

# CFR THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

Volume 92 • May 2016

FOR THE COMMERCIAL FLOOR COVERING INDUSTRY • TOTALLY GREEN PUBLICATION

## A New Twist on Carpet Tile, Wood and Luxury Vinyl Plank and Tile

We were discussing this issue at the lab the other day after seeing a new series of problems with some of the most popular products in the flooring market. Carpet tile will inherently have a bit of doming so that when pressed in place it fits snugly. This physical characteristic which is very slight, nearly imperceptible, has always been part of carpet tile. However this also now presents a new dilemma. Too much dome and you get the "pillow or quilted" appearance. The adhesive used to install carpet tile, though not meant to hold the tile flat, does have enough tack to pull the tile down enough so very minimal doming would not be noticed and when the tile relaxes it will settle in. The dilemma occurs when using tabs to install lighter weight carpet tile, obviously without any adhesive so any dome in the carpet tiles can be visible. The weight of the tile also comes into play. With carpet tiles getting lighter in weight overall, not being held in place with adhesive and only affixed in place by tabs in the corners there is nothing to prevent the carpet tiles from assuming a natural doming physical position. This is a new twist on what we have begun to see with carpet tiles. Will they fix themselves on the floor? We don't know at this point but my opinion would be if there is enough drape in the material, it is possible for the tile to lie flat; if not the material may not fix itself in place. This is science and physics which are vaguely considered in the manufacture of flooring material. Shoot, ready, aim! Is a motto that has been seen too many times over the years where a good idea with a product turns bad once it gets into the market place and starts being used. Another factor which is becoming a challenge with lighter weight carpet tiles is yarn coverage on the face. With less face weight, there is less yarn and it can't fall over the edges of the tile and blend together. This can create individuality in the appearance of the tiles making them look like a vinyl tile on the floor – a visible space around the edges - as opposed to a carpet tile. The lower face weight may not affect the performance of the carpet tile. We experimented with weight years ago and with the right backing we got an 8 ounce face weight product to outperform a 28 ounce product. As an industry we often place too much credence in face weight which really has nothing to do with performance. Low, tight and dense will win the performance race every time over more yarn in the face and with the right backing, especially high density foam or cushion type backing, carpet tile will perform like a truck. But the lack of enough yarn to blend at the edges of the tile is having ramifications in the market.



Another factor to consider is the myriad of sizes, shapes and textures, colors and blending or bleed out of one color to another of the “new generation” carpet tiles. The design element with these products is limitless but installing the tiles is like putting a puzzle together so the products are laid out and shipped with instructions as to how they are to be installed in the space. This is one of the many reasons for the continuing growth of carpet tiles. There seems to be no end in sight as to the design and styling of carpet tiles. These “art work” installations may take more time and cost a bit more so if you want the look be patient with the talent and skill it takes to achieve it. We’re also seeing a tremendous drop in complaints for edge curl of carpet tile. The cause of curling, as we’ve written here on several occasions, is due to the use of recycled content in the carpet tile backing material, the inconsistency of the feed stock and the stress caused by backing layers fighting each other causing planar issues. The back to basics approach has come back into play and the curling issues have dwindled as a result. You can use an adage I learned early in my career from one of my mentors who told me, “either you control the product or the product controls you.” It is eminently important to insure that all the components of a flooring material work together in unison and that one doesn’t get sidetracked to throw everything out of balance.



So having said this about carpet tile let’s jump over to hard surface flooring and particularly two products that are as hot as pistols in the market – luxury vinyl plank and wood. If problems with carpet tile are decreasing, the problems for wood and LVP are escalating upward exponentially. Leading the way is ignorance quite frankly and that is the belief that these two flooring products can be used anywhere carpet was used and there won’t be any problems – if only that were true. Carpet is far more forgiving in an environmentally unstable space than wood. The National Wood Flooring Association has done an excellent job in furnishing and explaining the conditions necessary for various species and types of wood to maintain their integrity and minimize problems with the products be it hardwood or engineered wood. If you use wood flooring in projects you should read what the NWFA has to say. It is exceedingly important to maintain and uniform environment for wood flooring to prevent the wood from reacting to conditions it normally and naturally reacts to. Too dry and the wood can shrink, crack, splinter, cup and curl. Too humid and the wood



### THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

**Lew Migliore - President and Owner**

LGM Enterprises, LLC

P-(706) 370-5888- F-(706) 270-0482 - Email: [lgmtcs@optilink.us](mailto:lgmtcs@optilink.us)

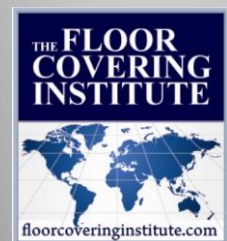
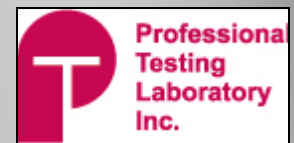
*Click this link for archives of CFR articles*

LGMANDASSOCIATES.COM



The experts at LGM specialize in consultation, correction and resolution for flooring complaints, claims, installation and performance issues. - No issue is too big, too small or too far away for us to handle.

