

What equipment do you require for floor preparation?

The common question is “What type of equipment should be used in the Floor Covering Industry?” But first: What is floor preparation? Why do I need to prepare the substrate?

Every floor covering will perform best if the substrate is prepared correctly.

The good thing about this is that with the right equipment it is faster, cleaner and costs less to do it right.

No matter what you are going to be doing to a floor, every adhesive, every floor

covering is going to perform best if the top laitance layer is removed, and the surface is ground back to ‘virgin’ concrete with no contaminants.

Interestingly floor coverings such as sheet vinyl or tiles laid on a beautifully flat concrete without any screed looks better and often lasts longer. Prepared concrete is the perfect substrate to lay onto directly.

If a screed is needed, which can happen especially if there are dips in the floor, then the adhesion of the primer and the screed is going to be excellent if prepared correctly.

As we often say: “No preparation, is preparing a floor to fail”.

The Best Methods of Preparation

- Diamond Grinders are the most frequently used machine in the Floor Coverings field.

From fully shrouded, dust-free hand grinders, to large walk-behind machines these are usually the best type of machine to prepare floors, get glue off, or to make floors flat.

Note that there are two essential factors that determine how productive a grinder is. Diamond speed measured in metres/minute (Not revs per minute) and weight per disc on the floor.

A good 240v machine will be at least 30kg per disc and will achieve 550m/min. → 34





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- Shotblasters can be a very useful tool for some applications. They produce the best adhesion, but they may not always provide the right finish for a floorcovering.

Usually they perform best for preparation for cementitious screeds in the Floor Coverings Industry

- Scarifiers (sometimes called Planers) are great if you need to remove high spots where the floor needs to be planed down or can be used to give a good bond for floor screeds.
- Floor Scrapers are part of preparation and an effective machine when used with the optimum blade.

A floor scraper used with a narrower blade should be able to remove adhesives with the floor covering. If you do this, the time taken to grind the floor can be dramatically reduced so a better job gets done in much less time.

The Importance of the Dust Extractor

Of all the equipment that is used in the Concrete Floor Preparation Industry, the dust extractor is the one thing everyone needs, and so often people end up with a unit that doesn't perform!

All too often what a contractor is sold is an "Industrial Vacuum Cleaner". These will come "cheap", but a Dust Extractor has two key attributes that make them especially suited to working with a lot of concrete dust. There are very few true dust extractors on the market!

- A true dust extractor cleans its own filter cartridge. DustMaster Extractors do this continuously, even while operating!

Some of these clean the filters by using a rotatory arm that flicks each pleat releasing dust.

A Continuous Compressed Air Reverse Pulse system works very effectively, and it is common to hear that owners don't touch their filters for many months or even years when used properly.

- Hopefully these will have a high quality 5micron polyester H13 filter cartridge that can handle immense volumes of troublesome dust; yet allows the dust to be flicked off and fall into a dust bin.
- NOTE: All machines used when using a Dust extractor should have an effective shroud system to control dust at the Grinder, Scarifier, etc.



The floating shroud is the best as it is always on the floor and provides the best possible dust control.

Floorex DustMaster (DM) Series with its effective filter cleaning system includes DM-1360 single motor vac. This performs beautifully with Meteor 250 single disc grinders, Satellite 400 small triple disc grinders and hand grinders.

Then the DM-2660 which is a twin motor vac with a 50litre bin, or the twin motor DM-2680 can be used either with LONGOPAC bag system, or single plastic bag system. These Extractors are ideal with Satellite 480, Mastiff scarifiers, and does cope quite well with Satellite 650 grinder/polishers.

The largest Dustmaster 240 volt extractor triple motor DM-2780 is also used with LONGOPAC or single plastic bags and will does an excellent job with Satellite 650, Satellite 766 Dual Head, and large scarifying machines.

Why is Dust Extraction so Important?

Silica dust is recognised as a carcinogenic substance, as well as the likes of asbestos. New rules that have come into force make it mandatory to have exceptionally high-quality extractors which means that:

- The filter element needs to be able to filter 99.99% dust out down to 3micron size.
- The filter element is not the only piece in the puzzle to make the dust extractor meet requirements; just putting a HEPA filter into a vac does not make it a HEPA vacuum!
- If you have a grinder with a poor shroud system, even the best vacuum is compromised.
- The vacuum hose if it is too small diameter and/or too long, may not allow the full flow of air because of friction. You need VOLUME of air, not exactly vacuum to control dust.
- A Supa Separator is a perfect way to make any vacuum perform better.

The good thing is that these can be used with plastic bags to collect dust.

- It is a distinct advantage if your vacuum has the option of running each motor individually. When you need to back off airflow to keep the diamonds open you realise how beneficial this is.

What does a typical floor prep set-up look like?

Most contractors will find that a Satellite 480 heavyweight 240volt grinder imperative (or 3 phase Satellite 650).

Meteor 250 single disc 240v Edger grinder or a 180mm Shrouded hand grinder.

A DustMaster DM-2660 (or DM-2680) vacuum is an important tool.

A Beaver 300 Self-Propelled floor scraper (or Beaver 240 push-type) is usually the norm.

PortaMix Hippo 5 bag screed mixing station makes jobs from 5-500 bags easy. ■