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YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, AGAIN!!!

This issue is an update of the original article from June 2018. There is also a post By LGM Associate Brian Beakler at the end of the newsletter you will find interesting.

It shouldn't, but more often lately it amazes me at how ridiculous and downright stupid the comments are regarding issues with flooring and installation failures or concerns when the obvious is staring one in the face. When looking at major commercial flooring failures and issues, you have to determine what went wrong and why, who or what is at fault, the decisions made by people leading up to the concern to do or not do something and how to fix or resolve the issue. Is the installation faulty for some reason, is the product defective and why, is there an environmental issue or was a decision made to use something that wouldn't work? This last comment may have been influenced by someone selling something they touted as being the best product on the market for a particular application when in fact it turned out to be the cause of the problem. I'll add that everything you read in this newsletter is an actual case we've worked on. It seems that there is more BS being thrown around by so called "manufacturers" of product that they know virtually nothing about. It is astounding to hear some of the excuses being made for product failures that have no basis in fact or science.

So let's look at some of the issues being alluded to above.

The installation of a graphic tufted carpet product, glued directly to the substrate. Graphics tufting involves two needle bars on the tufting machine that operate in opposing directions as they shift back and forth tufting yarn into the primary backing. This results in a construction where the shifting yarns step over one another (also referred to as step over stitch) creating a construction that one could loosely compare to a chain link fence, but much more tightly constructed. Installing these products has been a challenge for as long as they've existed. Years ago, installers would glue these products to the substrate only to come back the next day and find the seams shrunk a quarter of an inch. The yarn would absorb moisture from the adhesive, expand and, like the chain link fence, pull everything together, in other words, pull the carpet in at the width. The fix for this was to nail the carpet at the seams to hold them in place and clamp them as well. Also, an extremely aggressive adhesive should be used. The adhesive should be applied to the substrate with the appropriate trowel. Next, put the carpet into the adhesive while its wet, making full contact with the carpet backing. Next, pull the carpet back and out of the adhesive – this allows for adhesive application to both the carpet backing and the substrate. Next, let the adhesive start to tack up on both surfaces and put it back down and roll it. This is called the contact method of installation. And don't forget to use seam sealer. When we had someone call and tell us they had this problem and send photos and explain what was going on, it revealed a classic example of what this type of carpet construction does. The carpet base, adhered to the wall, was made of the same

product, cut in strips from the length of the carpet and bound on one edge and glued to the wall. This piece of carpet also shrunk leaving a gap at its base. When he explained this to a "claims expert" he was told this was impossible as carpet does not shrink up. Now think about that. The carpet base is constructed from strips cut from the length of the material. Whether it was installed at the base of the wall, on the ceiling or diagonally on the wall, it would shrink; the same as the carpet on the floor. The ignorance of the statement that "carpet does not shrink up" is astounding. But this is the type of "enlightenment" you have in the industry today when it comes to handling claims.

CARPET TILE TAKEN UP AT THE JOBSITE TO CHECK EDGE LIFT

In another case, taking random carpet tiles off the floor in various areas of the installation and laying them on a flat surface at the installation site revealed the extent of the lift in the tiles. No surprise there, except to see how much lift there actually was. Carpet tiles out of the box from this project were also harvested for testing. The lab tests revealed significant edge lift of the carpet tiles. Samples of this same product, out of the box, were laid out on a flat glass surface when we received them, allowing them to relax in a controlled environment and the edges lifted on those tiles. All of this tells us the edge lift is an inherent defect in the product relative to planar stability. You have to go through a process of not just lab testing but know what and how to look for signs in a product that are indications of the cause of a problem. The lab tests confirmed the carpet tiles were defective. Sometimes the issues with the product and the problem it has are hiding in plain sight – this is true of LVT and LVP products as you can't just tell by looking at them what's wrong. They all look the same for the most part. This is a multi-layered product, and each layer can conceivably be unbalanced from its neighbor. We wrote about this issue last month.

THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT
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With all the evidence and verifiable proof and experience working with these products and understanding the history of them, having worked with them over the years, there is no question that many of today's flooring products, especially soft and hard surface modular products, suffer from manufacturing induced illnesses. You would think that this would not be a disputable issue, but not so in the flooring industry where denial is an art form; where things that look like, act like, sound like and walk like a duck aren't recognized or accepted as being a duck. The contrary fall back argument is also that it must be an installation problem or environmental issue or acclimation of the product. Let me state unequivocally for the record that installers, skilled as many of them are, cannot make a flooring material change dimensionally – that is lift, dome, cup, curl, shrink or expand by installing it. If that were a true, we'd have a lot of magic shows and miracle performers in the flooring industry.

Let's look at another situation where a carpet tile is not lying flat. You know what the mantra is for that, which we have been preaching for years. Out of the box carpet tile should be flat, square and stable, without exception – no excuses. In this case, where the carpet tile was not laying flat, the manufacturer stated that there is nothing wrong with their carpet tiles, that they aren't supposed to lay flat (yes, they stated that in writing – unbelievable!) and that the test they performed allows for some lift. Well, that may be true in the country they come from and with the EN test (European test) they perform, which actually does allow a maximum deviation of any part of the sample from its plane ≤ 2mm. But the deviation is DURING THE TEST not on the floor in actual usage. So that argument, though they make it and use it in their defense, becomes moot. The manufacturer states that when they inspected the installation there was in fact edge lift, but it conforms to the standard. They also insinuate that the installation instructions were not followed and probably not even read. So, explain how it can be that two edges on every tile are lifting, uniformly, throughout the installation? How does installation or adhesive cause that perfectly uniform physical condition? What does one do wrong during installation that makes that happen? Prove that this is even possible and show us how to prove your argument. It can't be done. And why is one color of your carpet tiles lifting and the other, installed in the midst of the lifting tiles, by the same installers, in the same way with the

same adhesive, on the same substrate and the same conditions, not lifting?

The manufacturer's response states further that the inspection report says that "adhesive and adhesion has nothing to do with keeping the tile flat or holding it down, only to hold it in place." This is the kicker in their response when they say, "Carpet tiles are not to be flat, but conform to the standard, and there is a tolerance for this according to En1307." They conclude that the carpet tile fulfills all the requirements in the standard. Where I come from, if you make a stupid comment like this you get a slap in the back of the head - along with a few choice words.

The adhesive and adhesion have nothing to do with keeping a carpet tile flat or holding it down, only to hold it in place – that also goes for any modular flooring material including vinyl tile and plank – they should stay flat on their own. This has always been and will always be the case – no question, no argument. Carpet tiles should be flat, square and stable out of the box with no edge lift of any kind allowable as there is ZERO tolerance in a carpet tile for anything other than flat. These carpet tiles are not lying flat and are therefore defective. They lifted during the manufacturers test and they lifted during ours. They lift on the floor and they lift out of the box without any influence from anything at all. They lift when glued down, they lift when re-glued with a more "ambitious" adhesive and they lift no matter which way they're turned. So, when we use the process of elimination to deduce the cause of the complaint what conclusion do you have to reach? The conclusion is that nothing but the inherent planar instability of the carpet tile itself is the cause and reason for it lifting on two edges. The facts which are irrefutable prove the case. You are guilty regardless of how much you argue against the facts.

Let's look at another case. This one involves a plank flooring installation in which random planks are lifting. The manufacturer's position is that the material is not properly installed, that environmental conditions are causing the problem and that the space is not conditioned properly.

LIFTED VINYL PLANK FLOORING

When the physical inspection took place, the condition exhibited and seen with wood patterned vinyl plank flooring was that it was lifting in various areas in each of the units it was installed in. The first thought was, naturally, that the cause was installation. At a meeting of all parties the supplier of the vinyl plank flooring said that the material could not be used in direct sunlight and that the temperature of the space had to be between 65 and 85 degrees F, as well as the temperature of the concrete substrate. The fact that the use of the product was so restrictive, and the parameters in which they were stating that it could perform in were so limited, would send up a red flag that this product should not be used – not only here but anywhere. Second, getting the substrate to meet the same temperature requirements of the ambient space is beyond ridiculous – that is never going to happen. Another stupid comment that deserves a slap in the back of the head. This also brings up the legal issue of the product not being merchantable for service or fit for the intended purpose of use as a flooring material.

