

CFR The Commercial Flooring Report

For the Commercial Floor Covering Industry

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HOPING YOU'RE NOT GULLIBLE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE WHAT THEY TELL YOU

I'm going to share with you an edited claim denial letter from a flooring manufacturer that was sent to a flooring contractor who forwarded it to us. The letter states some absurdities you'll find interesting and ridiculous that are easily refutable by both common sense and science. It seems more and more that manufacturers forget or fail to understand that science, not words, dictate truth. This delusional thinking puts anyone using or installing flooring material in the position of defending themselves against these absurdities which are becoming far too common. (Delusion refers to a strongly held belief despite evidence that the belief is false) One of the reasons for the uptick in these notions is the flood of hard surface vinyl tile and plank products and the rush by everyone to grab a piece of the market. Most of the "everyone's" don't have any technical knowledge about these products, which themselves continue to evolve and morph into progressive versions of themselves. Worse, you can't tell by looking at them what you're seeing. Everything you need to know though is hiding in plain sight. But let's look at the following letter with my added comments in bold letters.

Please advise all parties that (manufacturer's name) has inspected the vinyl plank flooring material provided for this project. There are some noted factors in the correspondence which should be addressed prior to discussing the material on site. First, I understand there has been a reference to an on-line post regarding our product by a dealer who experienced issues. It is important to note that upon inspection of that floor, the dealer's installers had installed the vinyl plank flooring into dried or flashed adhesive and the material was not completely bonded to the floor. As a result, the flooring was demonstrating separation from the substrate. Our guidelines clearly state that flooring must be installed into adhesive while wet to achieve complete transfer. With regard to this inquiry on the project, it is my understanding that the tiles in question were removed from the packaging and left out on a desk or surface for several days. **(this was done by the flooring contractor to observe any planar issues with the flooring which would be revealed by this simple action)**. We (the manufacturer) also state to leave material in packaging until the time of installation. Product left loose on a surface is not bonded in its final intended state and will be free to react to environmental conditions. **(It's interesting to note here that when products are tested at the lab they are not adhered, but free to react to the stimulus or conditions of the testing which will indicate or expose their stability or lack thereof)** I am referencing excerpts of my response to that prior inquiry for reference here to explain the construction of (our vinyl plank) product and the reason for the condition with the tile. Traditional LVT loses plasticizer as all plastics will. When this occurs the LVT shrinks significantly. Anyone who has ever installed LVT into a spray adhesive or dry set pressure sensitive adhesive and has gone back to look at the floor a year or two later, will attest to the fact that the LVT will have shrunk and will have gaps between tiles. **(Sorry, I have to comment here, put your waders on, it's getting deep. If this were true, all vinyl tile or plank would be shrinking, and this is not the case. See more on this in my actual reply comments below.)** It may be flat but will shrink significantly as the adhesives used do not have lateral strength and cannot hold against the force of shrinkage in the vinyl. **(That would be a defect in the material relative to dimensional stability)** Our

LVT has a fiber glass inner layer built into the product which won't shrink. When left unbonded or unadhered the vinyl in the LVT will want to shrink resulting in a tightening tension in the product, but the embedded fiber glass won't allow it to shrink. As the stress in the material builds up, the vinyl tightens the edges of the unbonded material will slightly lift. **(Ugh, wait a second, isn't this "tightening tension" a description of shrinking?)** Tile installed into dry set adhesives or flashed adhesive are not actually bonded to the substrate. **(What!?! Really!?)** The tile is sitting ON TOP of elastic adhesive ridges and the strength to hold the product in place as well as to remain resistant to water penetration will not be present. The use of wet set, hard setting acrylic adhesives provides us with complete transfer and with that complete transfer an extremely strong lateral and pull strength that also delivers extreme water and moisture resistance. To demonstrate the facts in this matter we took the same exact product that was sent to this site which was left unadhered on a surface in our testing area for several days. I photographed the product on the surface of the substrate to demonstrate that left loose and exposed the natural tensions in the product will allow the edge of the product to gently lift. **(we have the photos of this very scientific test)**

I then spread the adhesive (their adhesive) recommended for installation and allowed it to have some open time to build body **(does adhesive build body? How? It tacks up but I don't think it builds up)** according to our guidelines. I then installed the tile into the adhesive and rolled it with a small steel seam roller. Our guidelines say to roll with a 100 lb. roller. For this test the seam roller was used and would generate significantly less force than a 100 lb. roller. **(which by the way will not allow the flooring to sit "ON TOP" of elastic adhesive ridges – see previous paragraph where this is stated)** I then placed the steel edge on the joints in the tile to demonstrate that the gentle lift in the edge of the tile was easily and adequately handled by the bond with the adhesive. **(Gee, really, and this proves what?)** Note: the seam edge which previously demonstrated crowning when left unadhered is now located in the center of the photo. As the adhesive continues to cure the bond strength which is already significant will continue to grow. **(and your vinyl flooring which has the "natural" lift will itself want to return to where it remembers being and lift again)** **Damn science keeps getting in the way of the ridiculous statements; again. I hate when that happens, don't you?**

Based on this inspection and the conditions noted with the product, we feel that by simply following our guidelines and using the appropriate adhesives, also in accordance with our guidelines, that the installation of the product should not require any unusual attention or labor during the installation process. We would stress again that product should remain in packaging until such time as it is to be installed on the floor.



THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT
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Page Layout By: Anita S. Drennon



VINYL PLANK WITH INHERENT LIFT

MY RESPONSE:

Well, where to start. If you consider the laws of physics what's being said in their letter, defies it. The lift or curl is built into the product and it has a memory to try and return to where it wants to be and where the stress makes it go. That the product has a "slight lift" is an admission that it has an inherent planar stability issue. So, out of the box it should naturally possess dimensional and planar stability. It does not possess planar stability because it lifts. The fiberglass should keep it stable, dimensionally and laterally – same as it does in a carpet tile. If the layers of the material aren't balanced, then they'll fight each other creating the stress that causes the material to lift. Yes, plasticizer will migrate out of vinyl, but it takes time so any change as a result of plasticizer migration won't occur right away. The letter got off the rails on that statement. To state that plasticizer migration causes shrinkage is also a stretch. Unstable PVC and plasticizer will create an odor as it volatilizes, but this doesn't mean the product will shrink or be unstable. Think back to PVC backed carpet tile that over the years has been afflicted from time to time with plasticizer issues. There was always an odor issue but not very often a dimensional or planar issue. Another example; did you ever see the vinyl interior or top of an older car crack and break? That's caused by plasticizer migration. The material will become brittle but not necessarily shrink which vinyl flooring doesn't traditionally do. And you'll smell the plasticizer migrating in the flooring if it is. It has the odor of a new shower curtain or Playdoh, which is not a plastic. If plasticizer migration causes the product to shrink, then the product is unstable which brings us back to this being a product problem.

Adhesive does not and should not and is not engineered to keep flooring material flat or stable. To think so and state so is ludicrous. If the product wants to lift, shrink or move at all, bolting it to the floor won't stop it, so the adhesive certainly won't. And no adhesive manufacturer will tell you that their adhesive is designed to overcome any movement of any kind in any flooring material. For the cupping under the flat edge and flattening after gluing, that's a valid point – at the beginning when it is bonding. But as the material stresses, and goes back to where it remembers being,

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See Page 5 regarding Excess Inventory Offer



it will again lift off the adhesive and nothing is going to prevent that. I'll give this manufacturer A for effort on trying to sell their theory though – very creative instead of just flat out denying the claim. As for having to keep it in the box before you install and not lay it out; I haven't figured that out yet, unless maybe the weight of the material upon itself is supposed to keep it flat so you don't notice that it's curling. Or so their magic adhesive can hold it flat if it starts out that way. I don't understand the exact reason for having to keep the material in the box until just before installation, but I bet it's a good one. Basically, the entire story is BS and if you believe in the tooth fairy you'll believe in what they're trying to sell you. I don't think any flooring contractors are gullible enough to believe this crap. Bottom line, this is a product problem. It has nothing to do with installation or the adhesive and I've written about this issue in previous CFR newsletters. Please don't believe something like this from anyone that is selling these products.



ANOTHER TOPIC:

Here's another absurdity – adhesives having acoustical properties which means they help deaden noise or sound. Now, the fallacy of adhesives having acoustics properties. Just think about. Do you think an adhesive has any acoustic properties? Let's look at what acoustics is. A material that is designed to absorb or control sound: An acoustic material is designed to control, direct, and manipulate sound waves as these might occur in gases, liquids, and solids. Acoustic materials have mass and intrinsic degrees of stiffness. Certainly, adhesive can glue sound proofing materials to a surface but in and of itself it is not a sound proofing material. For example, if you applied the glue to a surface, such as hard flooring, it would add virtually nothing to the soundproofing of the flooring. Just as paint won't soundproof a wall, adhesive won't soundproof a floor. It has to have mass and/or diffusion which flooring adhesive does not have. To say it does is a stretch. Acoustics is sound blocking or sound absorbing and adhesive does not make the list.

Adhesives all of a sudden have become some kind of magic paste. They stop moisture (unless it's hydrostatic – that means water under pressure), they're waterproof, they deaden sound, they keep flooring material stable, hey, I bet they can fly too! So, if you have a flooring failure and the adhesive is waterproof it can't be implicated at all. And if the floor resonates sound, the acoustics of the sound proofing adhesive, has no involvement in the issue – I'm being facetious here folks. You flooring guys are getting worse by the minute, according to the industry whose products you work with every day. Why, their products can't be the problem for any failures you have, their virtually bullet proof, so you must be getting dumber by the day. Many would have you think this.

The only dumb thing about any of this is if you believe all of the stupid statements you're being fed and that are being used as excuses for product failures. Remember what I've said for decades, "The flooring never lies. It will always tell you what's wrong if you know how to interpret what it's saying. People lie, but not the flooring." And if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Fortunately, we excel in hearing and knowing what the flooring is saying. So, you can trust us to tell you the truth. If you mess up, we'll tell you so and what you did wrong and how to fix it. If the flooring is the problem, or the adhesive, we'll tell you that too and how to fix that and it won't be a lie. And if you want to know how to sift through all the chaff so you don't have a problem, we're more than happy to do that as well. We'd rather help you stay out of trouble than to have someone get you into it and then try to defend yourselves. And we're really good at deflecting BS, just like I did in this newsletter.

Excess Inventory Offer

Most of you have flooring material sitting around that's taking up space and costing you money.

Dispose of your excess inventory - remnants, hospitality carpet, carpet tile and any hard surface flooring materials. Avoid paying insurance or taxes on flooring materials taking up rack space and convert it into cash.



We have a contact in Calhoun, GA that will pay you for this material and arrange for shipping from your location. They'd need a complete inventory of what you have so they can make you an offer. This firm is well financed and established with a stellar reputation.

This is a great opportunity to get rid of merchandise taking up space and make some money in the process. Call or email Kolt or Cynthia with any questions so they can help you.

surplus@overstockfloorzusa.com

Kolt Privett - 770-530-4709
Cynthia Potts - 706-271-6767

Thanks,
Lew Migliore