

CFR The Commercial Flooring Report

For the Commercial Floor Covering Industry

Volume 157 - October 2021 [Click here to View and Download all CFR Newsletters](#)

RUBBER FLOORS CAN IT TAKE THE PUNISHMENT?

Rubber flooring comes in various configurations, both tiles and sheet goods. This flooring material is durable, normally delivers high performance and can take a punishment depending on how thick and well constructed it is.

Rubber flooring products can be made from natural rubber, synthetic rubber, recycled rubber and thermoplastic elastomers which are a blend of plastic and rubber compounds. Much of, but not all, rubber flooring used is made with recycled content that comes from old car and truck tires. Like any other flooring material there are levels of quality and performance. The lower the quality of the product the less performance you can expect from it, especially if it's going to be used in a high traffic area. This is no surprise, as it's the same for any flooring material. Rubber flooring is durable, sound absorbent, has some thermal properties and is impact resistant, especially for thick sports and gym floor constructions. Rubber flooring can be solid colored or flecked with "chips" of colored rubber. Rubber flooring made with ground up tires can be bound together with polyurethane binding agents or vulcanized to stabilize it from expanding and contracting. Vulcanization is the process that permanently amalgamates individual layers, using high heat and pressure; the product will never separate, and its physical properties will be consistent.

Rubber flooring is used extensively in healthcare such as hospital corridors, operating rooms and various other areas. In transportation rubber flooring is installed in train cars, such as those at the Atlanta airport, and buses. In schools rubber flooring is most often seen in gyms in 4 foot wide roll material that is very thick. This particular product is most commonly seen in gyms where dropping heavy weights on it will have no adverse effects. It is also used widely outdoors, especially in play areas. Depending on the quality of the product and how it is constructed, it can be almost bullet proof, like when used in a gym, but when it's not it can create serious issues.

Two of the most prevalent problems we've seen with rubber flooring are the edges lifting and inconsistencies in the in the color. The color inconsistencies are most often found in the crumb rubber products which can vary greatly in what is supposed to be one run of color.

THE
INTERNATIONAL
SURFACE
EVENT


SURFACES

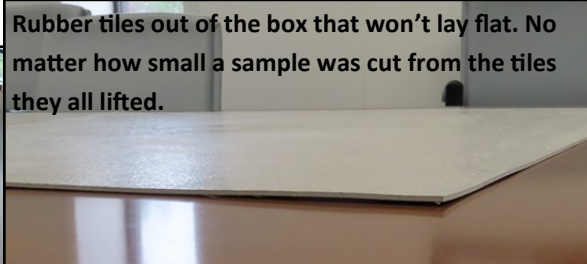
LAS VEGAS

COME SEE
ME AT
SURFACES



DETAILS ON PAGE SIX!!

Like any modular flooring material, if rubber isn't stabilized it will curl on the edges. If it's not controlled during the manufacturing process rubber roll goods can waver on the edges necessitating the installer "truing up" the edges or squaring them up. This is not something the installers should have to do. The product should be straight and the thickness uniform.



Rubber tiles out of the box that won't lay flat. No matter how small a sample was cut from the tiles they all lifted.

Three rolls of rubber flooring that are supposed to be the same for this project but every roll color shade varies.

Rubber flooring must be acclimated in the space in which it is going to be installed so that it relaxes and lays flat – like all flooring material. It should do this without any visible lifting of the ends or edges. If the ends or edges are lifted after acclimation and laying loose, it's very likely the rubber edges are going to lift when the flooring is installed. Remember, adhesive is not meant to counteract a dimensional or planar instability in a flooring material, regardless of what anyone tells you. Sometimes it might, but don't count on adhesive correcting an inherent product problem. One of the installation procedures sometimes employed when installing rubber flooring is to weight the edges down to hold them flat if they exhibit any lifting. Some rubber flooring is made as interlocking tiles which can be loose laid. A peel and stick backing can also be applied to glue rubber tiles to the substrate and rubber flooring can be glued to the substrate with water based acrylic adhesives formulated for the installation of this flooring product. I would advise using the adhesive recommended by the rubber flooring manufacturer, if they know, or by the adhesive manufacturer and using the specified trowel for the appropriate application and spread rate and following all other installation instructions. Make sure the substrate and the back of the sheet rubber flooring are clean and vacuumed as well to avoid any bonding issues. When installing crumb rubber products be very aware there are no contaminants on the substrate that can interact with the chemicals in the ground up tires or binding agents that can cause an installation failure. And remember never to install a PVC/vinyl flooring over crumb rubber flooring or underlayment as the two products are incompatible.



THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

Lewis G. Migliore—President

P: 706.370.5888 or Email: lgmtcs@optilink.us

Just Click Here to Go to Our Website for All CFR Articles

LGMANDASSOCIATES.COM

LGM and Associates
TECHNICAL FLOORING SERVICES

The Floorcovering Experts

"WHEN NO ONE ELSE HAS ANSWERS.....WE DO"
www.lgmandassociates.com • 706.370.5888

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.

We are now posting the CFR on LinkedIn. Just click the image below or search under *Lew Migliore and let's connect!!*

LinkedIn



**Professional
Testing
Laboratory
Inc.**



Page Layout By: Anita S. Drennon

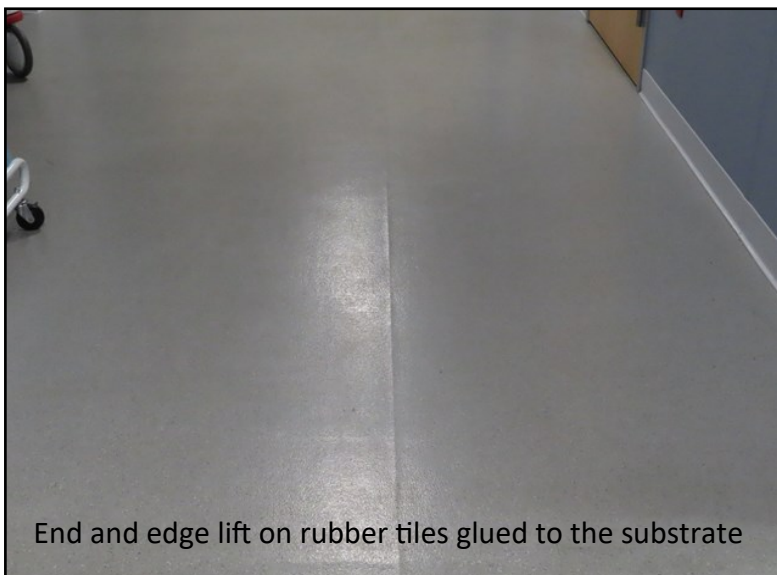
Rubber flooring is a product that you must understand if you're going to use it on a project. So, let's look at some of the disadvantages of it.

DISADVANTAGES OF RUBBER FLOORING

All rubber is flammable, but fire retardants can be added to rubber flooring material, such as those used in hospitals which have strict fire protection regulations. Not to minimize the importance of flooring being fire resistant but by the time a fire gets to any flooring most of the space on fire will be of more concern than the flooring itself. I'd advise you to stick with a name brand rubber flooring manufacture to be safe and to insure it will in fact meet the flammability requirements and fire codes of the municipality in which it is going to be used. The Fire Marshall will have the codes and the rubber flooring manufacturer should have the flammability ratings in their specifications. Be advised that the fire ratings for the flooring have to be ASTM ratings.

Oxidation. Interactions with light, heat or certain metals will cause rubber to oxidize and become brittle; and chalk. Exposure to inorganic fillers will deteriorate rubber flooring and cause it to become dull; softening and staining. This can be caused by interactions with oil, fatty acids, petroleum-based products, copper and solvents. Think rubber bushings or gaskets in an old car that dry out and crumble.

Loosening and lifting of seams. Rubber tiles or sheet goods are prone to moisture damage at the seams, which may allow additional moisture to penetrate into the subfloor, so the seams must be tightly installed and the flooring not flooded.



Faster, More Accurate
Moisture Test
for Concrete Floors

RAPIDRH[®] L6

THE BEST
RH TEST
JUST GOT
BETTER



• Simplest F2170 Test
• Improved Technology and Responsiveness
Especially in High RH • Integrated Data
Storage • Lowest Cost/Test

  **WWW.RAPIDRH.COM**
(800) 207-2214

U.S. Patent 7,231,815, 8,047,056, 9,032,701 & 9,588,092. Additional patents pending.

LOOKING FOR AN EXIT STRATEGY FROM YOUR COMMERCIAL FLOORING BUSINESS?



Call Lew Migliore—I can help you with that.
706-370-5888 / lgmtcs@optilink.us



Odor. Rubber floors made from recycled tires have a characteristic smell that, while harmless, is found by some users to be unpleasant. This odor will dissipate with time but it can be very offensive to people when first installed. Again, this depends on the product itself, where it's made and how it's made.

It is not uncommon for moisture beneath rubber flooring to create large bubbles particularly in rubber sheet gym flooring. I'm a gym rat and have seen this condition in the gym I belong to now and the one before it, especially during very rainy weather on concrete substrates that do not have a moisture vapor retarder installed. The rubber flooring expands upward, like a balloon and has to be cut open to vent the trapped moisture and vapor.

