

# IV

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## **SUBFLOORS AND UNDERLAYMENTS**

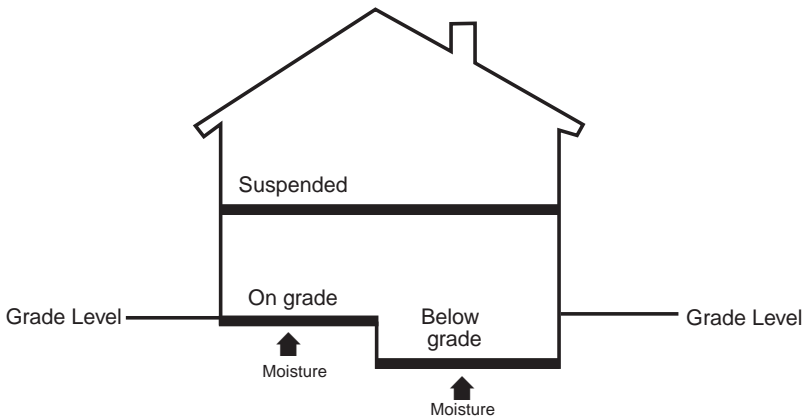
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## IV. SUBFLOORS AND UNDERLAYMENTS

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### A. GRADE LEVELS

1. **Suspended** - A suspended floor is one with a minimum of 18" of well-ventilated air space below.
2. **On grade** - An on-grade floor is in direct contact with ground or over a fill in direct contact with ground. A slab on ground level is an example.
3. **Below grade** - A below-grade floor is partially or completely below the surrounding grade level in direct contact with ground or over a fill in direct contact with ground.



### B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Subfloor** - A subfloor is selected for structural purposes and is the substrate (supporting layer) for the underlayment.
2. **Sleeper-constructed subfloor** - Consists of wood subfloor installed over or on an existing concrete subfloor on or below grade without 18" of well ventilated air space.
3. **APA trademarked** - Wood underlayments approved as suitable for the installation of resilient flooring by APA--The Engineered Wood Association.
4. **STURD-IFLOOR®** - An APA performance rated panel specially designed as combination subfloor/underlayment.
5. **Underlayment** - The smooth surface used as the substrate for the floor covering.
6. **Subfloor/Underlayment Combination** - A surface that must meet structural requirements and have a smooth surface suitable for the floor covering.
7. **Substrate** - The smooth surface prepared to accept the resilient floor covering, such as concrete, underlayment or existing resilient floor covering.

Regardless of the type of underlayment used under Armstrong resilient flooring, the responsibility for warranties and/or performance guarantees for the underlayment rests solely with the underlayment manufacturer and/or supplier and not with Armstrong.

The types of subfloors and underlayment panels described in this manual (F-5061) are intended only as a guide and should not be construed as an Armstrong warranty for these products.

Armstrong cannot be responsible for:

- joint or texture show-through
- tunneling and ridging over underlayment joints
- discoloration from stain sources in the panel, regardless of the type of underlayment panel used
- underlayment panel problems caused by local climate conditions, basement wall and subfloor construction, or improper installation

We strongly suggest that you secure a written guarantee and installation instructions from the supplier or manufacturer of the underlayment board being used.

## C. WOOD SUBFLOORS

Armstrong resilient floors are recommended on suspended wood subfloors with a minimum of 18" of well-ventilated air space below. Armstrong does **not** recommend installing resilient flooring on wood subfloors applied directly over concrete, or on sleeper-construction subfloors.

Loading requirements for subfloors are normally set by various building codes on both local and national levels. Trade associations such as APA-The Engineered Wood Association provide structural guidelines for meeting various code requirements. Subfloor panels are commonly marked with span ratings showing the maximum center-to-center spacing in inches of supports over which the panels should be placed.

### 1. APA-Rated STURD-I-FLOOR

Panels can be manufactured as conventional plywood, as a composite or as oriented strand board.

- a) For fully adhered resilient flooring installations and Residential Felt-Back floors installed by the perimeter bond (Armafelt Options) method, Armstrong recommends an additional 1/4" or thicker layer of APA plywood underlayment.
- b) Resilient flooring installed by the Armstrong Interflex Installation System may be installed directly over STURD-I-FLOOR if:
  - the panels have a smooth, "sanded face"
  - the panels show no swelling due to construction traffic or exposure to weather conditions
  - the panels are not contaminated by staining agents

**If any of the above conditions do exist, an additional 1/4" or thicker underlayment is recommended.**

This substrate increases the potential for staining from the panel components, coated nails, construction adhesives, spills, overspray and 35

show-through from texture and mechanical or water damage when resilient floors are installed directly to single-layer STURD-I-FLOOR.

## 2. Strip Wood, Board or Plank-Type Subflooring

These subfloors must meet structural requirements. Regardless of whether the subfloor is single- or double-layer, Armstrong recommends the following:

- If the top layer is tongue-and-groove and the strip wood is 3" or less in face width, cover with 1/4" or thicker underlayment panels.
- All others should be covered with 1/2" or thicker underlayment panels.

## D. WOOD OR BOARD-TYPE UNDERLAYMENTS

### 1. Underlayments

Subject to the board manufacturer's recommendations and warranties, the following underlayments may be used with Armstrong resilient flooring products with certain limitations indicated for each underlayment type.

