

Choosing The Best Floor System for The Project

Steps you can take to ensure your client is choosing a floor system that will last for years.

NPI

National Polymers Inc.

Whether you are selling a product for install by a do-it-yourselfer or you are installing the system for your customer, you want to make sure the chosen floor system is right for the environment. After all it's **YOUR NAME** on the can and your reputation on the line. Choosing the wrong system could mean the floor will fail sooner than expected, leading to an unhappy client and other costs associated with fixing the floor.

With so many epoxy floor systems available, it is often difficult for someone unfamiliar with the industry to choose the right products. There are many factors to consider when selecting a resinous epoxy floor coating system. While every floor project and client is unique, there are some common factors that will affect which products to choose when recommending a floor system. The information contained in this technical series will outline important factors to consider before recommending a floor system.

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“If you know the floor system that your client wants installed is wrong for their needs, offer your expert advice and educate them. This foresight could prevent future failures!”

Tips from NPI Experts

01 Understand Customer Expectations

In any situation, efficiently managing your customer's expectations plays a crucial role in their satisfaction. The best way to discover what your customer expects from the epoxy floor system is to continually communicate with your client and educate them when necessary. Keep them informed and explain in detail the reasons for recommending particular resinous floor systems and let them know if you have any concerns with their choices. You are the expert, if your customer comes to you asking for a thin mil epoxy system and you know that this system is wrong for the environment, educate the client. The client may appreciate your expert advice and you could avoid potential issues after the floor installation.



Communicate often with your client throughout the project.



Educate your client on the capabilities of the different floor systems.



Be the expert: advise the client on systems that will meet their needs.

02 Understand Customers Budget

“Avoid proposing an inferior floor system to get the job! Tell the client if their budget doesn't allow for an adequate floor system.”

Prior to submitting any bids for an epoxy floor project, try to find out what the customer is willing to spend on the job. By doing this, you will be able to send a bid that is realistic to what the client can spend. Be careful though, you should avoid proposing an inferior floor coating system just to get the job. If you realize that the only system that will last in the environment is a three-step troweled down mortar, but the budget only allows for a two coat thin mil epoxy system, you should address this with the client. Make them aware that the thin mil epoxy floor system will not hold up the heavy, abusive traffic that occurs in the area. If the client is not willing to spend more and you think the epoxy floor will fail, you may need to think about whether it's worth taking the project. It is your reputation on the line, installing a floor that will fail just to get a job is not always the right answer and could tarnish your reputation.

03

Determine if Installation Time Constraints Will be an Issue

The time available for installation of an epoxy floor system is another consideration to keep in mind when selecting products for the system. Some epoxy/urethane coatings may take longer to cure than others and it is important that time constraints be considered before recommending a floor coating system.

Products such as polyaspartic urethane topcoats, fast high build epoxies, and accelerator additives are available when a faster installation is necessary. If you are under stringent time constraints, discuss product options with your floor coatings manufacturer for recommendations.

*“Are other trades scheduled to complete work?
Does the business have to resume operations quickly?
What issues are present that could affect installation time of the flooring system? These are issues that need addressed before recommending a floor system.”*



Fast Cure Primers

NP013: Fast WB Epoxy
Ready for re/topcoat in 4-6 hrs.
Can be used in most floor systems, including exterior coating system.

Fast Cure Build Coats

NP181: Fast High Build
Ready for re/topcoat in 6-8 hrs.
*Can be used in most floor systems
Epoxy accelerators may also be available for some products*

Fast Cure Topcoats

Polyaspartic Urethanes
NPI has several polyaspartic topcoats available. Some polyaspartics are ready for light foot traffic as soon as 6-8 hrs.

NPI has a variety of quick cure products, including fast set joint sealants and quick concrete repair products. Contact us for details.

04

Determine Conditions of Concrete and Check for Moisture Issues

Prior to applying any epoxy floor system, proper surface preparation is necessary. But even before that, it is important to inspect the surface condition before recommending a floor coating system. If the concrete is badly deteriorated, a higher build epoxy system is usually necessary.

