Floor Care Glossary
Floor Care Glossary

ABRASION
The action of wearing away floor finish film by friction. Usually caused by particulate soil such as sand, silt, clay, ice melter and dust.

ABRASION RESISTANCE
The ability of a floor finish to withstand scratching and scuffing.

ACID
Any substance, which when dissolved in water, yields a pH below 7.

ACRYLIC
Type of polymer used in floor, sealers finishes and restorers.

ACRYLIC STYRENE
Popular type of polymer blend for floor finishes.

ADEHSION
A word meaning to stick or bond together. A floor finish needs to bond securely to the floor. Poor adhesion of a floor finish can cause peeling, flaking and powdering.

ALKALI
A substance used in some wax strippers, degreasers and cleaners to assist in soil and finish removal. Sodium and potassium hydroxides are examples of alkalis used for this purpose. The hydroxides can leave a white powdery residue that requires multiple rinsing. These non-volatile alkalis are being replaced by monoethanolamine (MEA) in wax strippers.

ALKALINE
Any substance that has pH greater than 9.

ALKALINITY
Alkalinity is useful in removing acidic, fatty and oily soils. Soap and soap-based products are alkaline and perform well only in an alkaline medium. Detergent products can be formulated at any level of alkalinity determined by the cleaning task to be performed.

ALKALINE CLEANER
A cleaner that has a pH higher than 9. This would include all purpose cleaners, degreasers and strippers.

ALKALINE RESIDUE
A white powdery residue that is left on the floor after using a highly alkaline stripper and not rinsing. It can be observed by running your hand over the floor surface.

ALL PURPOSE CLEANER
A powder or liquid detergent suitable for both general house cleaning duties and laundry. These products may not be as effective for specific cleaning jobs as products specially formulated for the task.

AMINE
A class of organic compounds containing nitrogen. Amines are often used as floor finish strippers, buffering agents in liquid laundry detergents and as fabric softeners.

AMMONIA
An alkaline gas composed of nitrogen and hydrogen (NH3). 5% to 10% solutions of ammonia are sold as household ammonia. Ammonia is used to aid in removing grease and dirt from surfaces and to boost the cleaning power in grease cutters, wax strippers and general purpose soil removers.

ANSI
As the voice of the U.S. standards and conformity assessment system, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) empowers its members and constituents to strengthen the U.S. marketplace position in the global economy while helping to assure the safety and health of consumers and the protection of the environment.

ANTIFOAM AGENTS
Antifoaming agents are necessary in floor coating to reduce and eliminate bubbles and foam when the finishes are applied. Bubbles and foam interfere with continuous film formation and can cause cratering when the bubbles break during the film formation and drying process.

ANTI-SLIP
A measure of a floor finish’s ability to be non-slip and safe. This is an important characteristic of floor finishes. Many floor sealers, finishes and restorers are listed as to slip resistance by Underwriters Laboratories (UL). The standard for slip resistance is widely accepted as a static coefficient of friction of above 0.5.

APPLICATORS
An alternative method of laying floor coatings. Applicators are designed as a five-gallon pull-behind applicator, backpack design, or a flat mop applicator system. Many applicators increase productivity up to five times faster than a traditional mop.

ASPHALT TILE
A floor tile manufactured with a mixture of fillers, coloring and synthetic fibers. Asphalt is used to bind all the components together. This type of flooring can release its colorant and asphalt (bleed) when wax strippers with high levels of solven- cy are applied. When stripping asphalt tile it is always a good idea to test wax strippers on a small inconspicuous area before proceeding with a full strip.

ASTM
American Society for Testing and Materials.
Floor Care Glossary

**AUTOSCRUBBER**
A powered floor machine that dispenses cleaning solution, scrubs it into the floor and then vacuums it up all in one pass. Autoscrubbers or scrubbers as they are sometimes called can operate using batteries or with a electrical cord. They clean the floor more thoroughly than wet mopping and they allow workers to clean more area in less time.

**B101.0 ANSI/NFSI STANDARD**
This guideline provides a technical review of the science of measuring surface friction (tribometry) including slip-and-fall dynamics, its causes and contributing factors and the testing devices and methods used to measure the slip resistance of walkway surfaces.

**B101.1 ANSI/NFSI STANDARD**
Test method for measuring wet SCOF of common hard-surface floor materials

**B101.2 ANSI/NFSI STANDARD**
The purpose of this guideline is to prevent and/or mitigate the effects of injuries and fatalities from slips, trips, and falls.

**B101.3 ANSI/NFSI STANDARD**
This standard should be used for the purpose of judging the relative impact of a particular chemical or physical walkway surface treatment on a specific hard floor substrate with regards to the wet DCOF of that surface. This is just one factor in determining the safety of the floor from a slip resistance perspective.

**B101.4 ANSI/NFSI STANDARD**
The purpose of this standard is to provide a means of quantitatively, and meaningfully, assessing the slip resistance of areas, and locations, that are expected, and/or known, to be wet while being accessed by barefoot individuals, and to significantly reduce the likelihood of injuries resulting from slips in these areas.

**B101.5 ANSI/NFSI STANDARD**
The purpose of this standard is to offer, at the point of product sale, guidance to users/purchasers on the traction capabilities of the contents of the package through the display of labels and markings.

