

6 Installation of Rubber sheet



On receipt of rolls, check that colours correspond to those ordered, that the quantities are correct and that there is no damage. In particular, check that rolls are from one batch, if that was requested on the order.

On arrival at site, the rolls should be safely secured in an upright position and stored, together with the adhesive, at a minimum temperature of 18°C for at least 24 hours before laying.

Inflammable adhesives require special storage conditions. Contact the adhesive manufacturer or see current literature for details.

To achieve best results, site conditions should be as described in BS 8203. A working temperature of between 18°C and 26°C is required for at least 24 hours prior to, and during, the laying period and for 24 hours afterwards. Conditioning areas and laying areas should be of similar temperature, to prevent thermally induced dimensional changes.

In installations where underfloor heating is used, this should be switched off from 48 hours prior to installation until 48 hours afterwards. It should then be slowly brought

back up to the working temperature, a maximum of 27°C.

Adhesives capable of withstanding temperatures up to 27°C should be used. Where direct sunlight, sometimes in conjunction with underfloor heating, creates high surface temperatures on the floor, an approved epoxy or polyurethane adhesive should be used.

See Polyflor recommended adhesive listings.

The work area should now be prepared to receive the rubber sheet flooring. Ensure that all other trades have completed their work and removed all their equipment and materials. Remove all debris and sweep or vacuum the whole floor area. Check the condition of the subfloor and make good as necessary.

Stone or power grind any cementitious subfloor to remove any "nibs" or ridges. Remove any surface contaminants, which may affect adhesion. Sweep or vacuum again prior to laying.

If required by the contract, or if in doubt, check the moisture content of the subfloor and record the results and method used. Good lighting is essential.

It is important to note that commencement of work is deemed by many as acceptance of the site conditions as being suitable for laying floorcoverings.

6.1 LAYOUT OF RUBBER SHEET

The architect may have provided a drawing showing the direction in which the material should be laid. In this case, lay the rubber sheet as directed. If the architect has left this to the discretion of the flooring contractor, it is

advisable to show at the tender stage in which direction the material will be laid and state that your estimate is based on this. Always pay particular attention to where seams will fall, avoiding such occurrences as seams in the centre of doorways. If large windows are installed, minimise the effect of the joints by laying towards the window.

6.2 SLABBING THE RUBBER SHEET

Polyflor recommends that all sheet rubber flooring be rolled out face upward, taking care not to damage the surface, and cut approximately to size. Allowance of at least 75mm should be made at the ends for trimming in. Ideally, the slabs should then be left overnight, and preferably for 24 hours, to condition at a minimum temperature of 18°C.

6.3 FITTING THE SHEET

Place the first sheet in position next to the wall with the outer edge approximately 15mm from the nearest point. Adjust the lie of the sheet so that the inner edge is parallel with the axis of the room (Figure 16).

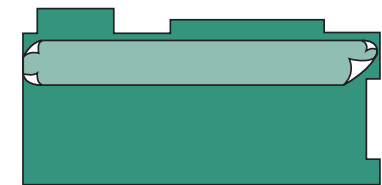


Figure 16 Lining up the first sheet

Depending upon the depth of the recesses, either a bar scriber or a pair of scribers should be used to trace the profile of the wall. The scribers should be set to allow for the deepest recess or rake of the wall. Holding the scribers vertically and square to the rubber edge, trace the wall profile onto the face of the sheet

(Figure 17). With this method, all irregularities of the wall will be accurately reproduced onto the surface of the rubber sheet. If, because of the colour or decoration, the scribed line is difficult to see, rub suitably contrasting chalk dust into the line to highlight it.



Figure 17 Scribing the wall profile

Ease the sheet away from the wall and, using a hook blade trimming knife, cut off the excess rubber to the scribed line. Slide the sheet back against the wall and check the fit, making any minor adjustments as necessary.

When satisfied that the fit on the first edge is correct, use a pencil to trace the opposite edge onto the subfloor (line A-B in Figure 18).

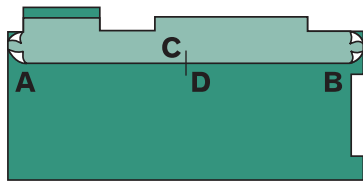


Figure 18 Marking the position

In the centre of the room, draw a line on both the rubber and subfloor square to the main axis of the sheet (line C-D in Figure 18).

Keeping the inner edge of the rubber on line A-B, slide the sheet back to clear the wall at one end of the room.

Set the scribers to the distance now between lines C and D (Figure 19). Trace the end wall profile and cut to fit as described in preceding paragraphs.