Underlayment Types	All Armstrong Floors	Fully Adhered Felt-Backed Sheet Floors & Tile	Interflex	Armafelt Options Perimeter Bond
Plywood				
APA Underlayment	X	X	X	X
Poplar or Birch Plywood	X	X	X	X
Lauan*	X	X	X	X
Hardboard			X	X
Particleboard CPA			X	X
Fiber Reinforced Gypsum, Fiber Cement Board, and Cementitious Backerboards	X	X	X	X

\* Some Lauan may present severe problems such as discoloration, indentation, loss of bond and delamination when used as an underlayment.

#### a) Plywood

##### (1) APA Trademarked Plywood or equivalent Agency Certified

**Plywood** rated as suitable underlayment for resilient floor coverings such as tile or sheet vinyl. It should have an Exterior or Exposure 1 exposure durability classification and a fully sanded face. APA plywood underlayment grades recommended for areas to be covered with resilient nontextile flooring are Underlayment, Underlayment A-C, B-C, C-C Plugged or C-C Plugged EXT when marked "sanded face." Also, Marine EXT or sanded plywood grades (A-C, B-C, A-D or B-D) marked "Plugged Crossbands Under Face," "Plugged Crossbands (or Core)," "Plugged Inner Plies" or "Meets Underlayment Requirements."

(2) **Poplar or Birch Plywood** with a fully sanded face and exterior glue.

(3) **Lauan Plywood**, when used as an underlayment, should be Type 1 (Exterior). The best grade is BB and the next best is CC, while OVL (overlay grade) is the minimum acceptable face grade. There is a

wide variety of quality and species classed as lauan. Some may present severe problems such as discoloration, indentation, loss of bond and delamination when used as an underlayment.

**b) Hardboard**

Untempered hardboard which meets requirements for wood underlayments is acceptable only for use under Armstrong resilient flooring products installed by the Interflex Installation System or the Residential Felt-Back perimeter bond (Armafelt Options) method.

**c) Particleboard**

Particleboard, often called “chipboard,” is comprised of small particles usually arranged in layers by size, but not oriented. Composite Panel Association approved grades of particleboard underlayment are acceptable only for use under Armstrong resilient flooring installed by the Interflex Installation System or the Residential Felt-Back perimeter bond (Armafelt options) method.

**d) Fiber Reinforced Gypsum Underlayment, Fiber Cement Board and Cementitious Backerboard**

These products must be designed specifically for vinyl floor coverings. Written installation instructions and a guarantee for the product’s use in conjunction with vinyl floor coverings should be furnished by the manufacturer.

**e) Other Materials**

(1) **Treated Plywood** - Armstrong resilient flooring is not recommended directly over fire-retardant treated plywood or preservative treated plywood. The materials used to treat the plywood may cause problems with adhesive bonding. An additional layer of at least 1/4” thick underlayment should be installed if the construction will still meet the applicable building or fire codes.

(2) **Wood Subfloors with Concrete or Gypsum Toppings** - These subfloors consist of lightweight concrete or gypsum-based topping over plywood on wood joists or trusses. See Concrete, Floor Fills, Underlayments and Toppings.

**2. Underlayment Requirements**

Underlayments for resilient floors must be:

- structurally sound
- designed for resilient flooring underlayment purposes
- a minimum thickness of 1/4”
- panels smooth enough so that texture or graining will not show through finished flooring
- resist dents and punctures from concentrated loads
- free of any substance that may stain vinyl such as edge patching compounds, marking inks, paints, solvents, adhesives, asphalt, dye, etc.
- installed in strict accordance with the board manufacturer’s recommendations

### 3. Underlayment Installation

- a) Armstrong suggests the panels be lightly butted and not filled or flashed, unless the manufacturer specifically recommends filling the joints.
- b) It has been Armstrong's experience that filling or flashing joints between panels with patch may increase the tunneling and/or ridging over these joints.
- c) Differences in the thickness of wood panels should be corrected by sanding.
- d) All wood product panels will change in size with changes in water content. Since panels received from the mill generally have very low moisture content compared to the interior of the building and the structural subfloor, allow the panels to condition to the job site per the panel manufacturers' recommendations. This will minimize the chance of tunnels or ridges over the underlayment joints.
- e) Some fasteners for underlayment panels or single-layer subfloor panels are coated with resin, rosin or cement that can discolor vinyl flooring. **Coated fasteners should not be used to install underlayments unless you know they will not stain the finished flooring product and you assume responsibility for their use.**
  - (1) How to Evaluate Fasteners for Staining Potential
    - (a) "Weave" or "thread" the coated nail through two small cuts 1" apart in a 2"x4" sample of white vinyl flooring.
    - (b) Smaller coated staples can be laid on both the face and back of the sample and held in place by foil wrapping.
    - (c) The coated fastener must be in direct contact with both the face and back of the flooring sample.
    - (d) Tightly wrap each sample (with coated fastener) in aluminum foil.
    - (e) Place in conventional oven set at 200°F (93.3°C) for one hour. **Do not exceed temperature or time recommendation. Do not place in microwave oven.**
    - (f) Remove sample from oven and allow to cool.
    - (g) Inspect for staining characteristics of fastener.
- f) Some construction adhesives used to glue subfloors and underlayments can stain resilient flooring, and solvent vapors can distort Interflex flooring. **Do not use adhesives to install underlayments unless you know they will not stain resilient flooring and assume responsibility for their use.**

### 4. Underlayment Preparation

A wood floor to be covered with a new resilient floor must first be properly prepared.