**B101.6 ANSI/NFSI STANDARD**
This standard provides criteria for the selection, installation, inspection and maintenance of floor mats, runners, and rugs as it relates to the prevention of slips, trips and falls.

**BIRDS EYE**
Circular blemishes on a polymer or wax surface caused by bubbles solidifying during application. Usually caused by agitation of the floor finish during the application or by applying heavy coats of finish. Also known as “fish eyes.”

**BLEACH**
Do not use chlorine bleach to clean out mops that are to be used for maintaining or applying floor sealer, finishes or restorers. It is an oxidizer and can severely deteriorate the floor finish. Bleach is not compatible with floor finish and can cause the finish to coagulate.

**BLEEDING**
Removal of color from a floor tile during the wax stripping process.

**BLACK HEEL MARKS**
Black marks left on a floor finish from the rubber heel of a shoe. Grocery carts, platform trucks, hand trucks and fork lifts can all produce black marks.

**BLOOM OR BLUSH**
A condition in which moisture has condensed upon and is being trapped by the floor finish film, rendering a haze over the surface. This can occur when high humidity conditions are present. Good ventilation and longer drying time between coats of finish can reduce the chance of this happening.

**BLUSHING**
The formation of a white or grayish cast in a finish during drying. Most often caused by one or more of the following: excessive humidity, improper dry time, overly heavy coats or more coats than recommended on the label.

**BUFFABLE FLOOR FINISH**
A floor finish that responds well to being buffed with mechanical action. A floor machine and buffing pad is typically used for this purpose.

**BUFFER**
A slang term for a buffing machine. Rotary floor machines are sometimes called “swing machines” or “side to side buffers.” Buffers are usually between 175 and 300 rpm. Burnishers are usually above 1000 rpm.

**BUFFING**
A polishing or smoothing process achieved by using a buffing machine equipped with a buffing pad or brush.

**BUILD-UP**
A heavy deposit of floor finish, wax, dirt and grime. It is caused by adding layer after layer of floor finish over dirt without deep scrubbing the old layers away first. These build-ups are frequently found along baseboards and corners.

**BURNISH**
A process similar to buffing. A high speed machine (burnisher) is used to enhance the appearance and polish of the floor finish. A very high gloss level can be achieved when using high speed burnishers above 1500 rpm.
Floor Care Glossary

**BURNISHER**
A machine that is used to burnish the floor. These machines have a rotary pad or brush that rotates at a high speed. These machines are usually powered by battery, electric or propane. They can produce exceptional levels of gloss when used in conjunction with appropriate pads and finishes.

**CANDY CANE STRIPED FINISH MOP**
Blue and white yarn distinguishes mop for applying floor finish to prevent contamination. It holds and releases floor finish more quickly and evenly than conventional mops.

**CARNAUBA WAX**
A natural wax obtained from the carnauba palm in Brazil. They have in modern times been replaced by synthetic waxes such as polyethylene waxes in floor finish formulations due to the more durable and more economical nature of these synthetics.

**CAUSTIC**
Any strong alkaline material which has a corrosive effect on living tissue and soft metals.

**CERMAIC TILE**
A clay tile that has a hard glossy surface that has been fired. It is commonly used on floors and walls of restrooms. The wall tiles are frequently glazed (high gloss) and the floor tiles are not glazed (matte). The glazed tiles can be slippery to walk upon. Grouting used to install these tiles can hold dirt, soil and bacteria and be difficult to keep clean.

**CLEANSER**
A powdered or liquid cleaning product containing abrasives, surfactants and frequently a bleach. Do not allow this type of product to contact the floor finish. Cleansers will attack and deteriorate the finish.

**CHALKING OR POWDERING**
The loose, powdery substance that may be present after a floor finish is buffed or burnished. It can be a major source for finish discoloration if not removed. Dust mopping after burnishing can prevent this problem. Keep them off the floors.

**CHEMICAL RESISTANCE**
The property of a floor finish that allows it to be unaffected by chemicals that are spilled onto it.

**CLARITY**
The state or quality of being clear or transparent to the eye.

**CLEANING**
The process of removing marks, dust and other contamination and materials from the floor surface.

**COALESCE**
A process of blending or fusing together. For instance, the particles in a floor finish come together to form a tight continuous film. This film becomes a smooth and polished surface. If the floor finish did not coalesce when it dried on the floor, the floor would be dull and powdery.

**COALESCING AGENTS**
These are ingredients added to floor coatings to assist in the film formation. The coalescing agent allows the latex particles in a floor finish to fuse together during the drying process resulting in a smooth, continuous film that adheres tightly to the flooring.

**COEFFICIENT OF FRICTION (COF)**
COF is a mathematical term used to describe the effect of dragging one substance (shoe sole material) over another (flooring surface). This coefficient is a measurement of the relative ability of various surfaces to resist the sliding or slipping of the selected material.

**COHESION**
The attraction of a coating to itself. Also referred to as the “inward force” of a coating.

**COLOR STABILITY**
The ability of an applied floor finish to resist fading or discolouration from exposure to oxygen, sunlight and water. There have been major improvements in color stability of floor finish ingredients.

**COMPATIBLE**
Capable of being used together in a product and having no undesirable effects.

**CONCRETE**
A mixture of sand, gravel, Portland cement and water that forms a very hard surface when dry. It is one of the most common floor types found in buildings. Other types of floors like vinyl and vinyl composition tile are often laid over the top of concrete.

