



We respectfully request that this information be **Required Reading** for Homeowners, Business owners, Builders and Subcontractor for the concrete slabs we are asked to stain.

Concrete Stained Floor Requirements

1. The finished outcome of a concrete stained floor or concrete overlay floor is directly the result of the care and responsibility taken by the builder and subcontractor that work on the slab before the arrival of the concrete staining crews. As our crews cannot be onsite to ensure the care of the concrete floor it should be covered during the entire construction process.

We recommend that the slab not be covered with plastic after the pour is made as this will leave some very interesting marks in the slab that are not very appealing (or maybe they are). Masonite or plywood can be used until the slab is “dried in” and then two layers of roofing (heavy gauge rosin paper) paper can be used for the duration of the construction process provided that the subcontractors are all informed not to spill adhesives, paints, solvents, oils, varnishes or stains on the slab. Ha-Ha, what a joke cover the floor thoroughly, nobody cares about your floor except you, trust me.

- A. If this is new construction here are the instructions for the concrete to be poured:
 1. A quality batch of concrete should consist of at least a 5 sack mix with no fly ash, retarders or chloride accelerators. The slab should be lightly power troweled to give a slick finish without creating too many “burns” in the concrete surface. This will give you a beautiful look and at the same time ensure that the concrete is readily stainable. The concrete should be wet cured using curing blankets for at least 7 days while keeping the concrete at all times wet during those 7 days. **ABSOLUTELY NO CURING COMPOUNDS ARE TO BE USED!** The use of curing compounds will result in a slab that is either impossible or very difficult to stain and will be a very large additional cost to remove.

The paper should be taped together and the **tape should not be applied to the concrete floor for any reason. This will act as a barrier (stain resist) to the stain when applied.** The mistaken spilling of the contaminants will just add to the cost of the staining process because these are very hard if not impossible to remove and are not very attractive if exposed during the staining process.

The concrete floors are to be clean swept and removed of all building materials, furniture, equipment, and fixtures and the paper covering the floor. Our fees do not include the removal of these items and fees will be assessed for us to remove them. Sorry our insurance does not cover these items.

2. If the above listed procedures are not adhered to the stains, chips in the concrete floor and imperfections will all be readily apparent but fear not sometimes but not always these all add character to the slab and of course we are after an aged mottled “old world” look so this may just add to the character.
3. That being said the Owners, Builders, and subcontractors are solely responsible for the condition of the concrete floor prior to our crews commencing work. No liability is accepted or implied on our part for the condition of the floor. We insist that all parties listed above take responsibility for the floor prior to our arrival. A copy of these instructions should be given to the GC and all the subs and make them sign off on having received them. That way when you back charge them for possible additional charges from us or other contractors they can't say “We didn't know”.
4. We use extended release tapes and plastics to mask the baseboards and the walls. **We do not however accept responsibility for paint peel off during the removal of the plastic and tape at the end of the process. Staining is an extremely wet process and as such water and stained water can make their way under tape and onto baseboards and trim.** Builder's grade paint is very often what we would consider below grade and often does not stand up to these conditions.
5. Anything that will not allow the stain to come in contact with the concrete surface is what we refer to as a “resist”. All glues, adhesives, pipe dope, sealers including curing agents etc. fall into this category. For instance your painter has taped his plastic or drop cloth to the floor and when pulls up the tape it leaves behind an adhesive residue, **Yes I am repeating myself** it is that important. This will cause the stain to show the tape spot on the floor and take the stain differently in that area.
6. If your plumber puts in a sprinkler system or regular plumbing and drips pipe dope on the floor you will see those spots as well. If the painter doesn't cover the floor well and the overspray of the paint gets on the floor it may show as well even though it appears all the paint has been removed.

If you are going to cover your floors with paper make sure to use at least builder's grade paper and at best rosin paper that can be found in the roofing dept. Tape the paper to itself and **DO NOT TAPE IT TO THE FLOOR (repeating again)**. Overlap the paper approximately 4 inches and that should give you good coverage. Most large rolls of paper come with about 432 sq. ft. of coverage with overlap you can figure around 350-375 sq. ft. coverage per roll. I would also recommend you place cardboard or Masonite on top of the paper. Do not use plastic as this will not let the concrete “breathe”.

