

## VCT Floor Stripping and Waxing Safety Guidelines

The essential maintenance task of stripping and waxing VCT floors has led to recent slips, trips, and falls. We would like to provide some recommendations to help mitigate the risk of accidents and injuries.

### **Comprehensive Training:**

It is crucial to ensure that all personnel involved in floor stripping and waxing receive comprehensive training on proper techniques, equipment usage, and safety protocols. Providing regular training sessions, both for new and existing staff, will reinforce their knowledge and raise awareness about potential hazards. Training topics should include proper handling of chemicals, understanding safety data sheets (SDS), correct use of equipment, and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) usage. We recommend working closely with your custodial equipment supplier who may help provide training for your staff.

### **Contracting Out the Work:**

Consider the option of contracting out the floor stripping and waxing work to professional companies. Hiring specialized contractors who are experienced in floor maintenance can bring numerous benefits. These professionals are well-trained in the latest techniques, possess the necessary equipment, and have a deep understanding of safety protocols. By outsourcing this task, you can ensure that skilled individuals are responsible for the process, reducing the risk of accidents and liabilities associated with in-house maintenance.

Contracting out the work also allows your school facilities staff to focus on other critical tasks without compromising safety or diverting resources from their core responsibilities. It provides access to expertise and industry best practices that can further enhance the quality and efficiency of floor maintenance operations.

If you decide to contract out the work, ensure that the selected company has a strong safety record, follows strict safety guidelines, and provides proof of insurance coverage.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

To minimize the risk of accidents and exposure to hazardous materials, it is imperative to provide appropriate PPE to all staff engaged in floor maintenance. Recommended PPE may include safety glasses or goggles, gloves, slip-resistant footwear, protective clothing, and respiratory protection as necessary. Regular inspections of PPE should be conducted to ensure proper functionality and replace damaged or expired equipment.



### **Alternative Floor Options:**

Consider exploring alternative floor options that minimize the need for frequent stripping and waxing. One notable example is the implementation of Forbo's Flotex product at a school, which proved to be an effective solution. By opting for Flotex, the school successfully eliminated the need for future floor stripping and waxing. One school decided to strip the VCT flooring and install Flotex on top of it. Flotex is a durable and low-maintenance flooring option that offers the benefits of both carpet and resilient flooring. Its unique construction combines the comfort and acoustic advantages of carpet with the practicality and easy cleaning of a resilient floor. This choice not only reduces the risk of accidents during maintenance but also provides long-term cost savings and a more sustainable approach to floor upkeep.

### **Hazard Communication and Signage:**

Proper communication is vital to maintain a safe working environment. Implement a hazard communication program that includes clear labeling of chemical containers, prominent display of safety data sheets (SDS) near the storage area, and proper training on reading and understanding SDS. Additionally, place signage in areas where floor maintenance is underway to alert individuals of potential hazards and remind them to exercise caution.

### **Regular Maintenance Inspections:**

Establish a systematic inspection schedule to ensure that all floor maintenance equipment is well-maintained and in proper working condition. Routine inspections should include checking the integrity of floor stripping and waxing machines, electrical cords, and ensuring the availability of necessary supplies. Promptly address any equipment malfunctions or repair needs to prevent accidents related to faulty machinery.

By implementing these strategies, you can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and injuries associated with floor stripping and waxing. If you have any questions or would like further assistance in implementing these recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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