- Check panels for sources of discoloration such as contamination from paint, varnish, stain overspray or spills, plumbing sealers, asphalt, heater fuel, markers or potential staining agents such as wood or bark not visible on the surface, edge sealers, logo markings, printed nail patterns and synthetic patches.
- Strip paint or varnish by sanding

- Remove old adhesive\*
- Cover adhesive, oil or wax residue with an appropriate underlayment. If the residue is tacky, place a layer of felt or polyethylene sheeting over it to prevent a cracking sound when walking on the floor.
- Do not use solvents to remove paint, varnish, oil, wax or old adhesive because the solvents can remain in the substrate and negatively affect the new installation.

## E. CONCRETE

New and existing concrete subfloors must meet the requirements of the latest edition of ASTM F 710, “Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring.”

**Note: Regardless of the type of concrete or other cement-like material used as a base for resilient flooring, in the event of underlayment failure, the responsibility for warranties and/or performance guarantees rests with the concrete or cement like material manufacturer and not with the manufacturer of resilient flooring.**

### 1. Concrete and Moisture

Any concrete subfloor can be a source of moisture-related flooring failures, including suspended concrete. By its very nature, concrete starts as a water-saturated mass which must cure and then dry sufficiently to allow the installation of flooring. Suspended floors normally have only the mix water to contend with although rain, spills and water leaks can add more water. Roughly one-half of the mix water is consumed by hydration of the cement during the curing period, with the rest being slowly reduced by evaporation. Once dry enough for installation, there is little chance of future moisture related problems on suspended concrete slabs.

Concrete subfloors in contact with the ground have not only the mix water to consume and dissipate, they also have a potentially inexhaustible source of moisture from the ground. When covered with resilient flooring, these slabs will be approximately as moist as the soil on which they are placed. To reduce this ingress of moisture, a well-designed slab will have a capillary break and moisture vapor retarder in place. Slabs on and below grade can be affected by both water vapor and capillary rise. Slabs below grade, however, are closer to the water table, have poorer ventilation for drying, and have the added risk of hydrostatic pressure. Movement of the water table beneath a below-grade slab can also force air into and through the slab resulting in blisters in the floor covering. Therefore, it is essential that below-grade slabs have an effective and intact vapor retarder, not only for retarding moisture vapor transmission, but to stop air movement resulting from fluctuations in ground water levels.

Vinyl-backed sheet flooring is, by itself, an effective moisture vapor retarder, and if more moisture is rising from beneath the concrete than can be accommodated by the sheet flooring, failure of the installation is inevitable. Felt-backed sheet flooring and vinyl composition tile are slightly more forgiving

\*Some previously manufactured asphaltic “cutback” adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions, refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute’s publication “Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings.”

with regard to moisture because they provide a path for the movement of water vapor and air through the felt-backing and at the tile joints.

Too much ground moisture can create problems for on-grade and below-grade areas of commercial and residential buildings over and beyond those relating to the installation and use of resilient flooring. These problems vary from merely slight, but unpleasant dampness to actual structural damage. Moisture in a concrete slab varies as the weather changes. The amount of moisture in the slab usually approximates the dampness of the subsoil. What may be a relatively dry slab at one time can be quite different at another.

**Note:** Water/cement ratio is the most important factor regarding moisture migration, permeability and rate of drying of a concrete slab. Water/cement ratios as low as 0.40 to 0.45 are practical and recommended in the information section of ASTM F 710 for concrete slabs to receive resilient flooring. Therefore, a water/cement ratio of 0.5 is an achievable and reasonable requirement for slabs on or below grade. A higher water/cement ratio may lead to problems with moisture and air movement through the slab causing blisters in sheet flooring.

## 2. Below-Grade Concrete

- a. The floor classification must be per American Concrete Institute's "Guide for Floor and Slab Construction", ACI 302.1R-96, pages 5 and 22:
  - For residential and light commercial: Class 2 (except minimum compressive strength must be 3500 psi)
  - For commercial and institutional: Class 4
- b. The concrete slab must be standard density concrete proportioned, mixed, and placed as recommended by ACI 302.1R-96 for slabs on ground and having a maximum slump of 4" and a minimum compressive strength of 3500 psi.
- c. The concrete slab must be dry, clean, smooth, structurally sound and free of foreign materials that might prevent adhesive bond as outlined in ASTM F 710, "Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring".
- d. The water/cement ratio must be 0.5 or less.
- e. The concrete slab must be protected from ground moisture with an effective and intact vapor retarder having a maximum permance of 0.1 perms as determined by ASTM E 96, and as described in ACI 302.1R-96, Section 3.2.3.
- f. The concrete slab must be placed on a vapor retarder as described in ACI 302.1R-96, Section 4.1.5, utilizing a base of compactible, granular fill.
- g. The concrete must be wet cured with wet burlap, plastic film or waterproof paper.
- h. Before installation of the finished flooring, moisture, alkali and bond testing must be conducted.
  - Moisture testing must be done according to ASTM F 1869, "Standard Test Method for Measuring Moisture Vapor Emission Rate of Concrete Subfloor Using Anhydrous Calcium Chloride". Test results must not

exceed the limits specified in ASTM F 710, "Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring" (3 pounds/1000 sq ft/24 hours or the flooring manufacturer's recommendations).

- The surface of the concrete must have a pH of 9 or less.
- Bond testing must be run to determine compatibility of the adhesives to the concrete slab.

