



## GUIDE TO THE PROPER MAINTENANCE OF TERRAZZO

(Follow the instructions to keep your terrazzo floor clean and long lasting)

(These are minimum maintenance suggestions)

**CAUTION:** Before deviation from the instructions, contact your local terrazzo contractor for advice. ALWAYS KEEP RINSE WATER, MOPS & PAILS CLEAN!

**DAILY:** SWEEP USING YARN-WICK BRUSH TREATED WITH SWEEPING COMPOUND. Hand work stubborn stains and scuff marks with neutral cleaner diluted in warm water.

**WEEKLY:** LIGHTLY, WITH A DAMP MOP, MOP SOILED FLOORS WITH NEUTRAL CLEANER. Heavily soiled floors should be scrubbed with a mechanical buffing machine and neutral cleaner. Mop up residue with clean water before it dries. Allow to dry and buff with a dry brush.

**NOTE:** ALLOW YOUR NEUTRAL CLEANER, ONCE APPLIED TO THE TERRAZZO SURFACE, TIME TO REACT. IT IS DESIGNED TO LOOSEN FOREIGN MATTER. SEVERAL MINUTES SHOULD BE ADEQUATE, BUT DO NOT ALLOW SOLUTION TO DRY ON THE SURFACE.

**SEMI-ANNUALLY:** 1) Strip all old sealer and any finish coats. 2) Reseal clean floor.

**WARNING!!**  
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ANY SEALER OR  
DRESSING BE LISTED BY UNDERWRITERS  
LABORATORIES FOR SLIP RESISTANCE.

The preceding maintenance suggestions have proven over time to provide the owner with the lowest maintenance cost of any floor system.

SOME OPTIONS TO THE ABOVE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Apply high luster finishes on top of the sealer to the desired sheen. These normally require the added expense of spray buffing to maintain the sheen. Terrazzo, unlike other floors, does not require this for wear protection.



There is another process that would produce a sheen without the application of sealers. As you clean your floors with the neutral cleaner / water solution, your final mop picks up the majority of this cleaner, but still some remains on the surface. After several such procedures, the residue of cleaner will become buffable and result in a sheen with buffing after each washing. This method of achieving a sheen never requires the stripping action, thus, reducing your maintenance costs. This is not recommended in areas exposed to staining materials.

As of late, some owners have been testing new technologies from the marble and granite industries to produce super high gloss finishes without day-to-day recoating. These include diamond pads for mechanical honing and polishing as well as crystallization/vitrification products. As of this time this Association does not know the long-term maintenance cost of these systems.

**NOTE: IN THE EVENT THAT YOUR FLOOR BECOMES HEAVILY SOILED, CONSULT WITH YOUR LOCAL TERRAZZO CONTRACTOR OR THIS ASSOCIATION FOR DIRECTIONS BEFORE USING ANY MIRACLE CLEANER SUGGESTED BY SOMEONE NOT FAMILIAR WITH TERRAZZO. IGNORING THIS WARNING COULD PROVE HARMFUL TO YOUR FLOOR SURFACE.**

## **DO'S AND DON'TS FOR TERRAZZO FLOOR CARE**

**HELPFUL TIPS FOR TERRAZZO MAINTENANCE:** Your terrazzo has been ground and polished and sealed with a penetrating terrazzo sealer. This protects your surface from immediate stains, but no spillage should be ignored and allowed to soak and dry into the floor. Good housekeeping procedures require that your floor remains clean.

### **DO'S**

1. **DO** ask your installing terrazzo contractor to recommend the proper neutral cleaner and sealers to be used on your floor.
2. **DO** dust mop your floors daily, this not only picks up the dust, but also the grit tracked into your building. The grit acts as an abrasive on your hard surface floor.
3. **DO** scrub your floors a minimum of twice a week, where a new terrazzo floor has been installed for the initial two to three months, as the construction dust is still in the air, and will eventually be deposited on your floor. After this period, once per week, depending on the amount of foot traffic, keep your floor clean in appearance. Always rinse your floors well to prevent a build up of cleaner residue that could become slippery.



4. **DO** seal your floors with a water-based acrylic sealer in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions. Normally, a new floor requires two or more coats, which provide a good sheen for a period of 45 to 60 days, before needing additional coats. Underwriters Laboratories should classify sealer, as slip resistant with a rating of minimum 0.5.
5. **DO** use maintenance products designed for terrazzo.
6. **DO** allow your neutral cleaner, once applied to the terrazzo surface, time to react as designed to loosen foreign matter. Several minutes should be adequate, but **DO NOT** allow solution to dry on the surface.

### **DON'TS**

1. **DON'T** use purely surface waxes, or all-purpose sealers. Employment of such can result in slippery surfaces.
2. **DON'T** use all-purpose cleaners containing water-soluble inorganic or crystallizing salts, harmful alkali or acids. Use of such products could prove harmful to your terrazzo floor.
3. **DON'T** use cheap cleaners or sealers since the majority of your maintenance costs is labor.
4. **DON'T** try miracle cleaners or sealers on your floor without getting an opinion on such products from your terrazzo contractor of this association.

### **NEW TERRAZZO FLOORS**

(Technical bulletin #18 (Revised 4-96))

This bulletin addresses the most frequent questions that we hear: "Why doesn't my new cement terrazzo floor have the sheen and luster of my neighbor's?" "Mine looks blotchy and dull!" There will be a significant difference in appearance between a new floor and one that has time to age. Chances are, the aged floor gave the same experience when it was installed. Terrazzo, like fine wine, gets better with age. While your terrazzo floor may lack the beauty you expect initially with natural cure and the passing of time, your floor will have the luster and beauty that terrazzo is know for. To further explain why this occurs, we offer the following information.



Moisture is added to the terrazzo products in the composition, curing, grinding, grouting and polishing stages. Structurally, with this much moisture, you can be assured of quality installation. You can also expect the water to dissipate and escape through the finished surface. It is necessary to regulate the moisture evaporation. Therefore, the terrazzo must be sealed with a penetrating type sealer. This further increases the time that it takes for the system to cure. This trapped moisture will migrate to the area adjacent to the strips, causing this to be darker until it is completely cured. It is not unusual, for this moisture to create efflorescence and/or tarnish metal dividers. Maintenance personnel using an 80 grit or finer 3-M type screen mesh pad under the scrubbing machine during normal maintenance procedures can remedy this. The building must first be climate controlled and the floor thoroughly cured before this will be effective. The curing time will vary depending upon temperature, humidity and ground water conditions. After the tarnish is removed, the screen pad should not be used. Each passing day, with normal maintenance, the aesthetics of your terrazzo floor will increase. Obviously, this requires your patience, but rest assured that the results will be rewarding.

**NOTE:** This document is copied directly from The National Terrazzo & Mosaic Association, Inc. literature.