The physical inspection, analysis, evaluation, research and investigation and testing determined that the product was reacting to normal conditions and most detrimental was the reaction to the underlayment it was installed over. The vinyl planks are made with recycled content and glued down to crumb rubber underlayment – made from recycled tires. These two materials have inherent incompatibilities

and putting them together is not condoned by many vinyl flooring manufacturers. This is a topic we've covered in a separate issue and mentioned several times. Vinyl flooring materials should never be installed over crumb rubber underlayment – PVC (vinyl) and SBR (rubber) should never come in contact with one another.

The big issue in this case starts with the designer and the architect and the desire to be green and qualify for LEED points on this project. Both the flooring and the underlayment are made with recycled content. I'm all for recycling and being green and shudder if I see a paper blowing around but, in this case, there needed to be some research done. As it turns out the underlayment instigated the flooring failure. The installation of the flooring had nothing to do with why there was a problem. The flooring itself, by admission of the supplier, is affected by normal conditions all types of flooring exist in every day. They also stated that this material is inexpensive and has a limited life span of 3 to 5 years. Did they give anyone this information when they were hot for the sale? Do they expect that this is going to be music to the ears of those looking at a multi-million dollar building that can't be occupied because the flooring is failing? And do they think that saying you can't use this material as you would expect to use any flooring because the sun affects it is going to make anyone happy?

In this situation you have two issues. First, the underlayment which is actually instigating the visible physical change in the vinyl plank flooring and second, the effects of nature on the material exacerbating the condition. So now everything has to go into the landfill which eliminates any green advantages. A different, more expensive and stable vinyl plank product has to be installed, the existing floor and underlayment trashed, more expense in labor to rip up and re-install and expediting all of this work so occupancy generating revenue can take place. After this comes the fun part of this situation going legal. The trail of what went wrong and why and who is at fault became clear. In this case a lot of parties have culpability and the one party with none is the flooring contractor, he and the installers did nothing wrong.

Here's the hot tip of the month - NO ADHESIVE will prevent dimensional or planar change in a flooring material. No adhesive is a moisture mitigator. MVER (Moisture vapor emission) is a moving target. Test results are for the spot the test is taken in, at the time the test is taken, and they cannot predict whether or not there will be a failure. They should be used as a guide, however, and be taken. There are no magic bullets. There are the correct products and procedures for every situation. Because you may not want to spend the money to implement them and look for a cheaper and easier way out, is of no consequence to the flooring material, substrate or conditions thereof. And another thing. Change is happening so fast in the flooring industry with products, adhesives and ancillary products that it's near impossible to keep up with and you don't know whether or not to believe what you're being told.

Remember this. The evidence never lies – the flooring never lies – it will always tell you what's wrong if you know how to interpret what it's telling you. People lie but never the flooring. No amount of nonsensical comments can change the facts revealed by the evidence. There is no alleging, assuming, "appears to being" or anything else when the facts prove the truth of the matter.

The depth LGM's resources and knowledge assets knows no bounds. As one manufacturer stated many years ago, "LGM are not the guys you want sitting on the other side of the table." When you really need and want to have the answers to what went wrong and why you have to call us, and if you want to avoid a failure you have to come to the same place.

Next By LGM Associate Brian Beakler

Kop-Coat Protection Products Launches WoodYouth Plus Wood Dimensional Stabilizer
BY ADMIN POSTED ON APRIL 5, 2021

Kop-Coat Protection Products has developed and commercialized a proprietary dimensional stabilizer for wood veneer and solid wood components. WoodYouth® Plus was designed to reduce the wood's ability to gain and lose

and lose moisture, hence creating a dimensionally stable wood component.

Kop-Coat partnered with the Beakler Consulting Services LLC to deliver on the goal of creating a real performance story to assist customers looking for water resistant properties in their products.

“The Kop-Coat team delivered a robust, cost-effective solution that is easy to apply and shows real results on wood exposed to extreme wet and dry conditions,” said Brian Beakler, CEO of Beakler Consulting Services.

The company shared that the new product will assist a multitude of wood product manufacturers looking for these properties from wood flooring to decorative panels and plywood. WoodYouth® Plus also claims to mitigate veneer checking and treated components can be glued, stained and finished with all available industrial technologies.

For more information, visit www.kop-coat.com or Just click the mountains.

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