**CONCRETE SEAL**
A protective coating applied to a new or old concrete floor to harden, seal and reduce dusting.

**CONDUCTIVE FLOORS**
Floors containing metal or other conductive materials to drain off or prevent static electricity build-ups or discharges.

**CONDUCTIVE FLOOR FINISH**
A finish that has the ability to take static charges and dissipate them. Also referred to as static dissipative finish or antistatic finish.
Floor Care Glossary

CONTINUOUS FILM FORMATION
The film formed on the floor is continuous to prevent cracks or openings in the film. These cracks can allow water or detergent to penetrate into and underneath the coating.

COPOLYMER
A molecule or chemical which is made up from two or more types of monomers. Copolymers are preferred over a single polymer in floor finishes, sealers and coatings. These copolymers when cross linked become tougher and more chemical resistant.

CORK FLOORS
Cork comes from the bark of the cork oak tree. The bark is ground into small pieces, mixed with resin, then pressed into sheets. These sheets are applied to the floor like linoleum. It is sensitive to many chemicals.

COTTON MOP
A type of mop head that has high absorbency and is used for wet or damp mopping. Cotton mops are NOT recommended for laying floor finish.

COVERAGE
The amount of square footage that a gallon of floor finish, sealer or restorer will yield when applied according to label directions.

CRAZING
A small irregular cracking or breaking in a floor finish film or coating after it has dried on a surface. These cracks allow dirt and soil to penetrate. Crazing can result in deterioration, chalking, dulling and rapid walk-off of the finish.

CREAMING
The separation of a layer of the dispersed phase of an emulsion polish to the surface of the liquid continuous phase. This can be seen as a ring on the inside surface of a container on top of a liquid emulsion.

CURING
The aging process that allows a floor sealer or finish to fully bond and harden. Some floor finishes can take several days to reach maximum hardness. Burnishing can speed up the curing and hardening process.

CYLINDRICAL BRUSH AGITATION
Cylindrical brush agitation is effective for grouted tile and floor surfaces that are uneven. Cylindrical brushes can be a single brush or twin counter-rotating brushes. Bristles can be made of a variety of natural and synthetic materials.

DAILY MAINTENANCE
Routine cleaning activities that remove soil from the building. Dust mopping, wet mopping, auto scrubbing and spot mopping are daily cleaning activities.

DAMP MOPPING
The mopping of a floor using a mop dipped in a mild cleaning solution and wrung out tightly. Daily mopping of floors covered with floor finishes should be done using a neutral pH floor cleaner.

DETERGENT
Cleaning solutions that consist of water and one or more of the following ingredients: Surfactants, builders, solvents, chelating agents and soap.

DETERGENT RESISTANCE
The degree to which a floor finish film exhibits no apparent deterioration when spotted or cleaned with a solution of a non-abrasive, non-ammoniated detergent.

DIRT EMBEDMENT
Soil that has been ground into and is trapped in a floor finish. This can be caused by a lack of proper floor cleaning and scrubbing, burnishing dirty floors, applying finish over dirty floors and using the wrong cleaning agent or floor pads.

DILUTION CONTROL UNIT
A device that automatically measures the correct amount of concentrated chemical for best results. These units can be wall mounted or handheld.

DILUTION RATIO
The ratio at which a cleaning agent is diluted in water for its recommended effective use, often expressed as a number such as 1:128, referring to parts of chemical dissolved in parts of water (e.g., 1:128 = 1 part chemical to 128 parts water).

DISCOLORATION
A darkening or color change visible to the naked eye. It can be caused by a number of factors including oxidation, embedded dirt and poor floor maintenance.

DISINFECTION
The removal or destruction of pathogens from inanimate objects. Nonpathogenic environmental organisms may not be completely eliminated through disinfection.

DOUBLE BUCKET PROCEDURE
A mopping technique that utilizes two buckets. The first bucket contains a disinfectant and the other, clear rinse water. The mop goes from the disinfectant to the floor; from the floor to the clear water rinse, to the wringer and back into the disinfectant. The procedure reduces disinfectant contamination.
Floor Care Glossary

**DRAG OR MOP DRAG**
A physical resistance between the mop and a floor finish during application. It is usually caused by not having enough finish in the mop or applying finish before the prior coat is dry. It often results in streaking.

**DRIVING PAD ASSEMBLY**
A tool that attaches with a clutch plate to a floor machine to drag a pad under a floor machine.

**DRY BRIGHT FINISH**
A floor finish that dries to a gloss without buffing. Many dry bright finishes can also be buffed or burnished.

**DRY BUFFING**
A floor polishing technique that uses an appropriate floor machine and floor pad. Never dry buff floors containing asbestos.

**DRY STRIPPING**
A method of removing a floor finish by using an appropriate floor machine, floor pad and spray stripping solution. This method is not recommended for floor containing asbestos.

**DRY TIME**
The length of time required for a floor finish to dry. The dry time usually refers to the time required before another coat of the same finish can be applied on top of it with no adverse affects such as drag, bloom or blush.