### 3. On-Grade Concrete

- a. The slab must be of good quality, standard density concrete with low water/cement ratios consistent with placing and finishing requirements, having a maximum slump of 4", a minimum compressive strength of 3500 psi, and following the recommendations of ACI Standard 302.1R-96 for class 2 or class 4 floors and the Portland Cement Association's recommendations for slabs on ground.
- b. The concrete slab must be dry, clean, smooth, structurally sound and free of foreign materials that might prevent adhesive bond as outlined in ASTM F 710, "Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring".
- c. The concrete slab must be protected from ground moisture with a 4" capillary break subbase and an effective and intact vapor retarder having a maximum permance of 0.3 perms as determined by ASTM E 96, and as described in ACI 302.1R-96, Section 3.2.3.
- d. The concrete must be wet cured with wet burlap, plastic film or waterproof paper.
- e. Before installation of the finished flooring, moisture, alkali and bond testing must be conducted.
  - Moisture testing must be done according to ASTM F 1869, "Standard Test Method for Measuring Moisture Vapor Emission Rate of Concrete Subfloor Using Anhydrous Calcium Chloride". Test results must not exceed the limits specified in ASTM F 710, "Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring" (3 pounds/1000 sq ft/24 hours or the flooring manufacturer's recommendations).
  - The surface of the concrete must have a pH of 9 or less.
  - Bond testing must be run to determine compatibility of the adhesives to the concrete slab.

### 4. Suspended or Above-Grade Concrete

- a. Suspended concrete is usually protected from all sources of moisture except the moisture initially in the mix and water vapor in the atmosphere. However, as with concrete placed on and below grade, it must be kept damp during the curing process to permit hydration to occur. Suspended concrete poured on a metal deck is often produced with lightweight aggregate, which can retain excess water longer than standard weight aggregate. Because drying is only possible from the top surface, such construction usually takes additional drying time.
- b. When resilient floors are to be installed, allow suspended concrete to dry thoroughly for several months with good ventilation and, if possible, with heat.

- c. Before installation of the finished flooring, moisture, alkali, and bond testing must be conducted.
  - Moisture testing must be done according to ASTM F 1869, “Standard Test Method for Measuring Moisture Vapor Emission Rate of Concrete Subfloor Using Anhydrous Calcium Chloride”. Test results must not exceed the limits specified in ASTM F 710, “Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring” (3 pounds/1000 sq ft/24 hours or the flooring manufacturer’s recommendations).
  - The surface of the concrete must have a pH of 9 or less.
  - Bond testing must be run to determine compatibility of the adhesives to the concrete slab.

## 5. Concrete Compressive Strengths

Because of the concentrated floor loads that exist in commercial and institutional environments, concrete slabs should meet the requirements for ACI\* class 2 or class 4 floors. For these environments, all concrete slabs, including lightweight, must have a compressive strength of 3,500 psi or greater.

## 6. Lightweight Concrete

Armstrong resilient flooring may be acceptable over lightweight aggregate concretes having dry densities greater than 90 lbs per cubic foot and cellular concretes having plastic (wet) densities over 100 lbs per cubic foot (94 lbs dry weight), providing the surface is troweled to a smooth, even finish. However, this is a minimum requirement for the application of resilient floor covering. Concrete slabs with heavy static and/or dynamic loads should have higher design strengths and densities calculated to accommodate such loads.

## 7. Preformed Concrete Plank or Sections

Because of the joints between the sections, this type of subfloor requires finishing with a concrete topping before resilient flooring is installed. The topping prevents the finished floor from cracking or loosening from the subfloor due to movement of the concrete. Trowelable underlayments are not satisfactory for smoothing preformed concrete subfloors.

## 8. Floor Fills, Underlayments and Toppings

There are numerous products available for use as floor fills, patches, self-leveling underlayments and trowelable underlayments. They include cellular concrete, portland cement and gypsum-based products. These are recommended by their manufacturers for smoothing rough or uneven subfloors, enhancing acoustical and fire characteristics of structures or as substrates to receive resilient floor covering for otherwise unsuitable subfloor conditions. When using these products, be sure to follow the manufacturer’s recommendations regarding application, drying time and moisture testing.

Do not install Armstrong floors over gypsum-based products which have

\*ACI 302.1R-96, Guide For Concrete Floor And Slab Construction, pp. 5 and 22.

been applied to on- or below-grade concrete or damp, suspended concrete. However, in **residential** applications only, Armstrong's S-172 Floor Patch may be used for repairing dry, on-grade concrete.

For commercial and institutional environments, the floor fill, topping or underlayment **must** also have a minimum compressive strength of 3,500 psi. Armstrong's S-183, S-184 or S-194 meet or exceed this requirement as underlayments.

**All recommendations and guarantees regarding their suitability as substrates for resilient flooring must be the responsibility of the manufacturer and installer of the substrate.**

## 9. Curing, Sealing, Hardening or Parting Compounds

“Curing compounds leave a film that can interfere with the adhesion of other materials to the treated surface; ... Their use should be avoided on surfaces that will later be covered with resilient floor coverings, ... Where applicable, a letter of compatibility should be issued prior to the use of a curing compound on a floor receiving a subsequent finish.” (Quote from American Concrete Institute, ACI, publication 302.1R-96, “Guide for Concrete Floor and Slab Construction,” page 50) Any letter of compatibility must come from the manufacturer of the compound.

