

Commercial Floor Maintenance Guide

How to care for the installed system

By **Henry Hunt**, Partner, Topcoat Services USA · For owners, facility managers, contractors and specifiers



Class 3 polished concrete in service, L.L. Bean Outlet, Framingham, MA.

A good floor can be ruined by a bad cleaning program. We've seen polished concrete etched dull by an acidic cleaner and epoxy scratched up by the wrong scrubber pad, both inside the first year. The fix is usually cheap: the right chemical, used the way the manufacturer says, the right pad, and a schedule the cleaning crew actually follows.

1 The basics for every floor

Grit is the enemy. Sand and dirt act like sandpaper under foot traffic and wheels. Dust mop or sweep regularly, daily in most commercial spaces.

Use walk-off mats at entrances to catch grit before it reaches the floor. In New England, winter salt and sand make this especially important.

Clean spills fast, especially oils, acids, sugars and anything colored.

Use approved cleaners the approved way. Follow the floor manufacturer's list, dilution, contact time, equipment and rinsing instructions. A neutral pH cleaner is a common default, not a universal one.

Match the pad or brush to the floor. The manufacturer's guidance sets this. Aggressive stripping pads don't belong on a finished resinous or polished floor.

Protect it during moves. Don't drag pallets, equipment or furniture. Steel wheels and dragged loads gouge floors.

Write it down

Cleaning crews turn over. Put the care instructions, approved chemicals with dilutions, and pad types in writing and give them to whoever cleans the floor, in-house or contracted.

2 Resinous epoxy

Typical daily care is a dust mop, then an auto-scrub with an approved cleaner and the pad or brush the manufacturer recommends. On textured or broadcast floors, brush heads often reach into the texture better than flat pads.

The topcoat is the wear layer. In high-traffic lanes it will eventually dull and thin. Renewing the topcoat before it wears through to the body coats is far cheaper than repairing the floor underneath. Timing depends on the product, traffic and inspection.

Avoid: wax and floor finish unless the manufacturer specifies it, solvents not listed as compatible, and aggressive pads. Check the manufacturer's chemical resistance chart for anything beyond the approved cleaners.



Flake broadcast with a polyaspartic topcoat.

3 Urethane cement

Urethane cement systems come in different builds and finishes: smooth self-leveling, broadcast slurry, troweled mortar, with or without a separate topcoat. Not every system has a renewable topcoat. Ask your installer exactly which system you have.

Many are designed for washdown environments, so the main job is getting them clean. Hot water and sanitation chemicals should stay within that system's published temperature limits and chemical resistance, at the stated dilution and contact time, followed by rinsing where required.

Textured surfaces need scrubbing with brushes, not just a rinse, to keep soil from building up in the texture. Squeegee water to the drains instead of letting it stand.

Inspect cove base and drain transitions regularly. A small chip at the edge lets water get underneath, and that is how a small repair turns into a big one.

4 Polished concrete

Typical daily care is a dust mop, then an auto-scrub with a cleaner approved for the installed treatments. Some manufacturers recommend specific maintenance pads, and PROSOCO's LSKlean data sheet, for example, cautions against aggressive brushes or pads on polished concrete and calls for the mildest effective dilution.

Polished concrete isn't acid-proof. Acidic cleaners, vinegar, citrus-based products and some sanitizers can etch it. Guards and sealers slow staining but don't prevent it. Wipe spills quickly.

Two treatments do different jobs. The **densifier** reacts inside the concrete to harden the surface and is applied during the polishing process. Whether it ever needs reapplying depends on the product and the floor's condition. The **guard or sealer** is the stain-resistance and sheen layer, and it is the part that wears. Reapplying a guard, or any densifier, should follow the installed products' instructions and an inspection of actual wear, not a fixed calendar.

Burnishing can restore sheen in traffic lanes where the installed guard calls for it, using the pad and speed the product specifies. Don't strip, wax or apply a topical finish unless that was part of the design. A worn or damaged floor can usually be re-polished without starting over.

5 A starting maintenance schedule

Use this as a starting point. Traffic, soil and the installed products' instructions set the actual schedule.

	Epoxy	Urethane cement	Polished concrete
Daily	Dust mop; auto-scrub with approved cleaner and pad	Clean per sanitation program within the system's limits; scrub texture	Dust mop; auto-scrub with approved cleaner
Weekly	Deep scrub high-traffic areas	Inspect drains, cove and edges	Deep scrub with approved pads
Periodically, by inspection	Check topcoat wear; renew where worn	Repair chips and edges; refresh topcoat if the system has one	Burnish if the guard calls for it; reapply guard where worn, per product
As needed	Spot repair gouges and impact damage	Repair damage promptly	Re-polish worn or damaged areas

6 What shortens a floor's life

Most early wear we see comes from a few habits: cleaning chemicals nobody checked, the wrong pads on a finished floor, dragged equipment, ignored damage, standing water, and skipping topcoat or guard renewal until the floor is past saving. Several of these can also void a manufacturer warranty, so read the care section before the floor goes into service.

The cheapest maintenance is the kind that happens before the floor needs repair.

7 Hand this to your cleaning team

1. Which system is installed, and where, including any guard or topcoat.
2. Approved cleaners, by name, with dilution, contact time and rinse instructions.
3. Pad or brush types for each floor, and which ones never to use.
4. Temperature limits for hot water on washdown floors.
5. Daily and weekly routine.
6. Who to call when there's damage, a stain that won't come out, or a question.

Maintenance requirements vary by product. Follow the installing contractor's care instructions and each manufacturer's published maintenance and chemical resistance guidance.

About the author. Henry Hunt is a partner at Topcoat Services USA, a family-owned, veteran-owned commercial flooring contractor in Hyannis, Massachusetts, working across Cape Cod and New England. Topcoat self-performs resinous epoxy, urethane cement and polished concrete with its own crews and equipment. We provide written care instructions at handover, and we're glad to walk your cleaning team through them.

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