If you want a beautiful concrete floor this is a small expense to consider when you live with these beautiful floors for at least a few years. Take the time to do this step and it will pay dividends beyond the small amount of time and money it takes to do it.

7. Heavy furniture can scratch the surface especially if you might have nails where your pads might have previously been located on the bottom of the legs so be sure to check. We recommend felt pads, magic movers or similar items which are durable and relatively inexpensive.

8. Your concrete stained floor needs to be vacuumed or dust mopped periodically and an occasional damp mop using a neutral cleaner which can be purchased at Home Depot. That is all that is required to maintain your floor. You will need to apply a floor finish 1-2 times a year which will take 15 minutes and 30 minutes to dry. Compare that to 4-6 times a year to clean your carpet. A Swiffer works great!
9. The staining process requires running water, preferably an outside faucet and two 110 volt outlets. The electrical outlets need to be within 200 ft. of the furthest point of the slab where we will be staining.
10. Our prices are based the actual square footage of the building. Just as an architect, designer or appraiser would measure, wall to wall, that is how we measure. Why do we measure this way, in short we have to tape off all the walls within that area and that is a lot of extra work.
11. Our prices do not include excessive cleaning of the concrete floor, protective covering of the slab upon completion, post construction cleaning or any other service not listed on our Estimate/Proposal. We do everything in our power to create beautiful and cost-effective floors and a little assistance from yourself and the GC goes a long way.
12. We fully expect to have to do a little touch-up here and there. We will schedule that upon completion. There is no charge for minor touchups but there will be a charge if there are areas that we have to totally redo due to abuse from other contractors.
13. For floors that have been completed in an overlay all of the above conditions apply. In addition an extra day or two should be given before heavy traffic is allowed on the floor.
14. Scheduling is critical to our performance and the outcome of your project. Please contact us 3-4 weeks in advance in the fall and winter and 5-6 weeks in advance during the spring and summer. We want to make sure that we have enough time to give your project the attention it deserves so we ask to be notified well in advance of your project.

We realize that project scheduling changes as projects changes, especially with commercial projects, we just want to be kept in the loop so we can make sure we have an adequate amount of time to complete your project as well as our other clients.

15. After completion and inspection of the concrete stained floor it is the responsibility of the homeowner, business owner, general contractor and/or builder to protect the stained concrete or concrete overlay floor.
16. Concrete acid stains and pigmented stains react chemically with the free lime in the concrete or overlay. Concrete acid stain color charts will show what the typical concrete slab or concrete overlay will render but due to the differences in concrete slabs from company to company and area of the country, concrete slab colors may vary. This is why it is best to do a sample on the concrete slab itself.

It is a little different with a concrete overlay. You first of all with get a more consistent color and this color will be more vivid and in most cases more dramatic. This is because the mix is

consistent and we are using white Portland cement in the mix as opposed to grey Portland cement in normal concrete.

17. These are a few contractor mistakes that we cannot remedy in most cases so be sure to make all of your contractors are aware of these conditions.

- Contractors normally use Sharpies or Marks-a-Lot permanent ink markers – These are an ABSOLUTE NO-NO!!!
- Electricians normally use spray paint to mark areas where outlets will go-this paint does not come easily or sometimes at all
- Sheetrock and drywall contractor are notorious for making the biggest mess and for some unknown reason they expect everyone else to clean up after them-WE WON'T so get them to cover your floors
- Painters are kind of like drywallers they spray their paint pretty much wherever they want and when they roll they're not much better, you need to tell them to cover the floor or they won't. If they are spraying the cabinets with urethane or varnish it will get on the floor also – Again ask them to cover up the floor.
- Carpenters like to use red caulk for their caulk lines- ask them to use orange
- Plumbers that are installing sprinkler system in commercial spaces will use oil to cut the pipes and when they install them they drip that oily water on the concrete which will leave a stain, they'll tell you it won't but trust me it will. Also the pipe solvent they use is clear and won't show until the floor is stained and then there is nothing that can be done about it.
- Concrete contractors use curing agents on the concrete to hold in moisture during the hydration process(curing process) these curing agents block the stain's penetration into the concrete- WET CURE THE CONCRETE - DO NOT USE CURING AGENTS

18. **Remodeling Projects-** Many folks want to rip up their carpets and tile and linoleum and think they can just stain the concrete-It's just not that easy. Under your carpet, tile or what ever are a bunch of potential problems that just might not let you stain the concrete. This is sometimes when an overlay might be the answer to the question.

