



Joe Nazzaro
joenazzaro@aol.com
(817) 994-1953



Skate Floor Rx

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR A ROLLER SKATE FLOOR

A skate floor, owing to its use and size, sustains unique stresses for its lifetime under constant changes in humidity in and outside the building. It is also tolerating rumbling street traffic and powerful sound systems as well as the weight of a skating crowd operating like a steam-roller compressing it to the consistency of concrete, "*work-hardening*" the surface. These stresses cause expansion or contraction of the floor. Understanding this, and potential extremes of these stresses aid daily cleaning and maintenance programs within a rink.

EFFECTIVE PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Scheduled, disciplined, preventative maintenance is an expression of the pride we take in the work of preserving or extending the life our skate floors and the coatings that are applied them. Clearly, the economies are in favor of maintenance and repairs over replacement. Troubles on skate floors are often traced to accidental or sustained use of contaminating agents, chemicals or cleaners also covered below.

1 – INTAKE

Dirt can only enter a rink through its front door on the soles of the customer's shoes. Remove this soil before it enters the building with a three-part ENTRY MATTING SYSTEM outside or inside the front door. The runner offers a *Scraping* section to pick at the shoe treads (especially effective in snow or gravel parking lots), a *Wiper Mat* removing the loosened dirt and a *Cleaning Mat* wiping away finer particles. This is the first defense against dirt finding the skate floor.

2 – DEEP BREATH

Dust! So much dust in the rink! The dust in a rink is from the lint flowing from the clothing of the skaters traveling around the skate floor. Skating is running all their clothing in a low cycle clothes dryer. But the rink doesn't have a lint trap - other than the AC filters. The use of a 5 or 6 foot wide microfiber drag mop prior to the next session will pick up the lint before the next group of skaters kicks it up again. Discard the cotton fiber drag mops. Use only microfiber. Never spray or treat the dust mop – it's a sure way to end up with a slippery floor.

3 – BURP THE BUILDING

Moisture is an activating medium and can be unhealthy in a rink. 150 persons skating for 2 hours, produce 45 gallons of sweat and respiration released into the enclosed atmosphere. These gallons are being distributed onto countertops, into carpeting, across the skate floor and clinging to the walls on a cold night. The water vapor has also entered the filters and ductwork of the ventilation system pairing with the lint. On continue ventilating the rink for several after closing to avoid unhealthy mold and mildew accumulations caused by condensation forming throughout the building. Investigate the usefulness of a dehumidifier in this climate.

4 – RINSE AND SPIT

Clear water cleans skate floor coatings extremely well. *Non-residue cleaners* boost water's ability to remove surface oils. Coated skate floors are best cleaned with the aid of an automatic scrubber. It spreads water onto forward rotating pads while a rear vacuum system pulls the dirty water into a reservoir. Those who own and operate an “automatic,” often clean their

floors twice a week. Soft bristle brushes with warm water and diluted non-residue cleaners are recommended.

5 – CLEAN AND PREP

Towel Tacking the floor has become a standard floor cleaning procedure in many rinks. It should not replace frequent scrubbing. It is often used in tandem with an automatic scrubber, wiping what it leaves behind. Soak a large terrycloth towel in clear water. Wring out the towel of excess water. Using a 24" or 36" push broom or squeegee, push the towel across the width of the floor. Turn the towel over. Push it back to the other side overlapping a little. Wring out and repeat. Diluted non-residue cleaners can be added to the water with this method. Be prepared to change the water frequently.

6 –SYMPTOM CHECKER

The surest way to shorten the life of a skate floor and pack dirt onto rental wheels is to clean carpets with anything other than a *Warm, Clear Water Extraction Method using*. When wheels begin showing dirt, it is usually being drawn from the carpet. Clear Warm Water Extraction is the safest method to remove those snack-bar cast-offs. Wet or dry carpet cleaners often mix with the sugars trapped in the carpet filaments attracting dirt.

7– WARTS AND MOLES

Black marks on floors are usually "burned in tar" in rear brakes and toe stops. Removal may require the use of flammable substances such as Xylene or Acetone. Test such chemicals to determine their effect on floor coatings, be careful disposing of cleaning rags and storing the chemicals. Be wary of paint thinners, mineral spirits and citrus cleaners (below). Some success is claimed in the field using a tennis ball on the end of a broom handle like a pencil eraser. It's worth a try.

8 – CODE GREEN

Kids are unpredictable. Stuff happens. Upset stomachs and anxious bladders sometimes express themselves on the floor. It is a good practice to create a "Spills Cart" to handle skate-floor-only clean-ups. First, never use a janitor's "String Mop" on your skate floor to clean spills. String mops do not LIFT the fluids from the floor - they spread them. Wearing disposable gloves, remove the material with paper towels, and using a household non-residue product, such as "Fantastic," spray the cleaner and "tack" the floor with paper towels until the last trace is gone.

9 – CITRUS SIDE EFFECTS

Citrus cleaners have a very high natural oil content. Those with too high in concentration can leave an oily or hazy film on floor coatings. High citrus oil

concentrates redeposit oils as they evaporate. “Spot degreasers” often keep dissolved oils on surfaces. Over-concentration or under-diluting according to label is another source of troubles. Poor pickup - letting the cleaner sit or dry on the floor allows grime and oils to reattach to the coating. There are some citrus cleaners claiming to leave no deposits and dry without residue. They are in the minority on store shelves.

10 – MINERAL SPIRITS' SIDE EFFECTS

Mineral spirits can contain everything from recycled lubricants, citrus oils and animal and vegetable “stuff.” The solvent components of the mineral spirits may not dry out as quickly as they once did. Mineral spirits, if used for cleaning purposes, will always leave an oily residue that will have to be removed or will lead to slippery floor conditions and dirt build-up on skate wheels.

11 – DETERGENT ADDICTION

Urethane skate wheels will move contaminants quickly around any skating center. Detergents leave oily films on all floor surfaces. Unless the label states, “non-residue” or “Zero pH” floor cleaners, these should not be used. Often overlooked, the contents of regularly used floor cleaning products elsewhere in the rink such as the bathroom and snack bar floors, should be reviewed for their non-residue status.

12 – VINEGAR BENIGN IN MODERATION

White vinegar is called an “acetic acid.” It has cleaning applications. However, there are circumstances in which vinegar will not clean a skate floor and should not be used until certain other maintenance procedures are brought in line. Mopping with a vinegar mix merely changes the pH and moistens a dirt film, softening it. As the practice of using vinegar continues without aggressive scrubbing, the dirt film becomes more uniform on a floor losing its gloss and grip. If vinegar is to be used as a cleaner, a disciplined combination of frequent cleaning with an automatic scrubber as well as terry cloth towel tacking can have the desired results. However, commercial non-residue cleaners are, of themselves, better removing at surface oils and dirt.

13 – ADD A FLOOR STETHASCOPE TO THE MEDICAL BAG

A moisture meter is to your skate floor what a stethoscope is to your heart. When moisture is known or suspected, a moisture meter calibrated for wood or concrete can solve moisture problems as they are discovered. GET ONE!

14 - CELEBRATE A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH

Disciplined daily efforts to keeping the building as well as its staff and customer's healthy is a source of pride among those who participate in it. It is good business to promote the work the staff completes on behalf of the company and community served. And, seriously - post it somewhere.