When curing, sealing, hardening or parting compounds have been used, the following general statements can be made:

- a. If they contain soap, wax, oil or silicone, they must be removed before a resilient floor can be installed.

They can be removed by using a terrazzo or concrete grinder, by sanding with a drum sander or by using a polishing machine equipped with a heavy-duty wire brush.

- b. There are many materials that do not contain soap, wax, oil or silicone and are advertised as being compatible with resilient flooring adhesives. No specific statement can be made regarding their use or need for removal. Conduct bond tests to determine the need for removal. If after 72 hours the bond fails, the compound must be removed.

Curing agents are applied to concrete slabs to retard the escape of water during the initial curing process. Such compounds can remain on the surface of a slab and continue to retard the escape of water during the drying process. They may break down after the floor covering has been installed and the building is in use. This can occur on suspended slabs as well as those in contact with the ground.

After the concrete is cured, the flooring contractor needs to ensure that it dries properly. The elimination of free water is essential for the formation of a bond between the adhesives, the flooring materials and the concrete. In the presence of free water, water-based adhesives will not set up, and solvent-based adhesives will not adhere. In the case of adhesives already bonded to concrete, the adhesive will be displaced by water if the availability of water is sustained.

The manufacturers of calcium chloride test kits recommend the removal of any surface agent from the concrete in test areas before running their tests

so an accurate reading on vapor emissions can be obtained. This removal is also recommended for alkali testing. If the curing agent has not been removed, testing for moisture and/or alkali may be inaccurate. If the curing agent has been removed from directly beneath the test sites and the test results exceed specified limits, the compound must be fully removed from the entire slab surface and additional drying time allowed. Calcium chloride tests must be run again and results must be within specified limits prior to installing the flooring.

**Note: In the event of adhesion failure, the responsibility for warranties and/or performance guarantees rests with the compound manufacturer and not with the manufacturer of resilient flooring and/or adhesives.**

## 10. Calcium Chloride Test

It is recommended calcium chloride tests be conducted to determine if the concrete is sufficiently dry for a resilient flooring installation. The calcium chloride tests must be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of ASTM F 1869, “Standard Test Method for Measuring Vapor Emission Rate of Concrete Subfloor Using Anhydrous Calcium Chloride.” When running calcium chloride tests, it is important to remove any curing agents so accurate readings can be obtained. Calcium chloride tests are not applicable for lightweight concrete or floor fills.

Armstrong offers the following guidelines as maximum acceptable moisture emission levels for flooring installations:

<b>Product</b>	<b>Pounds Per 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup> Per 24 Hours</b>
■ Vinyl-Backed Sheet and Tile Flooring, NATURAL OPTIONS, EXCELON SDT, SAFETY ZONE using S-230	3.0
■ Felt-Backed Sheet Flooring, Linoleum, Vinyl Composition Tile (Excelon, commercial and residential tile), SAFETY ZONE except when using S-230	5.0

All tests must meet the allowable moisture limits. As a reminder, calcium chloride tests cannot predict long-term moisture conditions of concrete slabs. They are only indicators of moisture conditions at the time the tests are conducted.

## 11. Bond Test

It is recommended this test be used to determine the compatibility of resilient flooring adhesives to concrete subfloors after removal of old adhesives\*, curing agents, parting compounds, dust inhibitors, oil, grease, paint, varnish and other special surface treatments or conditions. Using the

\*Some previously manufactured asphaltic “cutback” adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions, refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute’s publication “Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings.”

flooring material and recommended adhesives, install 3' x 3' panels spaced approximately 50' apart throughout the subfloor area. Select areas next to walls, columns or other light traffic areas. Tape edges of panels to prevent edge drying of adhesive. When testing where a curing agent has been used, the curing agent must be removed in some areas for bond testing.

If the panels are securely bonded after a period of 72 hours, you may conclude that the subfloor surface is sufficiently clean of foreign material for satisfactory installation of the resilient flooring. Material can be considered "securely bonded" if an unusual amount of force is required to lift it from the subfloor.

## 12. Alkali

Alkaline salts in solution with moisture, which exude from drying cement or which work their way up from the earth in concrete on grade or below grade, have a tendency to prevent or destroy satisfactory bonding of adhesives by sheer physical displacement. They can leave unsightly salt deposits at the seams of sheet materials and joints of tiles. They can also have a deteriorating effect on the overall installation.

Concrete floors should be tested for alkalinity before the installation of Armstrong resilient flooring. The pH scale runs from 0 to 14, with 7 being neutral. Below 7 is considered acidic while above 7 is alkaline. When testing for pH, the allowable readings for the installation of Armstrong flooring are 5 to 9 on the pH scale.

The most common form of testing is the use of a wide-range pH paper or tape. Distilled water is placed on the slab and the pH tape is placed on that area. A chart normally supplied with the tape allows you to determine the alkalinity based on the color of the test tape.

The pH of new concrete will run approximately 12 to 13, but with drying, the pH lowers to a more neutral range. In the presence of a continuing water source, alkali can continue to be carried to the surface of a concrete slab. Therefore, if testing shows high alkalinity, it is important to determine the cause.

Rinsing with clear water is the best way to lower alkalinity, but it cannot prevent the future deposit of alkali on the surface of the slab. While traditionally, acidic washes have been used to neutralize alkalinity, it is important to remember acids can leave a residue which can also be detrimental to the final installation.