**DURABILITY**
How well a floor finish resists wear.

**DUST MOPPING**
Removing dust and loose soils from the floor surface by means of a dry or treated dust mop.

**Dwell OR Contact Time**
Describes the amount of time the cleaning chemical is in contact with the floor surface.

**Ease OF Application**
The amount of drag (mop drag) encountered when applying the floor finish.

**Emulsions**
A compound of liquids that do not mix and are insoluble in each other. An example is water insoluble polymers being suspended in water using emulsifiers to produce waterborne coatings of non-water soluble ingredients. These non-water soluble polymers are then evenly spread onto a floor surface where they dry and then protect the surface from water and other foreign matter.

**Epoxy**
A very hard synthetic thermosetting resin often used in floor finishes, paints, and sealers.

**Factory Finish**
A temporary finish applied to a floor covering by the manufacturer. This finish provides protection during manufacturing, shipping and installation of the flooring. The factory finish must be removed before applying the floor finish.

**Fading**
Loss of color caused by actinic radiation such as sunlight, atmospheric gasses and cleaning or bleaching chemicals.

**Feather In**
To blend a spot in with the surrounding area. For example, spot touch-up where the newly applied polish is “feathered-in” with the adjacent area.

**Film**
A thin covering or coating.

**Finish**
A coating that protects a floor from wear and enhances its appearance.

**Fish Eyes**
Small circles that appear in a floor finish after it has dried. This can be caused by applying too heavy of coats of finish or by too much agitation during the application. Another name for this is birds’ eyes.

**Flexibility**
The ability of a floor finish to bend and flex without powdering, cracking or peeling.

**Floor Finish**
A product about the thickness of waxed paper that covers a floor or other surface for the purpose of protection and/or appearance.

**Floor Machine**
A machine used to scrub or polish a floor. Sometimes called a rotary machine, “swing machine” or “side to side” machine.
Floor Care Glossary

FLOOR PAD
These are round pads that are placed under a floor machine drive block. They are designed to polish floors as well as to remove dirt, scuff marks and old finish from hard surface floors. They are available in various color-coded grits: White for polishing floors and Red, Blue, Brown and Black Pads for stripping and burnishing tasks.

FREE RINSING
The ability of a product to be completely rinsed from a surface without leaving a residue.

FREEZE-THAW STABILITY
Floor finishes should be able to survive freeze-thaw cycles and still remain effective. Antifreeze agents, pH adjustments and surfactants all can contribute to freeze-thaw stability. Note: If floor finishes become frozen, it is important to allow the finish to completely thaw out and return to room temperature before using it.

GLOSS
The shiny appearance exhibited by a hard surface floor coated with finish. Visual gloss will vary with the surface porosity, color and viewing angle. Generally, porous floors will have lower gloss than non-porous floors and dark surfaces will appear glossier than light colored surfaces.

GLOSS (DEPTH)
An optical phenomenon of relative gloss perceived when viewing reflective surfaces. This is a qualitative evaluation.

GLOSS (SPECULAR)
A quantitative measurement used to show how shiny a surface or film is. The higher the number, the better the gloss.

GLOSS METER
A device used to quantify how much gloss a surface has at various angles. Inside the device, a light is emitted onto a surface that measures how much light is reflected back. The higher the number, the better the gloss.

GLOSS AND SOLIDS
The amount of solids in a floor finish is not a sure way of determining gloss. For instance, two coats of a 16% solids floor finish will typically produce higher gloss than one coat of a 32% solids floor finish.

GLOSS RETENTION
The ability of applied floor finishes to retain a gloss under normal wear conditions excluding exposure to water.

GRANITE
A crystalline igneous rock composed chiefly of feldspar and some quartz and mica; used extensively in construction work and for monuments. It is extremely hard, dense, and resistant to scratches and acids. It is extremely hard and will take a high polish. It’s an ideal stone for floors and food preparation areas.

GROUT
The filler or matrix used between ceramic tiles on walls and floors. The grout should be sealed before the surface is used.

HARD WATER
Water, which contains the ions of magnesium and calcium. When hard water is used in a cleaning system, insoluble materials may form. This is called a precipitate. Hard water is usually expressed in parts per million or grains. 1 grain hard water = 18 PPM hard water.

HARDWOOD FLOOR
A floor made of any number of species of wood including maple, oak and beech.

HAZE
A floor finish film that reflects unclear or foggy images. This can be caused by a variety of things. Rushing the recoat, applying finish too thick and improper floor cleaners are several examples.

HEALING
The ability of a floor finish to be repaired after scratching, scuffing and marking.

HEELING
Technique of applying pressure to the edge of a floor machine and pad to remove stubborn marks and scuffs. Care should be taken to avoid burning or damaging the floor surface when using this technique. This should only be done when using 175 rpm or less machines.

HIGH SOLIDS FINISH
A floor finish that has 20% or more of non-volatile solids. The non-volatile solids are what is left on the floor after the finish has completely dried.

HIGH SPEED FLOOR FINISH
A floor finish specifically designed to be used with a high speed floor machine.

HIGH SPEED FLOOR MACHINE
A floor machine that operates at 350-1000 rpms.

HIDING
The ability of an applied finish to cover scuff marks and scratches.
Floor Care Glossary

HUMIDITY
The measure of moisture in the air.

IMPACT RESISTANCE
The ability of a finish to resist damage from being struck by a sharp blow.

