

Commercial Maintenance Tip Sheet

Armstrong Vinyl Composition Tile Crown Texture, Raffia, ChromaSpin, Stonetex, Companion Square, Feature Tile/Strips, MultiColor, Imperial Texture

Following are guidelines for maintaining Armstrong Flooring's Vinyl Composition Tile (VCT). They are based on general experience using established methods and cleaning materials. It is important that these guidelines are read carefully. Ultimately, local site conditions will determine what specific maintenance procedures and frequencies are needed. It is the responsibility of the maintenance provider to establish the maintenance program(s) that meet the demands of the space(s) and needs of the facility.

All resilient floor coverings require maintenance. How frequently the floors must be maintained depends largely on the factors described below. Following regular and well-planned maintenance programs protects the floor by reducing wear, preserves the floor's attractive appearance and ultimately increases its service life.

- **How to Determine/Tailor A Maintenance Program**

Before establishing a maintenance program, there are several factors which must be considered in order to determine the most appropriate, cost-effective methods to use. It is critical that the maintenance methods for each floor and area be chosen only after careful evaluation and regard to the following:

- **Type of flooring**

It is important to know the type floor before cleaning. Rubber or linoleum could be confused with vinyl or luxury vinyl tile (LVT) could be confused with wood or laminate.

- **Resources/Equipment/Chemicals/Personnel/Budget**

Are well-trained maintenance personnel available?

Are the appropriate pieces of equipment (scrubbers, buffers, mops, pads, etc.) available?

Are the appropriate chemicals available?

What is the budget?

- **End User's Expectations**

What is considered an acceptable level of appearance by the owner, customers, staff or end-user?

What is the desired gloss (high or low gloss)?

- **Type of Facility & Location of Flooring**

Entryways, lobbies and pivot-point areas may require more frequent cleaning than lower traffic areas in other parts or upper levels of the building.

- **Volume and Type of Traffic and Soil**

Traffic types and volumes in entryways and corridors will vary greatly from those found at nurse's stations or in examination rooms. Dirt and grit carried in from the outside can differ significantly from the soils and chemical spills found in a laboratory or emergency room.

- **Special Traffic/Footwear**

Areas subjected to frequent rolling loads provide a different environment than a children's play area or corridor in an elementary school.

- **Color/Design of Flooring**

Color and pattern can have a significant impact on a floor's appearance and, when properly chosen, may help mask soiling and staining. Mid-tones are better choices than light or dark colors. Busier/high contrast patterns will hide better than solid/monolithic ones.

Preventive Care and Maintenance

Controlling grit and soil is crucial to prolonging the attractive appearance of any floor. Grit or soil is any material—including dirt, stones, sand and clay—that is deposited onto the floor by normal commercial traffic. The best way to control grit is by using appropriate walk-off mats.

Recommended walk-off mats should:

- Have a high-friction, open surface design to knock grit particles from the bottoms of shoes and then trap the particles.
- Be used at every entrance, inside and outside, should be at least as wide as the doorway and 8' to 12' long.
- Have a backing that won't stain the floor.
- Be cleaned regularly, vacuumed, shaken and/or hosed off frequently.

While walk-off mats will retain a substantial amount of this grit and soil, some will still find its way into the building. Regular vacuuming, sweeping and dust-mopping will help to further control this type of grit.

Other Maintenance Tips for Best Results

- Do not allow any traffic on the floor for 24 hours after installation. Newly installed flooring should not be exposed to rolling load traffic for at least 72 hours after installation to allow setting and drying of the adhesive.
- It is important to protect the floor during the installation and construction phase. If it becomes necessary to move any heavy fixtures or appliances over the flooring on casters or dollies, the flooring should be protected with 1/4" or thicker plywood, hardboard or other underlayment panels. If other on-site work is continuing, consider using a protective covering such as plain, undyed Kraft paper to guard against damage to the new floor.
- The use of aggressive strippers such as mop-on/mop-off, no-scrub and no-rinse strippers is not recommended on tile floors less than two years old because they may affect the adhesive bond.
- Do not wet wash, machine scrub, or strip the floor for at least five days after installation. This is to prevent excess moisture from interfering with the adhesive bond and/or seam treatments.
- When performing wet maintenance, always use proper signage and prohibit traffic until the floor is completely dry.
- Do not use excessive amounts of liquid during maintenance.
- Do not use brown or black pads, equivalent brushes or stiff-bristled, highly abrasive brushes on any Armstrong resilient flooring.