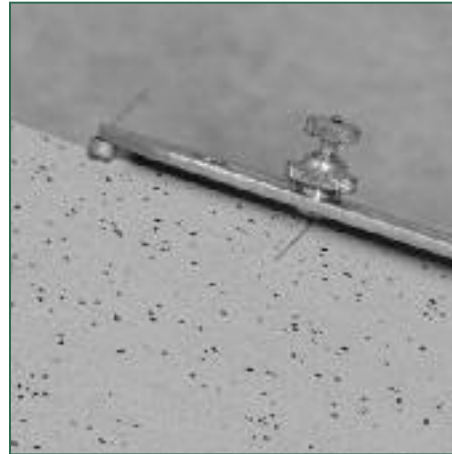


Figure 19 Setting the scriber

Repeat for the other end of the sheet. Once completed, the whole sheet - when slid back into position - should fit the wall profiles exactly.

Note: If fitting to set-in coving, the same principles apply but a reverse scriber must be used to trace the toe onto the sheet. It is normal to free hand cut to the coving, allowing 12mm overlap for final trimming in.

6.4 FITTING SUBSEQUENT LENGTHS

Place the second length parallel to the first length, with a maximum 25mm overlap along the adjoining edges. On the opposite side, trace the edge along the whole length onto the subfloor. In the middle, draw a line C-D at right angles to the main axis, as described previously.

Using the longitudinal line as a guide, slide back the sheet from the end wall and fit as described in Section 6.3. Repeat for the opposite end. Repeat the sequence for all remaining lengths. On the final length, which abuts the opposite wall, fit as described for the first length Section 6.3.

6.5 CUTTING IN THE SEAMS

If welding is necessary (see section 6.10), seam cutting, grooving and heat welding are described in detail in Welding vinyl flooring.

Note: The seams should be cut before the adhesive is spread.

6.6 ADHERING THE SHEET

Prior to adhering the rubber sheet, it is important to read and understand the adhesive manufacturer's instructions, recommendations and safety advice. You need to know the hazards and limitations of the adhesive, especially the open time.

Never spread more adhesive than can be laid within the open time.

Polyflor does not recommend any method of adhesive application, such as rolling or spraying, which cannot guarantee the spread rate.

Wherever practical, start with central strips first, as these are usually easier, having fewer recesses or awkward fittings.

A. Fold back the sheet to just over half its length, making sure the remaining half retains its position.

B. Spread the adhesive using a notched trowel of the correct size, as recommended by the adhesive manufacturer. Maintain the correct size of notch at all times, recutting as necessary as work progresses.

C. When the adhesive is ready to accept the floorcovering, roll the rubber sheet back into place, taking care not to twist the roll or trap air bubbles.

D. Check that seams are without gaps and remove any excess adhesive.

E. Roll with a 68kg articulated floor roller, firstly in the short direction, then in the long. In corners and other awkward areas, use a hand roller.

F. Repeat over the whole floor until all the sheets are adhered.

G. Roll the whole area thoroughly again, between one and four hours later.

6.7 PREMATURE TRAFFICKING OF NEWLY LAID FLOORS

Early trafficking may disturb the adhesive bond and weaken it, resulting in the associated problems of tracking, indentation, debonding etc. After the rubber sheet has been installed, only light foot traffic should be allowed for at least 24 hours. Where liable to be subject to heavy trafficking, the rubber should be protected with hardboard, plywood or a proprietary protector for at least 48 hours. Ensure that if there is any printing on the protector, it is not left in contact with the rubber surface as it can stain.

6.8 PATTERN TEMPLATE METHOD

Areas which call for a considerable amount of fitting around obstacles, or which are too confined to lay down a sheet for fitting by normal methods, can be dealt with by templating the floor in felt paper.

Note: In new buildings, it may be worthwhile discussing installation with the main contractor who may agree to fitting WCs, sinks etc. after the rubber has been laid.

A. Dry fit the area with felt paper, leaving a gap of 15mm to 20mm around obstructions.

B. Draw around the fittings using a compass set at 25mm. Mark the template "This Side Up".

C. Place the rubber sheet in a larger area with the face uppermost. Place the template on top ensuring the direction of decoration is correct. Secure the template firmly in position and, with a pair of scribes set at 25mm, mark the position of all obstacles using the template as a guide.

D. Using a sharp trimming knife, cut the rubber sheet to the scribed lines and fit into position.

Do not use the felt paper template as an underlay.

6.9 SITE FORMED COVERED SKIRTING

Polyflor sheet rubber flooring, in conjunction with a rubber cove, can be used to create site formed covered skirting. In hospital corridors or office complexes etc, a contrasting colour can be used for decoration or identification.

A. Adhere the sections of cove former using a contact adhesive.

B. Use a mitre-block to accurately cut internal and external corners. Only adjust for length on straight cuts.

C. To prevent a difficult fit, and potential weak spot near doorways, cut away the back edge of the cove former on a taper for 150mm so that there is minimal cove former near the doorway. Warming the cove former may help enable the shape to be formed but do not use a naked flame.

6.10 WELDING OF RUBBER SHEET

Welding of rubber sheet is not a prerequisite in most installations. However where there is heavy wet cleaning or where due to hygiene requirements a continuous smooth surface is demanded, the joints should be heat welded using the recommended weld rod.