IMPREGNATING
As a protective treatment, it is one that penetrates the subsurface. It is not a topical coating. It can have both water and oil repelling qualities. These types of sealers usually do not change the coefficient of friction (COF) of the floor. They are vapor permeable, breathable & generally natural looking.

IMPREGNATORS
Water- or solvent-based, penetrate below the surface and become repellents. Impregnators keep contaminants out, but do not stop the interior moisture from escaping. These products are considered “breathable,” meaning they allow for vapor transmission. They are generally hydrophobic (water-repelling), may also be oliophobic (oil-repelling): HYDROPHOBIC IMPREGNATORS are formulated to repel only water and water-based chemicals. A hydrophobic impregnator, for example, would repel fruit drinks, coffee, tea, and soda. OLIOPHOBIC IMPREGNATORS are designed to repel water and oil-based liquids. Cooking oil, grease, and body oils are examples of substances that would be repelled by an oliophobic impregnator.

INTERIM MAINTENANCE
Retain a high-level of appearance with a minimum amount of labor and material usage. Interim maintenance reduces the need for expensive restoration work. Top scrubbing is an interim procedure.

ISLANDING - A phenomenon that occurs when applied finish is not adequately anchored resulting in migration of film-forming materials to myriads of small pools scattered over the surface and surrounded by completely uncoated areas.

JAMES MACHINE
A laboratory device used to determine slip resistance on a hard floor surface by measuring the static coefficient of friction. All Paulsen & Roles Laboratories floor finishes are tested using the James Machine.

LAMINATE FLOORING
A rigid floor covering with a surface layer consisting of one or more thin sheets of a fibrous material (usually paper), impregnated with aminosilicic thermosetting resins (usually melamine.)

LEVELING
The property of a freshly applied finish to spread and dry to a uniform and streak free appearance. Leveling is the measure of the floor coatings wetting and spreading properties. Poor leveling properties may result in gloss reduction, streaking, cratering and islanding.

LEVELING AGENTS - Substances added to floor finishes to form smooth surfaces free of mop, brush or applicator marks.

LIFE CYCLE (FLOOR)
Involves examining the environmental sustainability over the product’s entire life. A well-planned floor care program may extend the life cycle of the floor coating. Scheduled maintenance and best practices can extend the life cycle of the floor coating 2-3 years between stripping cycles.

LIMESTONE FLOORING
A rock consisting mostly of calcium carbonate; used for building and for making lime. Limestone is a member of the natural stone category of products. It is a very soft stone and is extremely porous. It is subject to staining and must be sealed to protect the surface.

LINOLEUM - A generic name for flooring material that is installed in sheets. Most of this material today is sheet vinyl and not linoleum. Linoleum is easily damaged by a variety of chemicals.

LUDOX
Sand-like material added to wax to increase slip resistance.

MAR
A mutilation of a floor finish film that is only repairable by recoating.

MARBLE FLOORING
Marble is formed from limestone that has been subjected to great heat and pressure in the Earth’s crust. It consists chiefly of calcite or dolomite, or a combination of these carbonate minerals. It can be scratched easily and is very sensitive to strong acids or strong bases (alkali).

METAL INTERLOCK
A type of floor finish that provides improved detergent resistance and removability of the film. A metal salt is added to the polymer emulsion to provide this special binding and interlocking.
Floor Care Glossary

MICROFIBER
It is an ultra fine synthetic fiber that has abrasive cleaning characteristics and superior absorbency. Microfibers are densely microscopic constructed, polyester and polyamide fibers that are approximately 1/16 the thickness of a human hair. Microfiber cleaning tools include tube mops, string mops, cloths, mitts, dusting tools and cleaning trowels.

MINIMUM FILM MORMING TEMPERATURE
The minimum temperature at which a floor finish will form a continuous film on a floor surface. This temperature can vary depending upon the floor finish ingredients. However, the temperature at which most floor finishes lose their ability to film form on a cold floor is about 45-50 degrees F.

MONOETHANOLAMINE
Used in stripper to break down zinc interlock.

MONOMER
A simple compound (i.e. methyl methylacrylate) that can react and form a polymer. Monomers can react with themselves to make a homopolymer (i.e. polyethylene) or react with different monomers to form something more complex called a copolymer.

MONTAN WAX
Mineral wax extracted from lignite or peat (brown coal). It is a hard polishing wax.

MOP CONTAMINATION
The finish or wet mop can become contaminated and cause major problems when applying or maintaining finish. Keeping mops clean and neat are important for effective floor care.

MOP DRAG
Resistance felt when pulling a mop across a floor. Drag felt when recoating a finish usually is a sign of applying the finish too early.

MOPPING (SPOT)
A wet mopping procedure used to clean a dirty spill or dried up spot from a hard surface floor without mopping the entire floor. A damp mop is moved over spots and spills and then rinsed in a wringer bucket.

MOPPING (STRIPPING)
A mopping procedure designed to remove floor finish from a hard surface floor. It is similar to wet mopping except that a stripping solution chemical is added to the water bucket. The other difference is that the cleaning solution is flooded on the floor much heavier than you would do with wet mopping. A wet vacuum or auto scrubber is used to remove the soiled solution to speed the stripping process.

MOPPING (WET)
A mopping procedure done with water mixed in a bucket with a floor cleaning chemical. The chemical action of the cleaning solution and the wet mop being rubbed across the floor removes soil from floors quickly and easily.

