the new floor covering. Floor covering warranties do not cover instances where existing subfloor conditions cause damage to the flooring or installation failure.

#### **Can I install an Armstrong floor on a radiant-heated substrate?**

Armstrong flooring may be installed over radiant-heated subfloors as long as the surface temperature does not exceed 28°C. Temperatures above 28°C will cause the flooring to soften and increase the risk of irreversible indentation.

#### **Why does Armstrong recommend not smoothing true expansion joints with any type of underlayment product?**

True expansion joints are those placed between separate pours of concrete. These joints are designed to absorb the movement of the concrete and are normally filled with elastomeric fillers which absorb the movement of the separate pieces of concrete. If an underlayment is placed across or in these joints, the movement of the concrete will cause them to break up or will push them out of the joint. Additionally, any flooring placed across these joints will break with the movement of the concrete. Expansion joint covers, which are designed to span these joints, should be used in these areas.

#### **Why can't you install flooring directly over paint or other coatings on a subfloor?**

The bond of the flooring to the subfloor is only as good as what you bond to. If you bond to old paint, sealers, polish, or other foreign matter, you are dependent upon the bond of that material to the subfloor to hold the flooring in place. Since we cannot determine how strong that bond may be, it is best to bond directly to the substrate.

#### **What board underlayment products should I put in place before installing resilient floor products?**

Underlayments for resilient floors should be structurally sound and designed for resilient flooring underlayment purposes, with a minimum thickness of 5.5mm. The panels should be smooth enough so that the texture or graining will not show through the finished flooring. They should also resist dents and punctures from concentrated loads. The panels should not contain any substance that may stain vinyl such as edge patching compounds, marking inks, paints, solvents, adhesives, asphalt, dye, etc. Check with your supplier or panel manufacturer. Install the underlayment in strict accordance with the board manufacturer's recommendations.

### **Can Armstrong floors be installed directly over strip wood, board, plank-type or tongue-and-groove type subflooring?**

These subfloors must meet structural requirements. Regardless of whether the subfloor is single- or double-layer, Armstrong recommends subfloor is covered with a resilient flooring underlayment. Install the underlayment in strict accordance with the board manufacturer's recommendations.

### **Can an Armstrong floor be installed over an existing resilient floor covering?**

The short answer is yes, however Armstrong recommends the existing resilient floor covering be removed and the subfloor prepared to receive the new floor covering. If this is not practical, adequate care should be taken to ensure the existing resilient floor covering is to an acceptable standard to receive the new floor covering. Do not install Armstrong floor coverings over two layers of existing resilient floor covering.

## **Adhesives**

### **How important is the use of the recommended trowel?**

Most flooring adhesives are applied with a notched trowel. The size of the notching is important because it controls the amount of adhesive applied. Notches which are too large spread too much adhesive. This can cause excessive indentations to show through sheet goods and trowel mark show-through or bleeding at tile joints.

### **Why must I use the recommended trowel for spreading adhesive?**

Trowels are chosen for the amount of adhesive they place on the substrate. A trowel is chosen to place just the proper amount of adhesive where it is needed. If the notches are too large, they place too much adhesive which can lead to trowel-mark show through and bleeding with tile and excessive indentations with sheet goods. If the trowel notches are too small, the adhesive will not hold the flooring down. If the trowel notches are too far apart, they reduce the amount of adhesive which may not hold the flooring down and can lead to trowel-mark show through.

### **What is meant by open time?**

Open time is the amount of time recommended for the adhesive to set before it is covered with the flooring. Open time is affected by temperature, humidity and porosity of the subfloor. Placing sheet flooring into the adhesive too soon may cause the flooring to bubble. Placing tile into the adhesive too soon may cause the tile to move and adhesive to ooze up between the tile joints.

### **What is meant by working time?**

Working time for tile is the amount of time from when the adhesive is set until the tile will no longer bond. Working time for sheet flooring is the amount of time from when the flooring is laid in place until all cutting and fitting must be completed. Working time is affected by temperature, humidity and porosity of the subfloor. Placing flooring into the adhesive after the working time has passed will result in a failed installation as the flooring will not bond.

### **What does “dry to the touch” mean?**

Dry to the touch means when you place your fingertips lightly on the adhesive ridges, no adhesive transfers to them. Most Armstrong resilient tile adhesives require the adhesive be dry to the touch before installation may begin.

### **I spread the adhesive 2 hours ago, and the recommendations say open time is 1 hour or until dry to the touch. The adhesive is still wet. Why?**

If a larger notch trowel than recommended is used, too much adhesive is spread, and this will increase the amount of open time required for the adhesive to be dry to the touch. If there is moisture in the subfloor this too can cause retarded setting of the adhesive. If the controlled climate is not in use in the building where the floor is being installed, and the outdoor temperature and humidity are high, the setup time is greatly increased. This will especially happen on hot, humid summer days or rainy days. When the adhesive is spread on days like this, moisture can condense on the surface of the adhesive, severely slowing the setup.

### **Why must resilient flooring be rolled?**

Rolling pushes the flooring down into the adhesive and flattens the adhesive ridges. This assures contact with the adhesive and also assures the adhesive ridges will not show through the finished flooring. Rolling also pushes air out from beneath the flooring between the ridges left by the trowel notches. This assures no trapped air which may cause bubbles in the finished installation.

### **How can I fix stress whitening in commercial resilient sheet flooring?**

When dark colored materials are over severely bent during installation, they may show a lighter colored stress mark known as stress whitening. This can be removed by heating the area with a heat gun or hair dryer. Do not use a torch. If the whitening is discovered before the flooring is installed, you can heat both the back and the front of the material which will speed the procedure. Be careful not to hold the heat gun or blow dryer too close to the flooring as scorching may occur.

### **Why must flooring be conditioned before installation?**

All materials expand or contract when atmospheric conditions change. In order for the flooring to expand or contract with the subfloor, it must be conditioned to the same atmospheric conditions.

**I just finished cutting and finishing the seams of a dark-colored Corlon flooring. The seams appear to be whitened. What is this and how do I fix it?**

This is called seam whitening and can occur from cutting and deburring the seam. This seam whitening effect can be easily eliminated by gently rubbing the seam with parafin oil. Remove all excess parafin oil from surface.

**What heat-welding nozzle will reduce scorching and a shiny appearance?**

Use of the Armstrong S-65 Heat Welding Nozzle will reduce scorching and the shiny appearance at seam.

**When installing Armstrong resilient vinyl floor covering side by side with Linoleum what is the correct seaming method?**

Heat welding is the correct seaming method, the Linoleum weld rod should be used.