We don't see a lot of rubber flooring issues, but we do see them often enough to make you aware of the product and what it will and won't do. When we do see problems and determine the cause of the complaint, some rubber flooring manufacturers have been reluctant to comply with the determination. This is when you have to invoke, "the flooring never lies principal" and prove it. Of course, we have to do that all the time anyway with everything.

Remember, if you have a flooring problem you need help with, want to avoid having a flooring problem or just have a question, contact us. We exist to provide you with honest, objective answers.

Following is an article being shared with you from Wagner Meters, Jason Wright. While the material primarily leans toward the retailer and consumer, the information is just as important if you're engaging the services of an independent for commercial flooring installations.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A FLOORING INSTALLER

Do you know what to look for when hiring a flooring installer? Obviously, you want an installer who can deliver high-quality results that will last, even with sustained use. But how do you select the right person for the job?

The decision about which flooring installer you should hire is made much easier by carefully considering the following **(6) Six** important factors.

1) Get samples of the installer's work

At the outset, you'll want to ask to see a representative sample of the installer's previous work. Can the installer refer you to previous customers? Take the opportunity to talk to at least one or two previous customers to ask how happy they were with the work that was done. This can confirm the outcome you can expect for your project.

If you've been referred to a customer who's local, then ask if you can visit the job site and see, first-hand, the installer's work. If there are no local customers, you can request to see photos. Nothing beats a real-life visual of what to expect.

2) Look for customer testimonials

Do your research! You'd be surprised at how much you can learn online about a particular flooring installer if you're willing to do a little homework. You might just uncover a wealth of information about the installer you are considering. Look for Google, Facebook, or Yelp reviews. Check for Better Business Bureau reports or complaints. What can you learn about him/her on LinkedIn?

While you aren't necessarily guaranteed to learn a lot this way, it is possible that you may run across a critical piece of information that would affect your final decision.

3) Find out about their experience

It probably goes without saying that hiring someone with years of experience vastly increases the odds of a job well done. This doesn't necessarily mean just anyone with a ton of flooring experience. You're looking for someone with experience installing the specific TYPE of flooring you want. It does no good to hire someone who's installed a lot of vinyl flooring if your heart is set on a hardwood flooring installer.

Also remember to ask how long they've been in business. If it's been for many years, that speaks to a lot of satisfied customers over those years, which means you're likely to find a goldmine of online reviews. Plus, they should certainly be able to provide several great references.

4) Learn about their warranty

New flooring is a big investment. You'll want to read the fine print. What's the length of the warranty? What's included? What might void the warranty?

Beyond that, you should also inquire about the steps they'll take upfront to help prevent problems in the first place. If you're getting a wood floor, for example, ask them about crucial steps, such as acclimation of the wood, the use of moisture meters, etc. If the installation will be over a concrete subfloor, what kind of testing do they do to evaluate the moisture condition of the concrete prior to the installation? And in the unlikely case that an issue does arise down the road after the installation, what's their approach to dealing with problems and ensuring that you remain a happy customer?

5) Ask about certifications and licenses

If the installer has specific certifications related to the type of flooring job you're hiring them for, this is a good indication of their knowledge and skill level. So, be sure to ask about this. You might also want to ask about their memberships in industry associations, such as the National Wood Flooring Association, CFI or others. In addition, all professional flooring contractors will have a contractor's license and carry liability insurance. But don't just assume. Inquire about these things so you don't risk any surprises. Ask the installer how much insurance they're carrying. You might even ask to see a copy of the policy.

6) Consider their communication skills

If you do your homework and ask the installer a lot of questions related to the job, such as, "where do you source your flooring materials," or "do you use 'green-certified' products," you'll get a very good sense of your installer's communication skills. If you ask lots of questions about the job, you'll get a very good sense of whether you and your installer can communicate easily with one another.

This is not just an academic exercise.

If you and your installer communicate easily with one another, this assures you that the job will be performed to your specifications. It also means that if questions, problems, or issues arise at any time during the installation process or even afterward, you and your installer will be able to talk things through and arrive at a reasonable resolution.

And of course, if the installer you are considering can answer each of your questions clearly and thoughtfully, you can know that he/she is truly knowledgeable about his/her trade. Ultimately, all of this helps build trust that you'll receive a job well done.

Building Confidence for Your Decision—There you have it: 6 factors that you'll want to pay close attention to when making your decision about which flooring installer to hire. Sometimes a decision may boil down to a certain “chemistry” or gut instinct that you feel about a specific individual or flooring business. But if you've also done your research and the installer you're considering scores well on all 6 factors, you can be confident that you're making a great hiring decision for your flooring project.