MOTTING
A physical migration of floor finish film from smooth, even distribution at time of application to small discrete pools of material, resulting in a blotchy or spotty appearance.

NEUTRAL
Neither acid nor alkaline. Neutral generally means pH in the 5.0 to 9.0 range, but true neutral is pH 7.0.

NEUTRALIZER
A chemical sometimes used after stripping a floor with a high alkali wax stripper. It will neutralize the alkali left on the floor by the alkali wax stripper. This type of chemical is not needed when using a “no rinse” type wax stripper.

NEUTRAL CLEANER
A floor cleaner that has a pH that is compatible with the finish to be cleaned. Generally this means a pH of between 7-9. Higher pH floor cleaners can attack the floor finish and dull it.

NON-BUFFABLE FINISH
A very hard finish that is not repairable by buffing.

NON-RESILIENT FLOORING
Non-resilient flooring is defined as “hard” surfaces with no “give”. Stone and concrete area examples of non-resilient flooring. Non-resilient floors are usually classified as either Man Made or Natural

NON-VOLATILE SOLIDS
The amount of the floor finish that stays on the floor after everything has evaporated and the finish has cured. It is expressed as a percentage. Chemists speed this process up in the laboratory by baking the finish in an oven and then weighing the difference. Most floor finishes have non-volatile solids of between 16-24%.

NSFI
The National Floor Safety Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides standards development, product certification, auditing, education and risk management for public health and the environment.

OPTICAL BRIGHTENER
Optical brighteners take otherwise “unseen reflected light” and refract it in a way that allows the human eye to view it. This presents a higher gloss and protects the floor from damaging actinic UV radiation.
Floor Care Glossary

**ORANGE PEEL**
The pitting of a floor finish or surface that makes it look like the skin of an orange.

**PARTICLE SIZE**
In an emulsion it is the actual size of the suspended droplets. Typically, the smaller the particle size the clearer the emulsion.

**PEELING**
The floor finish pulls away from the floor surface in large flakes or strips. It is caused by poor adhesion related to alkali residues.

**PERMANENT COATING**
Once applied, are very difficult to remove. They’re made of solvent-based or water-based polymers such as polyurethane and epoxies. These are not normally recommended for stone.

**pH**
A measurement of the acidity or alkalinity of a substance. It is expressed in a number from 0-14. Zero being a powerful acid and 14 being a powerful alkali.

**PITTING**
Small holes that form in a floor finish or hard surface. A common cause of this are “spiked” heel shoes worn by women in the workplace.

**PLASTICIZER**
An ingredient of a floor finish that makes it more flexible and less brittle. This is accomplished with an additive which reduces intermolecular forces in the polymers.

**PLASTICIZER MIGRATION**
This is caused when a plasticizer in a floor mat or floor material transfers itself (migrates) into the floor finish or sealer. This is responsible for the discoloration sometimes found around or under floor mats.

**POLYETHYLENE WAX**
A type of polymer that is added to floor finishes, usually in small amounts, to impart certain properties. For example, hard waxes can improve black heel mark resistance but often reduce slip resistance. Soft waxes improve buffability and slip resistance but decreases heel mark resistance. Polyethylene is made by polymerizing the gas ethylene (C2H4).

**POLYMER**
A very large molecule that is made of smaller units called monomers. In acrylic floor finishes, it is an acrylic or acrylic/styrene polymer that eventually forms the film.

**POLYMER EMULSIONS**
Polymer materials that are chemically emulsified into a water base. When these formulations are applied to surfaces they form a smooth, continuous finish.

**POLYURETHANE**
A large family of polymers often used in floor coatings because urethane films can provide greater hardness without brittleness than is possible with most other polymers. They also have good chemical resistance combined with good adhesion. Aliphatic urethanes (water-based) are made by reacting organic isocyanate with compounds containing a hydroxyl (OH) group.

**POP**
A slang term used to describe the change in the appearance of a floor finish when it goes from a dull hazy look to a bright brilliant shine. High speed burnishers can produce this “wet look”.

**POROUS**
A surface that was many tiny openings. A porous surface will require more finish or sealer to fill and smooth out these openings.

**POWDERING**
Partial or total disintegration of the floor finish film resulting in fine, light-colored dust. It is the result of abrasion of the surface during burnishing or from heavy traffic. Be sure the floor pad being used is not too aggressive for the finish being used.

**PRESERVATIVES**
Floor finishes are susceptible to bacterial contamination. This is why finishes contain small amounts of antimicrobial agents to prevent microbial deterioration. These preservatives protect the unopened container, but do not substantially protect finish after it has been used. This is why it is important to never pour used floor finish back into a container of unused finish.

**PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE**
Products and proper cleaning tasks that reduce soil from entering a building. Preventive maintenance reduces labor cost associated with additional cleaning tasks and materials.

**PRESOAK**
It is a good idea to presoak mops in water before using them. This will open up the fibers of the mop to allow more even absorption of the floor finish. It will also wash away any loose fibers or residues that may be present in the mop.
Floor Care Glossary

QUARRY TILE
Quarry tiles are man-made and available in a variety of sized and come glazed or unglazed. The unglazed versions offer greater resistance to slippage but they must be sealed to protect against staining. Also called promenade tile.

RAYON BLEND MOP
Refers to the type of yarn used in producing the mop and is the preferred one for applying finish.

