

## Check Slab for moisture before installing the flooring



**Would you rather pay \$2,500** to pre-test your building's concrete slab for moisture, or spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to replace the flooring when it starts blistering and peeling away?

Unfortunately, many developers, architects, and contractors skip the testing and take their chances, says Lee Eliseian, founder and CEO of Independent Floor Testing & Inspection (IFTI) in Concord, Calif. Only after suffering through a flooring or coating failure do they adopt the practice of pre-installation moisture testing, he says.

IFTI tests interior concrete slabs for moisture prior to the installation of floor coverings or coatings. "We do an analysis and

**Above: A field technician from Independent Floor Testing & Inspection conducts diagnostic test that are used to determine why this floor is losing its bond with the concrete substrate. Pre-testing the concrete slab for moisture would have identified and prevented the problem in the first place, says IFTI CEO Lee Eliseian.**

report on the conditions of the slab and how it could affect the moisture-sensitive finishes that will be installed," he says. "We also provide a forensic service after a flooring failure, to get at the root cause of the problem."

Problems usually become apparent within months after the floor covering or coating is installed. The flooring doesn't stay bonded to the concrete substrate and may start to breach, allowing cleaning solution to seep underneath and worsen the damage. "Imagine the cost to a hospital that has to shut down an operating room in order to fix a slab moisture problem and replace the newly installed flooring," says Eliseian.

Slab pre-testing can give retailers an edge when they're moving into buildings that have been vacated by other tenants. "We come in as part of a due diligence process during the lease negotiation, to get a good benchmark of what the slab moisture conditions are," he says. "If adverse conditions are identified, they can decide early on who is going to shoulder the cost of slab moisture mitigation."

itive and manufacturers are pushed to look at the type of material they put into their products, says Duncan. Commercial carpet of choice in the architect's office, says Duncan.

Flexibility of installation, elimination of downtime and creative freedom offered by carpet tile has made it a popular flooring choice in the corporate sector. It's particularly popular with multinational corporations, in part because of its ease of installation.

Over the last three years has allowed designers to create colors in creative ways, says Duncan. With the use of colored tiles and delineated collaborative workspaces and add to the energy level of office workers. The carpet tile that is gaining attention is educational and institutional. "Maintenance is usually the biggest concern," Duncan says. "They need something that's durable. If a stain that won't come out, they can just

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standing beyond its traditional use in retail and education. Julia Pierce, director of marketing and design for Armstrong, says that designers are mixing and matching LVT designs. "Designers are putting down wood-look LVT in the institutional," says Pierce.

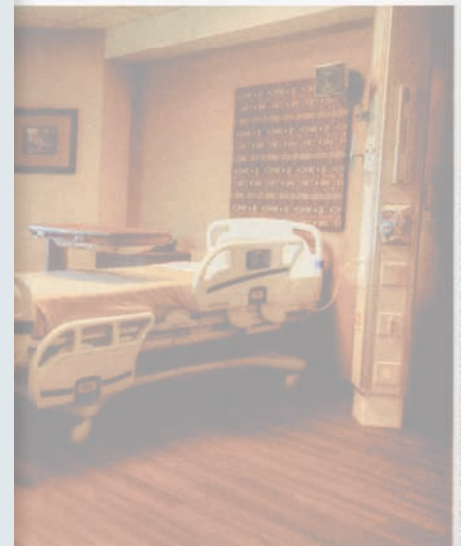


PHOTO: COURTESY ARMSTRONG FLOOR PRODUCTS

As LVT collections mimic the look of different types of wood, the flooring in the patient rooms consists of wood-look LVT. Designers often specify waterjet-cut inlays of LVT to create a transition from corridors to smaller spaces.