



NATIONAL TERRAZZO & MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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DISCOLORATION OF METAL DIVIDER STRIPS

Metal divider strips in various types and gauges have been used extensively in terrazzo floors for many years. Initially, the strips may tarnish or temporarily discolor.

This temporary discoloration is beyond the control of the terrazzo contractor because the problem is created by the water and cement combination used in the terrazzo installation.

A discoloration will often appear after the polishing and sealing operation has been completed and before the owner starts a maintenance program. The owner should not be alarmed, as this temporary condition has developed from the trapped moisture remaining in the system.

It is necessary to explain some details of installation to understand what is developing. The cement terrazzo system is made up of marble chips, Portland cement and water. A chemical reaction takes place that hardens these materials without absorbing all the water. A grinding, grouting and polishing procedure follow, all in the presence of water. This saturates the floor system with water.

Immediately after the final polishing, an application of the specified sealer is applied. The normal cure time of a terrazzo floor varies and is sometimes extended due to this sealing process.

The moisture used in the flooring system must dissipate during the cure period. With the sealer on the surface, the moisture moves laterally to the nearest divider strip to escape. This moisture can temporarily discolor the divider strips.

This discoloration will disappear with normal maintenance procedures, but to speed the process, we suggest that the owner's maintenance crew employ a screen mesh.

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