



Loss Control Insight

Floor Maintenance and Repair

Floor covering contributes to both the attractiveness and the functionality of a building. The appropriate floor covering, from wool carpeting to painted cement, must be selected with functionality as well as attractiveness in mind. Floor covering has the highest use of any part of a building; thus, it must also be maintained if its usefulness is to be continued.

Assuming that the appropriate floor covering was originally installed, the maintenance and repair of the floor covering should accomplish the following:

- Preserve the floor covering.
- Dirt, water and wear will reduce the useful life of a floor covering.
- The first task of floor maintenance is to reduce the dirt and water.
 - A side-benefit of removing the dirt and water is that this preserves the attractiveness of the floor covering.

Keep the floor covering safe for use.

- Wet floors are a slipping hazard. Loose edges of tile floors become a tripping hazard.
- Loose rugs can slip and create a falling situation.
- Broken tiles can be a tripping hazard.
- Improperly waxed floors can be a slipping hazard.

Eliminate health hazards.

- Mold can build up in wet carpeting.
- Dirt and dust can cause allergic reactions.
- Broken tiles can release asbestos.

When conducting floor maintenance, the following should be done to insure maintenance is not creating a personnel hazard:

- Have the appropriate signs, such as wet floors posted while maintenance is being done.
- Many times, hazardous chemicals are used, either as a cleaner or adhesives, in floor maintenance.
- Whenever hazardous chemicals are used proper personnel protective equipment, such as gloves, respirators and eye protection, must be used.
- The area where the maintenance is being performed should be well ventilated and closed to anyone except maintenance personnel.
- Many floor maintenance activities can be very noisy. Hearing protection should be used when appropriate.

Recommendations

Floor coverings must be regularly and properly maintained if the proper function and safety of the coverings are to be preserved. This maintenance includes everything from vacuuming the floor once a day, to refinishing a hard wood floor once every four to five years. Trained personnel, who always use the proper safety equipment and procedures, must do this maintenance.

~ As Always Be Safe ~