RECOATING
The process of applying successive coats of floor finish to provide improved appearance and protection. Care should be taken to allow plenty of drying time between coats of floor finish to prevent stress recoat problems. If humidity is high or air circulation in the area being finished is poor then lengthen the time between coats.

RE-EMULSIFICATION
A new coat of floor finish attacks and softens a partially dried coat of floor finish. It can cause streaks and dulling. Allow plenty of time between coats for drying.

REPAIRABILITY
The ability of a floor finish to return to its original appearance after it has deteriorated from wear. Usually accomplished through deep cleaning and buffing or burnishing.

RESILIENT TILE FLOORS
Flooring that will give under impact and certain loads and then return to its original form without damage. Vinyl composition tile (VCT) is an example.

RESINS
The basic solid content of gym and concrete floor finishes that are solvent-borne.

RESOILING
The rate at which a floor surface will begin to soil after cleaning.

RESTORATIVE MAINTENANCE
Intensive cleaning designed to restore the floor as close as possible to its original appearance. Stripping is a restorative maintenance procedure.

RESTER
A product used to restore a floor finish without recoating. They can be sprayed and buffed, mopped on and buffed or included in the daily scrubbing solution.

ROTARY BRUSH CLEANING
A carpet cleaning technique in which a detergent solution is worked into the pile by a motor-driven rotating brush. Loosened soil and spent solution is often subsequently removed by vacuum.

RUBBER FLOORING
Available in various thicknesses, it provides a good appearance, comfort, acoustic capability, safety and easy maintenance. The synthetic product has better oil and grease resistance than its natural rubber predecessor. Flooring materials made up of natural or synthetic rubber rolled and heat cured into a final product.

SANDSTONE FLOORING
Sandstone is composed primarily of quartz sands that are loose and rough in texture.

SCRATCH
Damage resulting from the movement of a hard pointed object. Deep scratches usually require recoating or refinishing to repair.

SCRUB AND RECOAT
A process, short of stripping, used to restore floors when they become embedded with soil and have excessive scuffs, scratches and marks.

SCUFF
Disfigurement of a floor finish resulting from an abrading or scraping action. It is usually repairable without recoating.

SDS
Safety Data Sheet. Required for all products. It lists hazardous ingredients for particular compound and also details safety precautions and first aid information.

SEALER
A coating designed to penetrate and provide the initial protection to a floor surface by filling in the tiny pores. Also, a product which prevents color bleeding.

SELF POLISHING FINISH
A finish which dries to a gloss without buffing. Sometimes called a “dry bright finish.”

SHELF LIFE
The length of time an unopened product will remain unchanged in its container after packaging.

SILICON IMPREGNATED BRUSHES
Silicon carbide is impregnated into fibers to increase abrasive action and extend the life cycle of the brush. These brushes are used for stripping, scrubbing, and for removing imbedded soils. They come in both cylindrical and rotary configurations.

SLIP RESISTANCE
The resistance a floor finish provides when people walk on it with their shoes. It is measured as a slip coefficient by the James Machine. A rating of 0.5 is considered the minimum safe coefficient.
Floor Care Glossary

SLURRY
A temporary suspension of insoluble solid or immiscible liquids in a carrier base. Usually refers to the suspension of dirt or the thick, dark, soapy mixture created when stripping a floor.

SOIL RELEASE
The ability of a floor finish to release soil that is attached to it. Some finishes have better soil release than others.

SOLIDS, NON-VOLATILE
The film or percentage weight of material that is left after the volatile materials have been evaporated. Non-volatile solids are the true solids that make up the actual film that dries on the floor surface. Floor finishes typically have non-volatile solids between 15% and 25% by weight.

SOLIDS, TOTAL
The total solids in a floor finish is the combination of the volatile and non-volatile solids in the finish minus the diluent content. It is expressed as a percentage of all ingredients.

SOLUTION
A single, homogenous liquid that is a mixture in which the components are uniformly distributed throughout.

SPRAY BUFFING
An application of a spray buff through a trigger sprayer and then buffing the area with a 175-350 RPM floor machine and spray buff pad.

SPREADING
The action of flowing out over a surface during application.

SQUARE FLOOR MACHINES
The Square Strip floor surface preparation machine gives operators the ability to remove multiple layers of finish, without using chemicals. The motor operates at 1750 rpm and creates over 2,000 oscillations per minute. Square corners allow it to work into corners that are missed by traditional “round” floor pads.

STAIN
A blemish or deposit on a floor surface that cannot be removed with conventional cleaning methods. It is embedded into the floor and may be permanent.

STREAKING
Areas on a floor surface that are non-uniform and left uncleaned or are visibly duller. Dirty mops and/or applying finish in too thin of coats are common causes.

STRIPPABLE COATINGS
Coatings are formulated to be easily stripped or removed from the stone. These coatings are made of polymers such as acrylics, styrene, and polyethylene, and are usually water-based. Many coatings available on the market are water-based polymer-type products designed for resilient tile floors and may not be suitable for stone.

STRIPPER
A product used to remove a finish from the floor without damage to the surface.

STRIPPING
A process of removing old finish from the floor surface and surrounding baseboards.

STYRENE
A low-cost polymer that is dispersed with acrylics and is used in many coatings. Styrene offers good detergent resistance, low soil pick-up and low water absorption.

