



NATIONAL TERRAZZO & MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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PROTECTION OF SAND-CUSHION CEMENT TERRAZZO

The NTMA Specifications recommend that during the grinding and polishing procedures of a cement terrazzo application and after the initial grinding has been completed, the floor surface be grouted with cement to match the matrix used in the floor system. It further indicates that this grout material is properly cured to retard the cure for a minimum period of 72 hours before final polishing. The final polishing can be completed at any time beyond this 72-hour period, even several additional days or months, without affecting the final finish.

Very often demands are made of the terrazzo installer to polish the floor too early in the construction process when there are many trades yet to install or finish their work. By doing so, the general contractor should accept the responsibility of protection and maintenance of these floors when they are polished prematurely. If the finished terrazzo is not protected from other trades, it will often be badly soiled and marred. This creates difficulty in getting the owner to accept the floor. Accordingly, under these circumstances, it is best to delay final polishing and removal of the grout for as long as possible.

A second method of protecting a newly finished terrazzo floor is to cover the floor with a plastic sheeting material and plywood or other protection board. It is essential that all parties involved recognize that such covering will greatly retard the cure of the terrazzo floor. The floor is unable to breathe if the circulation of air is closed off. This often oxidizes the strips and creates a definite mottled appearance. Applying a sealer before covering further retards the curing.

Thus, the floor surface is protected, but it is now a matter of patience to allow enough time for the floor to cure. The installation contractor can do nothing to speed up the curing process.

- Note: Cement Terrazzo systems must cure for a minimum of seven (7) days prior to general construction from other trades working over top of the terrazzo floor. After the initial seven (7) day cure process, all heavy equipment being used over top of the Terrazzo floor (both during construction as well as once the building is in use) must be used over 3/4" thick plywood."

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