



TECHNICAL BULLETIN – TB080

INSTALLATION OF NEW SHEET VINYL OVER EXISTING VINYL

27th November 2024

INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

The commercial resilient sheet and tile flooring industry demands that contractors save time and money by sometimes forgoing sound installation practices and requesting that new resilient coverings be installed over existing resilient sheet or tile coverings.

While this practice is undertaken daily in the industry, contractors should be aware of the requirements of the relevant Flooring Standards, the flooring manufacturer, and the issues of adhering a non-absorbent covering such as sheet vinyl to a non-absorbent surface such as an existing resilient sheet or tile covering using water-based adhesives.

THE AUSTRALIAN STANDARD

In referring to the current Australian Standard A.S.1884 2021 section 3.2.3, the following advice is provided:

“Resilient sheet and tile finishes are not considered a suitable surface for adhering resilient Coverings”.

This is a significant change from the superceded 1985 version of the standard, which said in section 2.2.2,

“Existing resilient sheet and tile floors, which have a smooth surface and are well adhered may be considered to be a suitable surface for laying a new floor covering. Cushioned or loose laid floor coverings are not acceptable surfaces”.

THE BRITISH STANDARD

The current British Standard “B.S.8203 : 2001 Installation of Resilient Floor Coverings” section 3.5 provides these recommendations as follows:

“The practice of laying the floor coverings covered by the British Standard on top of existing sheet and tile floor coverings is not recommended. Existing floor coverings and residual adhesive should be removed to enable the subfloor to receive the floor covering. The base's dryness level with regard to both rising moisture from the ground and residual moisture should be in accordance with section 3.1”.

RESILIENT FLOOR COVERING MANUFACTURER’S RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the recommendations provided in Flooring Standards, the vinyl flooring manufacturer’s recommendations must be followed in such installations. Installing sheet vinyl over existing resilient sheet or tile coverings is not widely recommended in Australia and is not a preferred option.

THE TECHNICAL ISSUES

Where the installer decides they wish to proceed with an installation that, while feasible, runs counter to the recommendations, they need to consider the following things.

- a) The old floor surfaces must be cleaned thoroughly to remove any polishes, varnishes, oils, soaps, etc., and then lightly sanded to create a slightly rough surface to assist the adhesive bond.
- b) Old sealers on existing vinyl can interfere with the performance of any levelling material or possibly even the adhesive bond of the new glue.



- c) Glass-reinforced-backed PVC sheet must not be adhered to this type of surface. Because the acrylic adhesives required for these products rely on at least one of the bonding surfaces to be absorbent in order to cure properly, such material should be loosely laid or perimeter fixed instead.
- d) *Adequate precautions should be taken when sanding existing resilient floor coverings, as they may contain asbestos fibres. Inhaling asbestos dust is detrimental to health.*
- e) Care must be taken with the selection of adhesives. If water-based adhesives are used over existing resilient sheet or tile floors, the adhesive may not dry out as moisture can be entrapped. The water-based adhesives almost exclusively used in the flooring industry require one absorbent surface for the moisture to migrate into so they can dry out. Consequently, their use in this installation may result in a high risk of lifting or bubbling the new sheet vinyl flooring.
- f) Placing vinyl over existing vinyl carries the risk of indentation and other surface damage. The old covering does not have the hardness or rigidity of concrete, and so imposed loads such as chair feet, table feet, heavy trolleys, or even high-heeled shoes can produce unacceptable indentations.
- g) VCT-type tiles are commonly adhered with pressure-sensitive adhesive, making for a less secure base for new vinyl. Also, a coating of 'smoothing material' applied as described below can result in cracking along the tile edges. Application over VCT should be considered carefully before proceeding.

ONE SOLUTION

ARDEX Australia does have a system for preparing existing embossed vinyl coverings, with procedures detailed in the ARDEX Feather Finish technical data sheet section titled "EMBOSSING FILLER." This system is suitable for residential applications only, and ARDEX does not recommend it for commercial or high-traffic **situations due to the high risk of indentation.**

With the application of underlayment at a thickness of less than 1mm and the mixing of Feather finish (1.5-2 parts) with ARDEX P82 Ultraprime (1 part), the system will not provide an absorbent surface for water-based *adhesives* to dry out into.

As a result, this system requires selecting a suitable adhesive, double dropping, or loose laying/perimeter bonding of the new vinyl flooring. Alternatively, the embossing filler can be overcoated with neat Feather Finish to improve the porosity.

Installers need to scrutinize the application to ensure that vinyl, once installed, will perform according to customers' expectations.

The other consideration is any pre-existing moisture conditions which may not be evident, for example:

1. Existing vinyl tiles, especially tiles manufactured with asbestos, may wick the moisture through the tile or allow moisture evaporation through the tile joint.
2. Existing sheet vinyl coverings with Hydricord backing may also wick moisture away through the porous backing.

Installing new sheet vinyl over an existing vinyl covering without checking for any pre-existing moisture problems may result in bubbling/de-lamination of the new vinyl and subsequent expensive replacement costs.

SUMMARY

In summary, the recommended procedures in line with flooring standards and the recommendations of the flooring manufacturer would be to

- remove the existing vinyl flooring
- remove adhesive residue
- proceed with checking the subfloor for any pre-existing moisture condition



- apply the appropriate level of floor preparation (grinding, levelling, patching, skim-coating, etc.) to achieve a smooth, flat surface to meet the customer's expectations.

ARDEX recommends that if there are any doubts about the suitability of the existing vinyl installation in a domestic situation, it should be removed. In commercial applications, the old vinyl must be removed prior to new underlayment coverings being put down.

IMPORTANT

This Technical Bulletin provides guideline information only and is not intended to be interpreted as a general specification for the application/installation of the products described. Since each project potentially differs in exposure/condition, specific recommendations may vary from the information contained herein. For recommendations for specific applications/installations, contact your nearest Ardex Australia Office.

DISCLAIMER

The information presented in this Technical Bulletin is to the best of our knowledge true and accurate. No warranty is implied or given as to its completeness or accuracy in describing the performance or suitability of a product for a particular application. Users are asked to check that the literature in their possession is the latest issue.

REASON FOR REVISION-ISSUER

Change of slogan and address

DOCUMENT REVIEW REQUIRED

36 months or whenever third-party suppliers change their recommendations.

Australia: 1300 788 780

New Zealand: 643 384 3029

Web: www.ardexaustralia.com

email: technical.services@ardexaustralia.com

Address: 2 Buda Way, Kemps Creek NSW 2178