



NATIONAL TERRAZZO & MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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INITIAL APPEARANCE OF NEW CEMENT TERRAZZO FLOORS

There can be a significant difference in appearance between a new floor and one that has been given time to age.

Terrazzo traditionally improves with age. While a terrazzo floor may initially lack the outstanding aesthetics expected, generally the client can be assured that with the natural cure and the passing of time, the floor will soon manifest the beauty for which terrazzo is recognized.

With some terrazzo floors, the finished aspect of shading can vary especially darkened areas along divider strips or in corners. Substantial water is used in the composition of the terrazzo system as well as the curing, grinding, grouting, and polishing stages. The excess water will dissipate and escape through the finished surface.

To ensure a good cure, it is necessary to retard this moisture evaporation. Therefore, the terrazzo is sealed with a penetrating-type sealer. This further increases the system's curing time. The trapped moisture will migrate to the area adjacent to the strips where there is a break in the sealer, which causes some discoloration. It is also not unusual for this moisture to create efflorescence that may tarnish metal dividers. In some terrazzo colors, this efflorescence will appear as an even color when compared to the normal color of a completely cured and moisture-free installation.

This can be remedied by maintenance personnel using an 80 grit or finer 3-M type screen mesh pad under the scrubbing machine during their normal maintenance procedures.

The building must be climate controlled, and the floor thoroughly cured before this is effective. Curing time will vary depending upon temperature, humidity, and ground water conditions. The screen pad should not be used after the efflorescence, or the tarnish is removed.

Although the surface may appear dry, the entire terrazzo system contains a great amount of moisture that must dissipate to achieve a uniform color. Sometimes this moisture will wick laterally until it finds a point of least resistance at the divider strips, which has minute openings along the strip lines. Therefore, the terrazzo surface adjacent to the strips will often be a different color from the balance of the panel, which may also have a cloudy, mottled appearance.

Depending on job conditions, the moisture creating the non-uniform appearance will disappear within a 3-to-6-month period with normal maintenance.

There is no need for alarm when a mottled appearance is seen. This non-uniformity is a normal characteristic of the product and will correct itself. It is beyond the control of the terrazzo installer.

Over time, the aesthetics of your terrazzo floor will increase with normal maintenance.

Note: This does not apply to epoxy terrazzo systems

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