

GUIDELINES FOR CUTBACK ADHESIVE AND RESIDUE REMOVAL

Vinyl-based flooring materials (PVC)—including vinyl tile, plank, sheet goods, and vinyl-backed carpet—should **never be installed directly over black asphalt-based (cutback) adhesive residues**. These older adhesives are chemically incompatible with vinyl products and must be properly addressed prior to installation.

Risks of Installing Over Cutback Adhesives

- **Chemical Reactions:** Asphaltic cutback adhesives can react with plasticizers in vinyl-backed flooring, causing the adhesive to soften or liquefy. This may lead to bond failure, flooring displacement, or staining from adhesive bleed-through.
- **Surface Sealing:** Residual cutback adhesives can act as a barrier on the concrete surface, affecting adhesive curing and moisture vapor transmission, and potentially hiding elevated moisture levels in the concrete slab.
- **Health Hazards:** Many cutback adhesives used in older buildings contain asbestos. Removal of these materials must comply with all local, state, and federal asbestos regulations.

Preparation Requirements

1. Complete Adhesive Removal:

- All visible cutback adhesives must be mechanically removed until no continuous film or trowel marks remain.
- Staining that cannot be removed must be properly encapsulated using an appropriate barrier product.

2. Encapsulation Options:

- If full removal is not feasible, encapsulation with cementitious overlays, epoxy coatings, or polymer-based isolation systems may be acceptable. These systems serve to isolate remaining residue (staining) from the new flooring system.



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- Always verify that the encapsulation system is compatible with the chosen adhesive and floor covering.

3. **Prohibited Removal Methods:**

- **Solvent adhesive removers, Oil base and surfactant-based cleaners should not be used**, as they may leave chemical residues within the concrete that interfere with adhesive bonding and cause lingering odors.
- **Solvent-based adhesives** must not be applied over any surface containing cutback residue.
- **Mechanical removal** should not include dry sanding or bead-blasting where asbestos may be present, as this may create hazardous airborne dust.

4. **Safe Removal Practices:**

- Use wet scraping, wet grinding, or wet shot-blasting to minimize dust and prevent contamination.
- Where asbestos is suspected or confirmed, all abatement must follow OSHA, EPA, and local safety standards.

5. **Installer Responsibility:**

- The installer must verify that the selected floor covering is approved for use over any remaining cutback residue (staining). If not approved by the flooring manufacturer, installation must not proceed.
- Adhesive manufacturers may offer guidance or limitations on warranties when substrates include residual adhesives.

6. **Moisture Mitigation Considerations:**

- If moisture control systems are to be applied, complete removal of all old adhesives—including cutback—will be required.



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- Substrates should be mechanically profiled (e.g., via wet bead-blasting) and then repaired with appropriate cementitious underlayments before installation.

Testing and Compliance

- Refer to industry standards and best practices such as:
 - **ASTM F710** – Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring
 - **RFCI Guidelines** – Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings
 - **CRI 104, Section 7** – Carpet Installation Standards

⚠ Note:

This document is for general reference only. While the information provided is based on the industry's best practices, Lighthouse Adhesives does not accept responsibility for any errors or liabilities resulting from the use or interpretation of this guidance.