A. Carpet or Tile- When removing you can be face with two possible problems

1. Tacks strips are sometimes used to hold down your carpet in this case when you pull up the tack strip you will create holes in the concrete because the tack strips are nailed into the concrete and they always pull up a little concrete when you rip them out.
2. Carpet adhesive may have been used on the floor for your carpet or the padding or indoor-outdoor carpet which was very popular in the past. In the case of concrete staining all of this material will need to be removed. We manufacture a carpet adhesive remover called Glu-B-Gone which works extremely well for this situation. A razor scraper in 4" or 8" will come in handy for this situation.
Even in the case of great adhesive removal you may be left with a bit of residue in the pores of the concrete. This may not be visible until you stain the concrete floors. You just need to be aware of this condition when you make your decision between stained concrete floors and stained concrete overlays.

3. VCT tile glue can be dealt with in the manner described above for carpet adhesive removal. You may need to use a different adhesive remover such as Twin-Chemicals Stick-M-Up water based adhesive remover.
4. Porcelain or ceramic tile is a whole different ball game. When you remove the tile you are left with the grid marks of the tile where it has stained the concrete. In other words the grout for the tile has allowed all the materials that stained it through to the concrete. You are left with a surface that can be “stained” but you will see the grid on the concrete. There are specific faux techniques to take your eye away from the grid, but the marks will remain. To date we have never found any cleaning agent that would completely remove the grid. Our Dyna Blue (mild acidic detergent) can sometimes remove up to 75% of the grid but not always.

In this case a concrete overlay is a great alternative to concrete staining. You can create any look you want and contrary to what many “concrete stainers” say overlays can be troweled just as smooth as concrete and will allow for the “aged marble effect” you may be looking for. You can even get a textured concrete floor with an overlay which you cannot do with concrete.

5. Older Concrete Floors- Many warehouses that have been converted to lofts and many old residences have concrete that is 30-40-50 years and older. The concrete may have lost a lot of the free lime from the surface (which is what the metal salts in the stain react with) and may not be a good candidate for concrete floor staining.

While tests can be done on the concrete to determine the viability of staining for that surface many times an overlay can be used in this situation. If you are bound and determined to stain the concrete you have there are products such as Scofield’s “Enhancer” which can add some of the ingredients necessary to stain back into the concrete. This can work on some concrete slabs but not all.

6. Paint Overspray- While this is definitely a project stopper in the case of a stained concrete floor, the project can be saved when using an overlay. You will of course need to remove all the paint and we will use a liquid polymer on the concrete to ensure adhesion.
7. Exteriors- Concrete that has been poured at different times can render different hues of stain color even when sprayed at the same times. This is because concrete coming from different companies has different ingredients such as the amount of fly ash dissimilar brands of Portland cement and so forth. You can even have different ingredients coming from the same company at different times of the year.

We hope this “Required Reading” has given you some insights into the possibilities and even some of the limitations of concrete floor staining and the advantages of concrete overlay when concrete staining

is not the right fit. Yes I do realize that I have repeated myself about several things within this document, they are that important to the success of your project.

You can still have your stained floors in the case of concrete overlays but there are several surprising things you will find with concrete overlay floors; the floors are warmer on your feet than tile, you will get brighter and more vivid colors with the overlay, you can have textured floors which resemble stone or marble, are much less expensive and require a heck of a lot less maintenance than real marble.

If you have any further questions email us at condes@bellsouth.net or call us at 770-485-2570.

Thanks for your time and we look forward to assisting you with your uniquely artistic concrete flooring solution.

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