For more information visit <https://www.wagnermeters.com/>



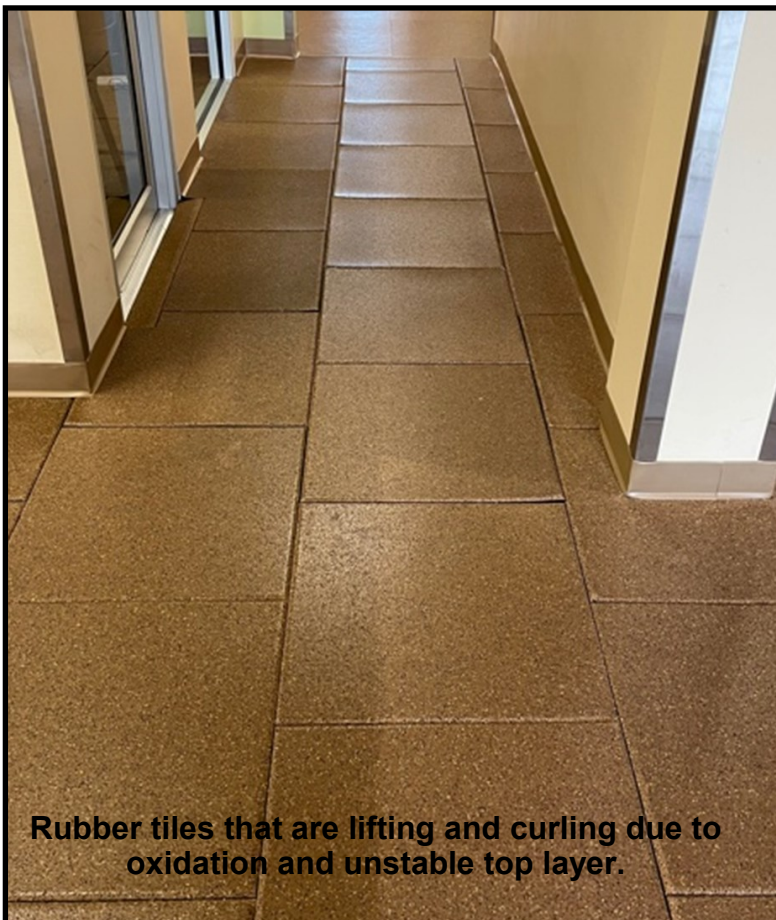
Come see me and attend my seminar at Surfaces 2022

Title: MOISTURES EFFECTS ON FLOORING INSTALLATIONS- CAUSES, FAILURES, CORRECTIONS AND PREVENTION.

Date: Wednesday, February 2nd

Time: 11 am to 12 noon

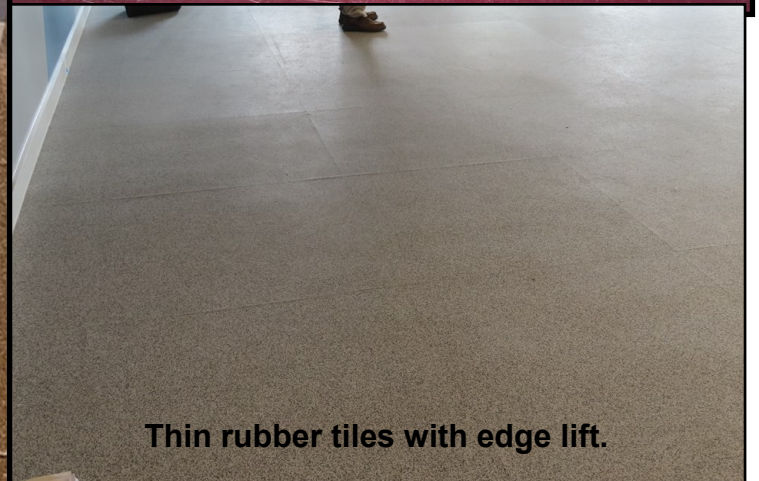
Let's make this one of the best attended Surfaces shows as we all have the opportunity to get together in person again.



Rubber tiles that are lifting and curling due to oxidation and unstable top layer.



Sheet rubber flooring installed in a school that would not lay flat.



Thin rubber tiles with edge lift.



Does Your Warehouse Look Like This??

Is Warehouse Space an Issue?



Call Us to turn Your Excess Inventory into

CASH!!!



surplus@overstockfloorzusa.com

Kolt Privett - 770-530-4709

We prefer broadloom, carpet rems, carpet tile and LVP