**The testing of concrete for alkalinity can show the amount of alkalinity only at the time the test is run, and cannot be used to predict long-term conditions.**

## 13. Residual Adhesives

Some previously manufactured asphaltic "cutback" adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions,

refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute’s publication “Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings.”

The following guidelines for adhesive removal pertain to resilient flooring adhesives only. All others adhesives are to be removed 100%:

Degree of Removal	Products
100% Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Linoleum</li> <li>■ All vinyl-backed sheet and tile floors</li> <li>■ Luxury solid vinyl flooring</li> </ul>
80% of the overall area of the original substrate must be exposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All felt-backed sheet floors</li> <li>■ SAFETY ZONE tile</li> <li>■ EXCELON Static Dissipative Tile (SDT)</li> </ul> <p><b>Subfloor must be porous when installing SDT.</b></p>
Adhesives must be left so that no ridges or puddles are evident and what remains is a thin, smooth film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All vinyl composition tile except SAFETY ZONE and SDT.</li> </ul>

As an alternative, you can apply a cementitious underlayment, such as S-184 or S-194 as approved by the underlayment manufacturer for use over residual asphalt cutback adhesives. All warranties and/or performance guarantees concerning underlayment failure rest with the underlayment manufacturer and not with the manufacturer of the resilient flooring.

**Note: Many adhesive removal products contain solvents that leave a residue within the subfloor. This residue can negatively affect the new adhesive and bleed through the new floor covering. The warranties provided by manufacturers of new floor covering materials will not cover instances where existing subfloor conditions damage their products or affect their installation.**

The use of asbestos encapsulants or bridging materials over asphaltic adhesive is not recommended. These products may affect the bonding properties of the new adhesive.

#### 14. Preparation of Concrete Subfloors

The surface of a concrete subfloor must be dry, smooth and structurally sound. It must also be free of depressions, scale or foreign deposits of any kind.

Remove all paint, varnish, oil and wax from all subfloors. A good paint remover for concrete subfloors is a solution of Trisodium Phosphate and hot water. Paints with a chlorinated rubber or resin base that cannot be removed by Trisodium Phosphate may be removed by grinding with a concrete or terrazzo grinder. Armstrong does not recommend the use of solvents to remove paints or old adhesive residues because the solvents can remain in the concrete and negatively affect the new installation.

After the concrete has cured and is dry, clean construction joints, saw cuts, score marks and cracks, and fill with an underlayment such as S-183, S-184 or S-194 on any grade level. S-172 Floor Patch may be used for this

purpose on suspended and on-grade **residential** applications. Repaired areas must be finished flush with the surface of the concrete and allowed to fully dry before the installation of the floor covering.

Actual expansion joints with elastomeric fillers are designed to absorb movement in concrete slabs. Cementitious underlayments, patches and resilient flooring installed across expansion joints often crack or buckle when the slabs move. Armstrong does not recommend flooring products be installed across expansion or isolation joints. Expansion joint covers are available for use with various floor coverings and should be specified by the architect.

Dusty concrete slabs may be primed with one coat of S-185 Primer. Sweep or vacuum the concrete and apply the S-185 with a 3/8" nap paint roller. You may also prime concrete subfloors with the recommended flooring adhesive for the material about to be installed. After sweeping/vacuumping, apply the adhesive using a smooth-edge trowel. When using adhesive as a primer, allow the adhesive to dry completely. After drying, install the flooring in accordance with the recommended installation system. **NOTE:** A dusty concrete floor on-grade or below-grade may be a sign of alkali salts.

Sometimes a rough concrete floor can be smoothed with wet, sharp sand and a floor machine equipped with carborundum stones. If the concrete subfloor is extremely rough or uneven, it may be too great a job to smooth it this way. In this case, apply a mastic underlayment such as S-183, S-184 or S-194. Scaly and cracked concrete will not be a good base for resilient flooring.

## **F. EXISTING RESILIENT FLOORS**

Armstrong resilient floor products (except EXCELON SDT, TRANSLATIONS Tile, PERSPECTIVE Tile and NATURAL OPTIONS) may be installed over a **single layer** of existing resilient flooring if the proper installation system is used for the new product and the old resilient flooring meets the following conditions:

1. Is not textured or embossed enough to show through the new installation.
2. Do not install any resilient floor products over SAFETY ZONE tile or SAFEGUARD products, other slip-retardant flooring or rubber tile.
3. Is completely and firmly bonded (not Perimiflor, Interflex or Armafelt Options).
4. Was properly installed over recommended underlayments and subfloors recommended as suitable for the new resilient flooring.
5. Shows no evidence of moisture or alkaline.
6. Is not a cushion-backed (foam backed) floor.
7. Waxes, polishes and other finishes are removed with a commercially available stripper. For existing linoleum, the stripper should not exceed a pH of 10.
8. Indentations or damaged areas have been replaced or repaired.

