

# CHAPTER 4

## RECOATING A PREVIOUSLY FINISHED FLOOR

### PART 1 – GENERAL RECOATING GUIDELINES

**SAFETY NOTE: ALWAYS WEAR NIOSH-APPROVED RESPIRATORY PROTECTION. WHEN APPLYING RECOAT AND FINISH PRODUCTS, FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATION IN THE MSDS SHEET PROVIDED BY THE FINISH MANUFACTURER.**

**NOTE: When abrading a previously finished floor, ascertain whether the floor finish contains lead. Floor finishes applied before 1978 may contain lead. Test kits are available to determine the presence of lead in floor finishes and other architectural coatings. Abide by local, state and federal guidelines for handling and disposal of lead-based products. For more information, visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).**

- A. If the floor has visible dents, wear patterns or permanent cupping, recoating is not a viable solution, and it will be necessary to fully sand the floor to restore the finish. See Chapters 2 & 3.
- B. Finish adhesion is affected by surface contaminants, i.e. wax, grease and many other maintenance products. One brand or type of finish may not be compatible with another. Always test in several areas in accordance with finish manufacturer's recommendations to be sure the finish will adhere and dry properly. If the floor has been waxed, NWFA guidelines suggest rewaxing the floor whenever possible, rather than resanding
- C. There are several methods to test for wax. One is to use a small amount of mineral spirits on a clean, white rag in an area that has not been exposed to high traffic. If a slight yellow or brown color appears on the rag, paste wax is probably present. Another method involves taking a piece of screen or sandpaper and lightly abrading the floor. If residue balls up, it is a paraffin-based product. Yet another test involves putting two drops of water on the floor. If white spots appear after about 10 minutes, the finish is probably wax.
  - 1. **NOTE: Closets may not be the best test area because wax, maintenance and other finishes are used on the main body of the floor, but usually not in closets.**
  - 2. **NOTE: TESTING IN ONE AREA DOES NOT GUARANTEE ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE. ADVISE THE CLIENT OF THIS BEFORE PROCEEDING.**
- D. Factory-finished floors that include a high-abrasion finish may need to be pretreated with an approved chemical etching solution, as recommended by the finish manufacturer.
- E. There are two basic recoat methods: a screen and recoat and a chemical etching and recoat system. A screen and recoat involves lightly abrading the top surface of the finish with a screen or a pad and abrasive strip, then applying another topcoat. In a chemical etching and recoat system, the existing surface is chemically etched, then recoated. No

sanding or screening is performed. When using the chemical etching and recoat system, use a chemical etching solution approved by the finish manufacturer.

### **Part II - Screen and Recoat Method**

- A. Clean the floor in accordance with the finish manufacturer's recommendations.
- B. Lightly abrade the old finish according to finish manufacturer recommendation. (See Appendix E)
- C. Vacuum and tack floor with proper solvent, dependent on finish, and allow to dry thoroughly. (See Appendix E)
- D. Apply surface finish according to manufacturer's recommended cover rate using manufacturer's recommended applicator and procedure. See Appendix A, Applicator Recommendations.

### **Part III - Chemical Etching and Recoat System**

- A. Clean and pretreat the floor according to the finish manufacturer's recommendations.
- B. Follow manufacturer's instructions for applying the chemical etching agent.
- C. Apply surface finish according to manufacturer's recommended cover rate using manufacturer's recommended applicator and procedure. See Appendix A, Applicator Recommendations.

### **Part IV - Preventive Maintenance**

- A. Most surface finished floors can be walked on after 24-48 hours. Do not slide furniture on the floor. Lift it into place after 48 hours or as recommended by the finish manufacturer. Area rugs can be put down after the finish is fully cured, generally after 7 to 30 days, or as recommended by the finish manufacturer.
- B. Provide customers with information on proper maintenance practices to protect floor finishes. Furniture or rugs placed too soon may result in finish or surface damage. Some area rugs and padding may damage or discolor the finish. This type of damage as well as color change due to aging and UV sunlight is not the responsibility of the flooring contractor. In addition, soft plastic or fabric-faced floor protectors should be placed under the legs of furniture to prevent scuffing and scratching. To prevent scratching, walk-off mats both inside and outside doorways will help prevent grit, dirt and other debris from being tracked onto wood floors. For more information, see Wood Floor Maintenance, Appendix J.