Additionally, if evidence exists that the floor was exposed to solvents, inks, oils, grease or other contaminants in the past, extra steps may be needed during surface preparation. In some instances, a test patch may even be needed to make sure the coating will hold up to any contaminants present in the concrete. Moisture issues will need addressed as well. Conduct all proper moisture tests before installation of the floor coating system. If moisture issues are present, a moisture vapor barrier product may be necessary.



Concrete conditions, moisture issues, and past exposures to contaminants will also play a part in deciding the best floor system.



05

Determine Environmental Conditions in Area of Installation

The environmental conditions that are present in the floor system installation area will play a big role in determining the most suitable products for the floor system. The following are some of the most common questions to ask about conditions and exposures that are present in the facility. The answers to these questions will help determine the most suitable floor system for the environment.

Chemical Exposures: What type of chemicals are used in the facility and how often will the floor be exposed to these chemicals? Will novolac epoxies or chemical resistant urethane topcoats be necessary?

Cleaning Routines: What is the cleaning/maintenance process? What types of cleaners are used? In environments, such as commercial kitchens, floors are often exposed to high heat temperatures during wash downs. In these situations, a Cement Urethane Slurry system would be an ideal choice.

Traffic/Equipment Exposures: What is the primary type of traffic? Is the floor exposed to a high volume of foot or wheeled traffic? What about hand or power trucks, are these tools used in the facility? Does furniture get moved often, such as in cafeterias or retail spaces? All of these questions need to be answered to determine if a heavy-duty epoxy floor system is required or if a thin mil floor system will suffice. Additionally, if you see any activities being done that could damage the floor, such as an employee dragging a pallet, you can educate the client to make them aware of any precautions they should address.

Interior/Exterior Application: Is the floor inside or outside? Will the floor be exposed to UV or other harsh weather? In exterior environments, an exterior flexible concrete coating would work best to withstand these conditions. It's also important to consider that interior floors can be prone to some UV exposures. Areas near skylights, windows, and doors can be subject to UV exposure and certain types of lighting can also emit UV light. In this case, a polyurethane topcoat with excellent UV resistance may be necessary.

Type of Work Performed: What type of work does your client do in the facility and floor coating installation area? Is there a need to recommend an epoxy for traffic line markings or work area designations? Is slip resistance necessary in the area? Finding out the type of work performed in the area will help when making system and product recommendations.

06

Checklist for Determining Floor System Recommendations

CUSTOMER NEEDS/FACILITY INFORMATION

Briefly describe customer expectations (decorative, durability, reason for request): _____

If known, what is the projected budget range? _____

What type of operation/work is conducted at facility? _____

Location of floor: _____ Interior or Exterior (or any UV exposure): _____

If chemical exposure is present, list chemicals of concern: _____

Frequency of exposure: _____ Type (leak, etc.): _____

Extreme temperature exposures (hot/cold, provide temperatures): _____

Type of traffic exposures, list all (foot, wheeled, etc): _____

Will floor be exposed to frequent furniture/equipment movements, any other concerns? _____

What methods are used for cleaning the floor? _____

How often is floor cleaned? _____ What type of cleaners used: _____

CONCRETE CONDITION:

Is concrete deteriorated, explain severity: _____

Any contaminant exposure, describe: _____

Cracks or Joint Issues? _____ Waterproofing concerns: _____

ADDITIONAL NEEDS/INSTALLATION CONCERNS:

Drains required? _____ Cove? _____ Slip Resistance? _____

Appearance (Solid color, decorative, etc.) _____ Safety Marking? _____

Will facility be shut down? _____ How long? _____ Are other trades working? _____

How soon will client/others need access to area? _____

**This information is a preliminary list to get a conversation started with client on system suggestions. Not to be used as substitute for complete site survey, proper testing, etc.*