SURFACTANT
Surface active agent (surfactant) that contains a water hating (hydrophobic) portion and a water loving (hydrophilic) portion. Surfactants emulsify and suspend oils and dirt in solution to keep them from re-depositing on the surface being cleaned.

SYNERGISTIC
When in a solution, the effects of the combined individual ingredients are greater than if they were by themselves.

SYNTHETIC FLOOR PADS
These are round pads which are placed under a floor machine drive block. They are designed to polish floors as well as to remove dirt, scuff marks and old finish from hard surface floors. They are available in various color coded grits White for polishing floors and Red, Blue, Brown and Black Pads for stripping and burnishing tasks.

TACKINESS
Sticky, gummy character of a floor finish allowing the surface to attract and hold dirt, dust and soils.

TACK RAGS
A cloth wrapped around a broom or dust mop, that is used on a floor surface to clean up fine particles, such as dust.

TERRAZZO
A non-resilient floor material composed of marble and Portland cement.
Floor Care Glossary

THERMOPLASTIC
A polymer which can return to its original shape after being softened or heated. Technically, floor finish polymers are not thermoplastics. But many companies have adopted a modified acceptance of the word thermoplastic to mean that the finish can be returned to its original condition with high speed burnishing.

THERMOSET
A type of polymer that is elaborately cross-linked and three-dimensional. It decomposes upon heating and is insoluble. Epoxy is an example of a thermoset polymer.

TOUCH-UP
To improve, as in a picture, by touches of a brush or other applicator; refers also to small applications of wax in spots within a larger waxed surface; to repair worn spots.

TRAFFIC WEAR
Marring or deterioration of a floor finish by foot and mechanical traffic.

TRAVERTINE MARBLE
Travertine is a natural stone such as Marble, Granite, Onyx, Limestone and Slate. Travertine is formed in hot springs and/or limestone caves. Travertine is not the same as Marble or Limestone category. Key characteristics of Travertine stone are the holes within the stone that are caused by carbon dioxide evasion.

U.L.
Underwriters Laboratories. An organization that tests manufactured products for safety.

ULTRA HIGH SPEED
This refers to burnishing machines that have speeds of 1,000 - 2,000> RPMs. These machines are propane, battery or electric powered.

UNEVEN FINISH
This may be caused by a poor subfloor, or be the result of a poor maintenance job, poor scrubbing and rinse and the uneven application of floor polish. Not uniform.

UNIVERSAL WALKWAY TESTER (UWT)
The UWT is a fully robotic walkway testing device used by manufacturers of floor coverings, floor maintenance products, and the insurance industry. Focuses on the slip-and-fall accident prevention via education, training, and research.

URETHANE
A synthetic resin, ethyl carbamate, used in protective coatings for wood, concrete and metal.

VINYL ASBESTOS TILE (VAT)
A floor tile chemically similar to asphalt tile, except that the asphalt and resinous binders in asphalt tile have been replaced by assorted vinyl compounds such as vinyl chloride and vinyl acetate. Tile size is 9x9" dimension.

VINYL FLOORS
A compound of vinyl resins, plasticizers and mineral fillers. This surface comes in varied sizes (12x12, 24x24 or sheets), colors and vinyl contents. Can also be described as sheet vinyl flooring.

VINYL ASBESTOS TILE (VAT)
VAT, or vinyl asbestos, is composed of vinyl, resins, asbestos fibers, wood flour and color pigments. Special care in maintenance must be taken to avoid damage to the tiles and thus the danger of contamination and exposure to asbestos fibers. Tile is primarily 9 inch square tile sized.

VINYL COMPOSITION TILE (VCT)
VCT is a finished flooring material used primarily in commercial and institutional applications. Vinyl tiles are composed of colored vinyl chips formed into solid sheets of varying thicknesses (1/8" is most common) by heat and pressure and cut into 12” squares. Tiles are typically waxed and buffed using special materials and equipment. Vinyl tile is favored over other kinds of flooring materials in high-traffic areas because of its low cost, durability, and ease of maintenance. VCT contains vinyl resins and is primarily offered in 12 inch square size tiles.

VISCOCITY
Refers to how thick or thin a product is. Different scales are used to measure this property.

VOLATILE
The part of a product that evaporates during drying.

VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS (VOC)
Organic compounds which evaporate into the air. Regulatory agencies are currently restricting and regulating organic compounds in all industries. Solvent based gym floor sealers and finishes are being reformulated to meet stricter VOC regulations.

WALK-OFF MATS
Entrance matting used to reduce and eliminate the soil that gets into a building. It will prolong the wear life of the floor finish.

WATER SPOTTING
Change in appearance of a surface finish resulting from the action caused by spot wetting by water.
Floor Care Glossary

**WETTING**
There are products that make water wetter. It enables water to “get in” at a dirty surface and makes cleaning much more effective and with more speed.

**WET LOOK**
A high shine floor appearance produced by using a floor machine and a special finish or restorer. The floor reflects as if it is still wet even after it is dry.

**WET MOPS (STRING, TUBE OR FLAT MOPS)**
Primarily for cleaning, stripping and picking up spills.

**ZINC OR METAL CROSSLINKING**
Extremely small amounts of Zinc or other metal compounds are sometimes used to provide increased hardness and improved removability to floor finishes.