All ads are interactive. Just click on the ad to enter their website.



Page Layout By:  
Anita S. Drennon



will expand, curl, bow and crack. Controlling the environment in a commercial space can often be a challenge with air handling systems being cycled. It is also always important to select a wood flooring product that possesses a high degree of stability if conditions for wood are not ideal and sometimes you just can't use a flooring product in a space you'd like to because it won't be comfortable there and when it's not it reacts.



The other product is LVP or LVT. Luxury vinyl plank and tile, especially plank that looks like wood, is being used everywhere with, again, no consideration for the parameters of performance. This fire hot product is flooding the market and not all sources can handle the heat of the commercial flooring market. Be wary of whom you buy the product from; I would strongly suggest a name brand manufacturer who makes their own products with state of the art technology. This way you know the source and can trust the product is stable and capable of doing what you expect it to. Another factor to consider is Glueless installation systems. If there is a lot of rolling traffic on the floor it's likely there may be some failures with the installation system being stressed from vertical and lateral movement particularly over a substrate which itself has some flex to it. The corners of planks can chip; the connection system crack and the product may even break down. If the LVP is coming from who knows where and is not properly annealed it can skrink, curl, cup or dome – these are inherent problems with those types of products. The other factor not being considered which we think is looming in the wings is noise.

Protect your reputation...Guard against flooring failures.

# WAGNER

WOOD MOISTURE METER LINE

- 7-Year Warranty
- Non Damaging Pinless Meter
- 3x Faster than Any Pin Meter
- 3/4" Depth Measurement
- Independently Confirmed Accuracy

**RAPID RH**  
CONCRETE MOISTURE TEST

- Easiest to Comply with ASTM F2170
- 10 Times FASTER
- Lowest Cost/test
- Simplest to Use

WAGNER METERS  
Unleash Your Expertise

www.wagnermeters.com • Call us at 800-207-2214

**SCHÖNOX**  
HPS NORTH AMERICA

**NEED SUBFLOOR SOLUTIONS?  
WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.**

**LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP ON YOUR NEXT PROJECT.**

www.hpsubfloors.com



Four hard surfaces – floor, walls and ceiling - do not make for a quiet environment particularly in a public space and this is bound to start becoming an issue at some point where large groups of people meet and the noise becomes overwhelming. This would bode well for carpet for which the death knell is definitely not tolling. In an attempt to deaden reverberation through ceilings in high rise living spaces acoustic type material is being used under LVT and LVP. This creates another big issue. Static loads, which are exerted by furnishings sitting on the floor, indent both the vinyl and the acoustic material making permanent deformities in the materials. This is not an appearance any occupant wants to deal with and it's something they would not feel is reasonable. So we open up a new Pandora's Box with these products when they are used in places where carpet was used before.



We're entering a new era with these products; those that are evolving and those that are fairly new to the market. You need to be aware of what you can expect if the wheels come off a project. Don't be going head strong into a flooring endeavor without using some common sense and doing your due diligence. Staying out of trouble is much easier than getting out of trouble.

If you need help before or after, contact us. We'll give you answers to keep you out of trouble before hand or let you know how much trouble you're really in and what to do about it after you've stepped in the slop.

Fast, Accurate  
Moisture Test  
for Concrete Floors

# RAPIDRH

- Easiest to Comply with ASTM F2170
- 10 Times FASTER • Lowest Cost per Test
- Simplest to Use

**WAGNER METERS** [RapidRH.com](http://RapidRH.com)  
Unleash Your Expertise 1.800.207.2214

U.S. Patent 7,231,815, 8,047,056 & 9,032,791. Additional patents pending

You would never let a landscaper trim your hair.  
So why wouldn't you call a specialist for your LVT needs?

Introducing

# ENGAGE GENESIS™

Featuring ISOCORE Technology™

FROM THE LVT SPECIALISTS AT METROFLOR

[LEARN MORE >](#)



*LGM and Associates*  
TECHNICAL FLOORING SERVICES

## **FLOORCOVERING KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION**

**ON-SITE PRESENTATIONS**

**CUSTOMIZED TO FIT YOUR NEEDS**

**LEARN THE INS AND OUTS OF THE INDUSTRY**

**LGM WILL KEEP YOU ON THE FOREFRONT**

**OF THE FAST PACED CHANGING MARKET**

**WE WANT YOU TO HAVE THE ANSWERS**

**CONTACT - ANITA DRENNON**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**EMAIL: [LGM\\_ANITA@OPTILINK.US](mailto:LGM_ANITA@OPTILINK.US)**

**PHONE: 706-370-5888**