

CFR The Commercial Flooring Report

For the Commercial Floor Covering Industry

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Happy New Year!! Welcome to a new decade.

May it be Healthy, Happy, and Prosperous for us all.

Do You Even Understand the Products Your Looking at and Why They're Behaving Like They Do?

Well were off to a good start in 2020, where stupid comments and determinations are being made by people looking at flooring failures who don't understand the nature of the products, their inherent characteristics, how they should perform and why they're seeing a problem. They also don't understand the proper terminology to describe a visible condition or understand the nature of specific products and the results of lab tests and what they mean. Nor what tests to conduct to determine if, in fact, the problem is related to the product. In addition, the term "Industry Standard" is being thrown around as justification for a stupid comment when a standard doesn't exist in most cases. Actually, there aren't that many formal industry standards at all but there are common and ordinary industry practices that can and should be relied on and referred to with a flooring problem. In addition, there are "sources" of information being used from people who don't know themselves what they're talking about. This is because there are actually fewer truly technical people in the industry that understand the products and in particular, hard surface products. Let's look at a few of the issues I'm referring to.

The use of the word ledging on a commercial LVT installation. Ledging occurs when one tile is thicker than another which results in a height difference in the material at edges. A report written by the field analyst looking at the complaint indicates a lifting of the edges that when pressed on go down which is also described by them as compression. So, which is it compression from the tiles being fitted together too tight, because that's what compression is, or a lifting edge or the tiles being different thicknesses? The argument that tiles of any kind are fit too tight is bothersome. It indicates the installers are incapable of taking pieces out of a box and putting them on the floor without squashing them together. This would be like putting a puzzle together and forcing the pieces in. Not going to happen. I've never seen a commercial flooring installer who could put tile, hard or soft, on the floor and not fit it together properly. This is something that the installer would see and experience immediately and be able to fix or adjust as they went along.



TERAZZO TILE LEDGING



The LGM Substrate and Moisture Seminar

is being sponsored by Tucson Commercial Carpet "Flooring in the Desert"

* Place: Hacienda Del Sol Resort - Tucson Seminar & Trade Show

5501 N Hacienda Del Sol Rd, Tucson, AZ 85718

- * Date: March 12th, 2020—Time 7:00 am to noon
- * Continental Breakfast will be served
- * Please contact Agnes Sheldon at: 520-240-4134 or ashedon2019@gmail.com

Speaker: Lewis G. Migliore—Why flooring and installation systems fail, how to avoid and resolve failure. We'll show issues on concrete and the science of it, flooring failures of varying types caused by moisture with pictures. This is a very unique and eye opening presentation that you won't want to miss.

Any change in the material after the installer's hands leave it is virtually always due to a change in the material itself. I've said this before and I'll say it again, over and over, installers CANNOT instigate a physical change in flooring material. They can't make it grow, shrink, cup, curl, dome, lift, change color or otherwise distort in any physical fashion. And they can't create a chemical change in the material or the installation package. That is all a function of the flooring or existing circumstances or conditions. To suggest otherwise is to be an idiot and not understand how the product is made and what can occur after it's produced. This is getting to be an epidemic with all the vinyl flooring products in the market doing hinkey things that are blamed on everything but the product itself.

Let's look at another issue of a flat weave product installed by inexperienced installers. This is actually an installation issue based on the fact that there was a lack of understanding about the product. First off, this is a product that does not like to lay flat. It is not a normal carpet product, shouldn't be thought of as a normal tufted or woven carpet product, as it has its own set of inherent characteristics that require very specific installation techniques and an understanding of the product itself. If the product is not secured 100% at every edge, including at the seams and perimeters – that is at the walls, it will lift by curling up. This is not a product problem as the material is doing what one would expect it to do. Without being affixed properly it will appear to be unstable. If you take a roll of this material and lay it out it will take forever for it to lay flat, if it does at all. So, you have to understand how to work with it in order for it to be properly installed. To suggest, when you are unfamiliar with a product, that it should act a certain way that you think you're familiar with, when it can't because it is made different, is to not understand the product.



THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

Lew Migliore - President

P (706) 370-5888 or Email: lgmtcs@optilink.us

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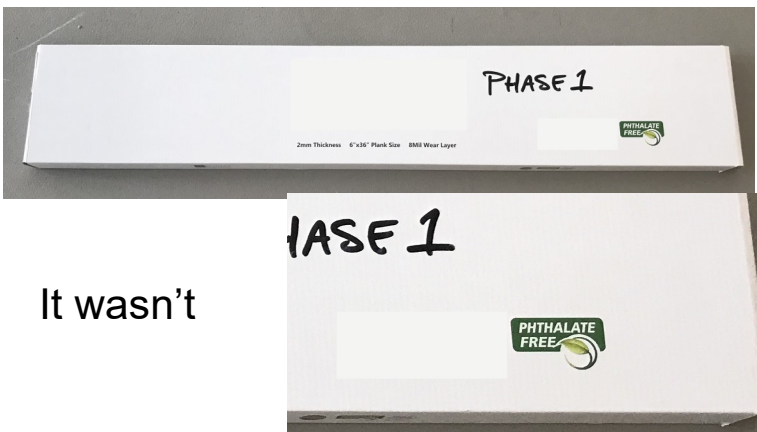


Page Layout By: Anita S. Drennon

In another situation a PVC floor was installed that experienced end and edge lifting. The manufacturer insisted installation was the cause. The flooring contractor vehemently objected to the point that the manufacturer brought in several people to try and prove them wrong. They mitigated the substrate to the exact standards they believed it should possess. They used different adhesives and they installed the material in several different mockups to show that if you did exactly what they said to do the flooring would stay flat. And guess what? All the trouble they went through to prove the flooring contractor wrong was for naught because by the following day the flooring that was supposed to be installed “exactly by the book” had all lifted -again. At this point there was silence from the manufacturer and their experts since the flooring was doing all the talking. Despite trying to prove that the failure was installation the flooring spoke back and disproved it. Again, a statement I’ve made for years, “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.

You have to understand that every flooring has its own unique set of characteristics and this is especially true of vinyl flooring products. Where they’re made, how they’re made, how they’re processed, handled, finished, what types of equipment they’re made on, who’s making them, etc., all have an effect on the material. What you don’t understand is that these types of flooring don’t, for the most part, exhibit any discernable characteristics that you can tell them apart or tell what’s going on with them just by looking at them. Everything is literally hiding in plain sight. You have to know what and how to look for the answers; words uttered by “non – knowers” don’t change that.

Let’s look at PVC free flooring issues. PVC means the flooring is not made with Poly Vinyl Chloride and thus it does not contain Phthalates which are a class of synthetic chemicals that are widely used in a variety of consumer products.



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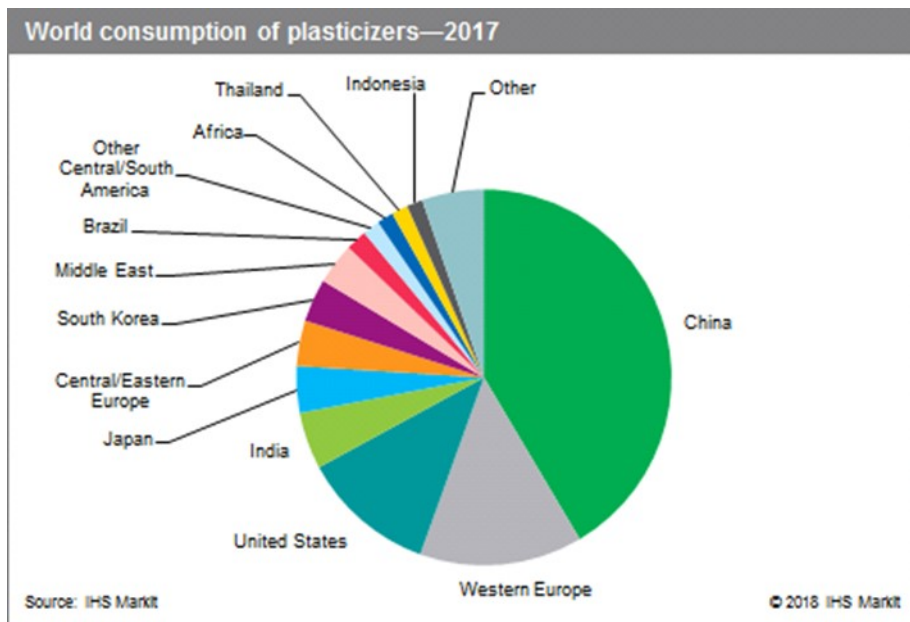
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Relative to flooring, phthalates make otherwise brittle PVC plastic flexible and durable. PVC products may contain up to 50 percent by weight of plasticizers, most commonly phthalates. Phthalates are in all plastics as well as products like nail polish, hair sprays, paint, food wraps, medical devices and even skin moisturizers. You can't escape them because they are literally everywhere.

