

Cleaning Raised Access Floor Panels

The Cavity

Whenever panels have been removed for access, the cavity should be checked for cleanliness. Vacuuming is the most appropriate method.

If a floor sealer has been employed previously, any cracking or flaking should be noted so that repair work can be scheduled.

At all times, utmost care should be taken, as there are likely to be live cables (415v) and expensive fibre optics in the floor void.

General Cleaning

Cleaning a bare steel encapsulated floor for a CAT A fit out is a relatively simple task. It must be remembered that this is not to be used as the final finish of the floor as it primarily manufactured specifically to accept tackified carpet or vinyl finishes.

Regular maintenance includes sweeping with a soft bristle broom or dusting with a dry (or very slightly moist) microfiber mop. As the floor has bevelled edges, vacuum with the beater bar turned off to remove dust from between the panel joints. **Do not** use water or liquids during the cleaning process. Spot cleaning may be required by hand to remove scuff marks or dirt, if using proprietary cleaning products you should ensure that they...

- Do not contain solvents
- They are Neutral PH (Neither Alkaline nor Acid based)

Vinyl Panels

Vinyl covering, which has been bonded to access floor panels, is likely to have static control properties. Do not impair these by using sealing compounds, polishes etc.

Do not in the first place allow the vinyl surface to become dirty or stained and discoloured. There are serious limitations on methods to be used for cleaning due to the nature of the services in the void.

Normal methods for the initial clean and long term maintenance of vinyl floor coverings are generally unsuited to raised floors simply because the surface is not water tight. **You cannot use a bucket and mop.**

- All surplus dust and debris should be removed by sweeping with a soft broom.
- The floor surface should be burnished with a rotary floor polishing machine. No polish or sealant is necessary and indeed should not be used because it could impair the antistatic characteristics of the vinyl.
- Depending on the condition of the floor to start with, a number of burnishing treatments will give the vinyl a clean and shining appearance. There are various grades of pad available for floor polishing machines and, dependent on the condition of the surface, the cleaning contractor should select whatever he considers most suitable for the initial burnishing and then the ongoing maintenance.
- In conjunction with the burnishing process, a detergent mist may be sparingly applied from a hand held bottle with a trigger to produce a fine spray.
- Under no circumstances should liquids be used on the floor in a way which would damage the adhesives used in panels or in quantities which could seep between panels and on to services (mostly electrical) in the cavity below.
- This limitation therefore precludes the use of mop and bucket methods of cleaning the floor, with or without detergent added to the water.
- If necessary panels must be lifted, one by one, and bench-cleaned by hand.
- The floor covering may become indented or lined by the wheels, castors or feet of static or moving objects. It is strongly recommended to protect against damage by overlaying the floor with a suitable sheet material when equipment is being manoeuvred.

Carpet Panels

This instruction relates to needlepunch carpet.

Barrier Matting

Soil within the carpet will abrade the carpet fibres and accelerate the ageing process. Over 80% of carpet soiling is applied directly to the floor via foot traffic.

The long-term appearance of any installation will therefore be substantially improved by the use of an effective barrier system at the exterior entrances. In order that these barriers remain effective in removing soil, it is essential that they be regularly cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers instructions relative to traffic density.

Pattern Staining

Where a differential pressure exists between the floor cavity and the room there is a danger of "edge staining" because the floor can seldom be 100% airtight.

The risk of discoloration at panel edges will be reduced by ensuring that the cavity and the room are kept as clean as possible. Circulating air must be filtered effectively.

Routine Maintenance

DO NOT WASH OR WET THE CARPET

Vacuum the carpet frequently, daily if possible, preferably with a machine that has a separate power driven brush head and an airflow of at least 38 litres per second. Needle-punch carpet, by virtue of its extra-dense construction will tend to hold soil more tenaciously than pile carpet and so the vacuum cleaner must be effective to extract the dust.

Spot, Stain Removal or Spillage

Deal with the problem quickly. The sooner it is tackled, the easier and more effective the cleaning will be.

Blot up excess liquid with absorbent material and scrape up solids with a flat tool such as a blade or spatula.

Make sure that you have the correct cleaning substance for the type of stain and one which will not "bleach" the colour out of the cloth. Do not spread stains. Work carefully from the edges to the centre. Always dry off as quickly as possible to prevent dust and dirt settling on the damp area.

Periodic Cleaning

It may become necessary to clean the complete carpet in which case a "dry powder" method is recommended. This involves the application of a proprietary compound brushed into the carpet and vacuumed off. A specialist contractor normally carries out such intermittent cleaning.

Shampooing and hot water/steam cleaning are not recommended on account of the amount of moisture involved.

Loose Lay Carpet Tiles

Loose lay carpet tiles should not be wet-shampooed unless the application is able to remove all the moisture, which is used in the process. Residual moisture will eventually migrate into the panels and potentially result in swelling, delamination and corrosion.