**Note: The responsibility for determining if the old resilient flooring is well-bonded to the subfloor, and is not textured or embossed enough to show**

**through the final installation, rests with the retailer and the installer. Installations of rotovinyls over existing resilient flooring may be more susceptible to show-through than inlaid floors. Installations over existing resilient flooring may be more susceptible to indentations.**

Other Options and Exceptions:

1. Only felt-backed sheet flooring may be installed over existing on-grade and below-grade tile.
2. Do not install vinyl-backed flooring or linoleum over existing on-grade or below-grade tile.
3. Do not install any vinyl-backed flooring over existing asphalt tile.
4. S-199 Liquid Underlayment or S-194 Patch, Underlayment and Embossing Leveler mixed with S-195 Underlayment Additive can be used to smooth the embossed textures of approved existing **residential** resilient floors. **S-199 is the only leveler recommended when installing Patina Solarian or Designer Solarian.** S-199 or S-194 mixed with S-195 must be used when installing fully adhered felt-backed floors over existing rotovinyls.
5. Existing Glazecraft, Glazecraft II and Components installations must either be removed or, where applicable, covered with S-199, S-194 mixed with S-195 or an appropriate wood underlayment.
6. Interflex products may be installed over existing rotovinyl installations, however, the perimeter of the installation must be secured with quarter-round molding or wall base.
7. Underlayment boards are not recommended over cushion-backed floors (foam backings) and these types of floor coverings should be removed.

#### **G. POLYMERIC POURED (SEAMLESS) FLOORS**

All Armstrong resilient flooring (except SDT or Interflex) may be installed directly over polymeric poured (seamless) floors. The polymeric poured (seamless) floor must meet the following conditions:

1. Be well cured and free of any residual solvent, structurally sound and well bonded to a concrete subfloor. Any loose or damaged areas must be completely removed and patched with S-183, S-184 or S-194 as necessary.
2. Have no history of moisture-related problems.
3. Be smooth. Remove any “nubby” texture with wet, sharp sand and a floor machine equipped with carborundum stones. Do not use a skim coat of latex underlayment to smooth the surface as it will not adhere reliably to the poured-on floor.
4. Waxes, polishes and other finishes are removed with a commercially available stripper. Make sure substrate is completely dry after wet stripping and rinsing.

To install SDT over polymeric poured floors, the surface must be roughened and then a Portland cement-type underlayment such as S-194 applied. The S-194 would need to be mixed with the S-195 Underlayment Additive. A depth of at least 1/4" of S-194 must be applied to make it porous enough to install SDT.

**Note: The responsibility for determining if the existing poured-on floor is well-bonded to the concrete, and is not textured enough to show through**

**the final installation, rests with the contractor and the installer.**

## **H. METAL**

Armstrong commercial felt-backed sheet floors and tile (except SDT) may be installed directly to steel, stainless steel, aluminum, lead, copper, brass and bronze substrates using the recommended adhesive for each specific flooring product and substrate (see VI Adhesives).

Armstrong commercial vinyl-backed sheet floors may be installed directly to steel, stainless steel and aluminum.

Armstrong linoleum may be installed directly to steel, stainless steel, aluminum, lead and copper.

To install SDT over metal, the surface must be roughened and then a Portland cement-type underlayment such as S-194 applied. The S-194 would need to be mixed with the S-195. A depth of at least 1/4" of S-194 must be applied to make it porous enough to install SDT.

Metal substrates must be installed according to the manufacturer's recommendations and must be roughened and cleaned before installation of the floor covering. If there are low places, they should be leveled with S-194 mixed with S-195.

## **I. CERAMIC TILE, QUARRY TILE, TERRAZZO AND MARBLE**

All Armstrong resilient sheet floors and tile (except SDT) may be installed directly over ceramic tile, quarry tile, terrazzo or marble subfloors on all grade levels which are firmly bonded to a structurally sound substrate.

To install SDT over ceramic tile, quarry tile, terrazzo or marble, the surface must be roughened and then a Portland cement-type underlayment such as S-194 applied. The S-194 would need to be mixed with the S-195. A depth of at least 1/4" of S-194 must be applied to make it porous enough to install SDT.

Clean the floor of all paint, varnish, oil, wax and finishes. Roughen glazed or very smooth surfaces and repair badly fitted joints or cracks with S-183, S-184 or S-194. If the floors are badly worn or have low places, they should be leveled with S-183, S-184 or S-194.

## **J. TROWELABLE UNDERLAYMENTS, PATCHES AND LEVELERS\***

1. S-172 Floor Patch/Skim Coat
2. S-183 Fast Setting Cement Based Underlayment
3. S-184 Fast Setting Patch and Underlayment
4. S-185 Latex Primer and Additive
5. S-194 Patch, Underlayment and Embossing Leveler / S-195 Underlayment Additive
6. S-199 One-Part Embossing Leveler

\*See Work Site Environment statement on page 32.

# S-172 FLOOR PATCH/SKIM COAT

**▲ WARNING** S-172 EYE AND SKIN IRRITANT

- Type:** S-172 Quick setting plaster-based compound
- Use:** Residential
- When used as a skim coat, Armstrong S-172 Floor Patch powder **must** be mixed with S-185 Latex Primer and Additive for repairing and smoothing (skim coating) dry, on-grade or suspended concrete.
  - When used as a floor patch, Armstrong S-172 Floor Patch powder must be mixed with either water or S-185 Latex Primer and Additive for filling cracks or holes on approved suspended wood underlayments and dry, on-grade or suspended concrete.
- Pot Life:** 30 minutes
- Compressive Strength:** 3,400 psi after 28 days
- Unit Size:** S-172 - 25-pound bag
- Mix Ratio:** Three parts powder to one part water or S-185 (one pound powder to 6 ounces water or S-185)
- Shelf Life:** One year if not opened
- Floor Preparation:** All surfaces must be clean, dry and free of foreign matter, including dust, dirt, oil, grease, wax, old adhesive\* and paint. Sealers and curing compounds must be removed unless recommended by the manufacturer for use with cementitious underlayments. Concrete floors must be free of excess moisture and/or alkali.
- Mixing:** For best results, place liquid in a metal pan, mortar box or other appropriate mixing container and slowly add powder to the liquid to form a mixture which can be easily spread and troweled smoothly. We recommend mixing three parts powder to one part cool water or S-185. These amounts may be adjusted as desired. Keep mixing containers clean at all times since unused material in the container will contaminate newly mixed underlayment. Working time for mixing and troweling is approximately 30 minutes depending upon temperature and humidity.