Maintenance Recommendations for Vinyl Composition Tile

A. Initial Maintenance, Immediately After Installation

1. Sweep, dust mop or vacuum the floor thoroughly to remove all loose dust, dirt, grit and debris.
2. Remove any dried adhesive residue with a clean, white cloth dampened with mineral spirits, carefully following warnings on the container.
3. Damp mop the floor with a properly diluted neutral (pH 6 to 8) detergent solutions such as Armstrong S-485 Commercial Floor Cleaner.
4. Apply a minimum of two coats of a high-quality commercial floor polish (such as Armstrong [S-480 Commercial Floor Polish](#)) to temporarily protect the floor until regular maintenance procedures can begin. The use of a high-quality stain-resistant sealer (such as [Armstrong S-495 Commercial Floor Sealer](#)) beneath the polish should be considered in areas of high traffic, high soil load and areas where staining potential is high.

B. Initial Maintenance and Preparation for Commercial Traffic

1. Machine scrub the floor with a properly diluted neutral detergent solution (such as Armstrong [S-485 Commercial Floor Cleaner](#)) and a scrubbing pad (3M blue or equal), or equivalent brushes. If the floor is badly soiled and/or scratched, strip it using the same procedure but substituting a properly diluted stripping solution. **NOTE: The use of aggressive strippers such as mop-on/mop-off, no-scrub and no-rinse strippers is not recommended on tile floors less than two years old because they may affect the adhesive bond.**
2. Thoroughly rinse the entire floor with fresh, clean water. Remove rinse water and allow the floor to dry completely.
3. Apply 3 to 5 coats of high-quality commercial floor polish, such as Armstrong® S-480 Commercial Floor Polish. In areas where the flooring will be exposed to heavy traffic and/or staining agents, the application of 1 or 2 coats of a stain resistant sealer (such as Armstrong® S-495 Commercial Floor Sealer) prior to the application of polish, is recommended.

C. Daily / Regular Maintenance

1. Sweep, dust mop or vacuum the floor daily to remove dust, dirt, grit and debris that can damage the floor and become ground into the surface.
2. Spot mop as needed. Any spills should be cleaned up immediately.
3. Damp mopping of the floor should be performed on a regular or daily basis, depending upon traffic and soil levels in the space. Use a properly diluted neutral detergent solution such as Armstrong® S-485 Commercial Floor Cleaner.

D. Periodic Maintenance

1. When needed, after sweeping, dust mopping or vacuuming, machine scrub the floor with a properly diluted neutral detergent solution such as Armstrong® S-485 Commercial Floor Cleaner and the appropriate scrubbing pad (3M™ red or equal for light scrub, 3M™ blue or equal for a deep scrub) or equivalent brush.
2. Thoroughly rinse the entire floor with fresh, clean water. Remove rinse water and allow the floor to dry completely.
3. If needed, additional coats of floor polish may be applied at this time. If there is sufficient base of polish remaining (3 to 5 coats), buff, spray buff or burnish to restore gloss.

E. Restorative Maintenance – Stripping of Existing Floor Finish/Polish

1. Mix stripping solution to the appropriate dilution, depending on floor finish build-up.
 - Cordon off areas to be stripped.
 - Apply liberal amounts of solution uniformly on floor with mop.
 - Let stripping solution soak for the appropriate amount of time recommended by the stripper manufacturer.
 - Keep areas to be stripped wet. Rewet if necessary.
2. Machine scrub the floor (300 rpm or less) with a scrubbing pad (3M blue or equal) or equivalent scrub brush to break up the polish film. **Do not allow stripping solution to dry on the floor.**
3. Remove dirty stripping solution with a wet vacuum or mop. **TIP: Drizzling fresh, clean rinse water onto the dirty stripping solution will assist with more thorough removal.**
4. Thoroughly rinse the entire floor with fresh, clean water. Remove rinse water and allow the floor to dry completely.
5. Apply 3 to 5 coats of high-quality commercial floor polish, such as Armstrong® S-480 Commercial Floor Polish. In areas where the flooring will be exposed to heavy traffic and/or staining agents, the application of 1 or 2 coats of a stain resistant sealer (such as Armstrong® S-495 Commercial Floor Sealer) prior to the application of polish, is recommended.

Special Considerations

FEATURE TILE™: Feature Tile, like solid-colored floors of any composition, shows scratches and soiling more readily than patterned materials. They have been designed for use as decorative bands, borders and spot accent colors in combination with other Armstrong 1/8" Standard EXCELON® and EXCELON® Tile. Feature Tile is not suitable for use as an overall floor color and is not recommended for this use. When first installed, the plain-colored surface may reveal a light dusty or powdery film and some directional surface markings. These are common to the production of this type of product, but the markings will be eliminated with regular cleaning and polishing, and they will not affect the performance of the floor.

STONETEX®: Although Stonetex presents a monolithic or solid-colored image, the speckled pattern enables it to look better longer than Feature Tile or other non-patterned vinyl composition tile. Stonetex may require more frequent maintenance than a typical vinyl composition tile with a more prominent pattern.