China, by far, uses the most plasticizers, 42%, and most of the vinyl flooring in the US comes from China. Even if the product is supposed to be phthalate free it may still contain plasticizer. That's one of those things you can't tell by looking at it.

There are no phthalates in PVC free flooring, at least there's not supposed to be, but it doesn't mean there is not thermoplastic in it. One class of alternative plasticizers to phthalates is bio-based plasticizers. Bio-based alternatives can be made from plant materials such as corn, soy, rice, wheat, and linseed. These floors can be made from several thermoplastic materials such as recycled polyester, polyolefin or acrylic. All of these products will have unique characteristics of performance, dimensional and planar stability as well as installation. Some will require special adhesives to hold them in place. These are not your typical resilient flooring materials. Some of these products have a long track record and others do not. One concern should be that a lot of the PVC free products are made with recycled content and recycled content can vary, even if it's pre-consumer material, which can affect the integrity of the product and it's performance. And the recycled material could have phthalate plasticizers in it. The other issue is that if there is nothing for the adhesive to "grab" onto, it may be a fight to keep them flat on the floor. Remember, adhesive is not meant to correct planar or dimensional stability of flooring materials. Polyolefin, used in some PVC flooring products, for example is polypropylene. Polypropylene is inherently hydrophobic, which means it hates water – it literally pushes it away. So, if the adhesive being used has water in it, getting the flooring to stick to it is going to be a challenge at best. And, of course, when that happens the installation contractor and installers are going to get blamed. So, it's ignorant to not understand the characteristics of the products being made and expecting to get results that defy simple chemistry. Worse yet, is to blame someone else for the failure, deny any culpability for the problem and then try to justify the failure with absurd explanations that defy common sense.

Here's a chart of that will show you who uses the most plasticizer in the world.



See Page 6 regarding Excess Inventory Offer



And just a tidbit about water - since moisture in concrete is still a huge issue causing flooring failures.

There is a hundred times more water in the ground than is in all the world's rivers and lakes. Some water underlies the Earth's surface almost everywhere, beneath hills, mountains, plains, and deserts. ... Groundwater is a part of the water cycle. So, regardless of where you put a concrete slab, there's going to be some water beneath it. And if you're installing flooring on a slab on grade with no proven vapor retarder, you're going to have moisture. Like the saying goes, water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink but it will mess up your floor, sometime, some way, when you least expect it, so you can bet on it.

I've had the great fortune over my 49 year career to have been mentored by some of the most intelligent people in the industry in both soft and hard surface products and associated materials. And being located in Dalton, GA, the flooring capitol of the world was by design. If you're going to be an expert in flooring, you have to be here at the epicenter. We work with and for a variety of industry firms and have access to information and technology no one else does. And, understand, there are no secrets in Dalton. This is a close knit, incestuous industry where everyone knows everybody's business and what everyone is doing.

Where am I speaking? I'll be doing presentations at:

Domotex USA—Wednesday, February 5, 2020—Time: 1 to 2 pm on “Flooring Failures Case Studies”,

NeoCon—Tuesday, June 9, 2020—Time: 9:30 a.m., on “Flooring Products: What You Need to Know”,

NFMT Baltimore—Thursday, March 19, 2020—Time: 2:45 pm—” The Latest Trends in Flooring”

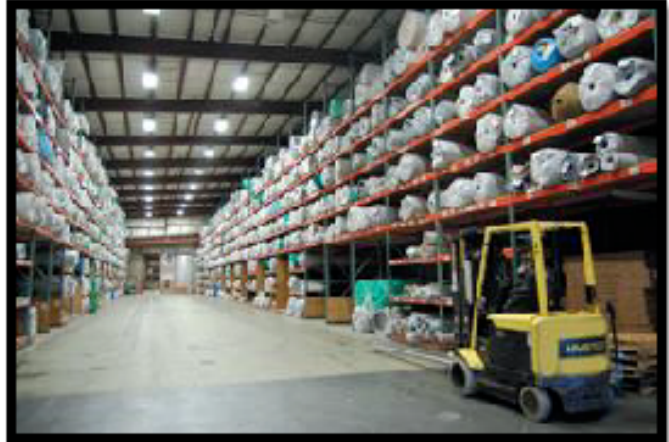
And for 2020 we have a unique new educational and information program we'll be unveiling soon.

As previously mentioned: Tucson Commercial Carpet —“Flooring in the Desert” - March 12, 2020 Time: 7 am—noon. “The LGM Substrate and Moisture Seminar” Why flooring and installation systems fail and how to avoid and resolve them.

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.

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Kolt Privett - 770-530-4709
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Thanks,
Lew Migliore