

July-August 2005

## LOOK OUT FOR LINO!

In recent times, we have been called for help after cleaners have stripped sealer from a floor in the normal way thinking it was vinyl, only to be left with streaky, yellowed degradation of the floor surface. They didn't realise the floor was actually linoleum.

In one case, the linoleum was located in an airport arrival hall. It was mistaken for sheet vinyl as linoleum is not common in such large areas, and it looked like vinyl anyway.

In fact, linoleum flooring continues to make a resurgence in commercial and institutional properties. Lino, as we tend to call it, is made from a mixture of oxidised linseed oil, resins, pigment colours and fillers such as woodflour, cork and limestone, which is then pressed onto a jute/canvas backing.

*Marmoleum* is a form of linoleum produced with an attractive marble pattern.

Whilst linoleum is ideally suited for sealing with a water-based acrylic sealer such as Agar's **3D-Gloss** or **Duro**, removing the sealer if required, must be approached very differently to vinyl and stone floors. It helps if the chosen sealer is easy to remove if the need arises.

This is because linoleum, due to its construction, is very sensitive to strong acids, alkalis and solvents. These substances attack the materials of construction of linoleum, especially the linseed oil which is the binder of the linoleum. Yellowing occurs when strong alkalis react with the woodflour.

So allowing a high productivity floor stripper to soak into a linoleum surface will have disastrous results.

The best way of preventing this from occurring is to avoid the need to strip at all. This is made possible by:

- ▶ cleaning the sealer finish thoroughly on a daily basis (Agar **pH-7** at 1:60 is ideal),
- ▶ buffing regularly to remove scuffs and repair scratches, and
- ▶ periodically re-coating worn areas after careful preparation (with Agar **Fiorprep** at 1:30) to ensure any accumulated soil is released from the existing sealer film.

However, if the existing sealer film has reached the end of its life, it can be stripped using a careful and gentle approach. A few tips:

- ▶ Divide the area to be stripped into manageable areas, so the stripping process can be monitored closely and carefully controlled.
- ▶ Do not use highly alkaline or caustic stripper. Use a milder stripper such as Agar's **Topstrip** at a weaker dilution rate than normal. Alternatively, Agar **Fiorprep** is ideal provided there is no build up, diluted at 1:8 parts water.
- ▶ Blue scrubbing pads should be sufficient
- ▶ If the stripper slurry is turning the same colour as the linoleum, stop stripping immediately. Remove the stripper solution and rinse.
- ▶ Use neutralizer in the rinse solution to remove any residual alkalinity. Agar's **Browning Treatment** can be used for this purpose diluted 1:15 with water.

All of this stresses the need for cleaning professionals to ensure that when new flooring is installed, or when they enter a new contract on an existing building, they obtain specifications on all floor types so there is no confusion about what the floor is made of, or how it should be maintained.

## TEMPTED TO MIX CHEMICALS?

### DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT

#### Here's a reason why not ...

If you've been in the cleaning industry for a while, you will have heard about various 'mixtures' cleaners have concocted to do the job a little better. The idea was that by mixing product A with product B, the resultant mixture would deliver the benefits of both products A and B at the same time!

Unfortunately, chemistry doesn't work that way. More often than not, the resultant mixture will not perform as well as the original products, and may be quite different in nature to the original products, possibly hazardous to health or surfaces. It could even release dangerous gases.

So, as we have stressed before, NEVER MIX CHEMICALS.

To demonstrate the pointlessness of mixing products, consider the following example which was recommended to us by a cleaner at a training seminar recently. (We recommend that you never do this.)

It was suggested that by mixing Magic Detergent with Lemon Disinfectant, you would create a solution with Magic's high foam and excellent emulsifying power, and Lemon's effective anti-bacterial action and fresh fragrance.

Sadly, this won't be the outcome. The result will actually be pretty useless.

#### Why is this so?

The main ingredient of Magic Detergent is an anionic surfactant.

What does this mean?

A **surfactant** is a word that's short for "surface active agent", that is, something which changes the behaviour of a substance at its surface. When we add a surfactant to water, it allows the water spread out and wet the greasy surface more easily. Also, the surfactant allows the solution to foam up, emulsify oil and disperse dirt. So a surfactant reduces the surface tension of water and gives it the power to clean things.

**Anionic**, (pronounced an-eye-on-ic), simply means a group of atoms that carries a **negative** electric charge. **Cationic** (pronounced cat-eye-on-ic) is the opposite and refers to a group that carries a **positive** electric charge.

So, a solution of Magic Detergent contains millions of surfactant groups that each carry a negative (-) charge.

Lemon Disinfectant is based on a quaternary ammonium compound which kills bacteria. The quaternary ammonium groups are cationic and each carry a positive electric charge (+).

So, what happens if you mix Magic with Lemon Disinfectant?

As they say, "opposites attract". Each positive cationic group (from Lemon) combines with a negative anionic group (from Magic) and many large neutral groups are produced. These new large groups do not kill bacteria and are also not very good as a detergent – we've effectively taken two useful groups and turned them into one useless one!

It is like connecting a wire across the positive and negative terminals of a battery. The battery goes flat very quickly and is rendered useless.

This is an important reason why we say "NEVER MIX CHEMICALS". It is quite possible that the mixture may turn out to be a neutralised concoction that is of no use to anyone!



### Citrus Extra – new perfume

Following requests from customers and distributors, we have changed the perfume in Citrus Extra back to the original **orange** fragrance. For a while, we used an orange blossom perfume, but this was not universally accepted, so we decided to revert to the original perfume.

### G-SOLVE 1L BOTTLES

The clear PET bottle with the smaller (28mm) neck is not being made any more, so we had to change to the current PET bottle with the large (38mm) neck. Unfortunately, this new bottle will not accommodate the tilt-top cap for easy dispensing; however, we will be able to provide an empty 500ml PET dispenser bottle with the 28mm neck that can take the tilt-top cap, if customers wish to use this method of dispensing. Please call your Agar office to request these.

Please contact your Agar Representative or call us for more information.....