\* Some previously manufactured asphaltic “cutback” adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions, refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute’s publication “Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings.”

**Application:** Pour the thoroughly mixed patch from the mixing container and apply using a smooth edge trowel such as the Armstrong S-890. Finish flush with the adjacent subfloor. Before installing flooring, allow to cure 1–2 hours depending upon temperature and humidity. After curing, level unevenness by using a hand-held rubbing stone or by grinding.

- Precautions:**
1. Do **not** use to level (overall skim coat) wood, ceramic, terrazzo or marble subfloors. Do **not** use on below-grade concrete subfloors.
  2. Before applying S-172, concrete subfloors may be primed with S-185 Latex Primer and Additive.
  3. Working time for mixing and troweling S-172 is approximately 30 minutes, depending upon temperature, humidity and subfloor porosity.
  4. Working time of adhesives may be reduced when using S-172.

# S-183 FAST-SETTING CEMENT-BASED UNDERLAYMENT

**▲ WARNING** S-183 INJURIOUS TO EYES  
CAUSES SKIN IRRITATION  
RESPIRATORY HAZARD BY INHALATION

- Type:** Fast-setting, Portland cement-type material mixed with plain water; does not require a separate additive.
- Use:** Commercial/Residential
- Patching and leveling concrete on any grade level, ceramic tile, quarry tile, marble and terrazzo (except metal terrazzo strips)
  - Patching and repairing small voids in wood underlayments
  - Not recommended for use on stripwood floors or overall leveling of wood subfloors
- Coverage:** 10-pound box - 12 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
20-pound bag - 24 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
40-pound bag - 48 sq ft at 1/8" thick
- Pot Life:** 15 minutes
- Compressive Strength:** 4,500 psi after 28 days
- Single Layer Application Range Thickness:** 0-1/2"
- Maximum Thickness:** 1"
- Unit Size:** 10-pound box; 20- and 40-pound bag
- Mix Ratio:** Four parts powder to one part water  
One pound powder to 3 ounces water  
(10 pounds powder to one quart water)
- Shelf Life:** One year if not opened
- Floor Preparation:** All surfaces must be clean and free of dirt, oil, grease, plaster, curing compounds, old adhesive\* and other foreign matter. Concrete floors must be free of excess moisture and/or alkali. Dampen concrete floors with clean water or prime with S-185 Latex Primer. Do not leave standing puddles of water or primer. Apply underlayment while floor is still damp with water or when primer is dry to the touch. When filling small voids in wood floors, prime areas to be patched with S-185 for a superior bond. Allow primer to dry before underlayment is applied.

\* Some previously manufactured asphaltic "cutback" adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions, refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute's publication "Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings."

**Mixing:** Powder and water are easily mixed in a pail or mortar box. Mix 10 pounds of S-183 to one quart of cool water. Mixing containers must be clean at all times, since unused material in the container will contaminate newly mixed underlayment. Mix to a smooth, lump-free consistency; do not over mix. S-183 should remain workable for 10-15 minutes. Do not add extra water after proper consistency has been achieved. If underlayment starts to set up before it is used, discard it. Do not attempt to remix.

**Application:** Pour the thoroughly mixed S-183 from the mixing container and apply using a smooth edge trowel such as the Armstrong S-890. Apply sufficient pressure to the underlayment with the trowel to secure adequate bonding to the cleaned, damp-mopped or primed subfloor surface. During troweling, it is helpful to dip the trowel in clean water from time to time to keep the mix from adhering to the trowel. S-183 may be applied in single layers to a maximum thickness of 1/2" or the total of two layers (up to 1/2" each) not to exceed a thickness of 1". Allow the first layer to cure for at least 60 minutes before applying the second layer.

**Precautions:**

1. Most water-based adhesives applied over S-183 will exhibit shorter working times than expected. This can be corrected by the application of S-185 Latex Primer to the surface of the patch before spreading the adhesive.
2. When using S-665 or S-670 Adhesive, the underlayment must dry at least 2 hours.
3. When using S-89 Adhesive, allow adequate open time for the adhesive to set up before installing Armstrong tile.
4. Warm or hot water will shorten the working time of S-183.

## S-184 FAST-SETTING PATCH AND UNDERLAYMENT

**▲ WARNING** S-184 INJURIOUS TO EYES  
CAUSES SKIN IRRITATION  
RESPIRATORY HAZARD BY INHALATION

- Type:** Fast-setting, Portland cement-type material mixed with plain water; does not require a separate additive.
- Use:** Commercial/Residential
- Patching, skim coating and overall leveling concrete on any grade level, ceramic tile, quarry tile, marble and terrazzo (except metal terrazzo strips).
  - Covering existing asphalt cutback adhesive over concrete only.
  - Patching, repairing small voids and skim coating wood underlayments; may be used for overall leveling of approved suspended wood underlayments.
  - Not recommended for use on stripwood floors.
- Coverage:** 3-pound box - 4 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
10-pound box - 15 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
25-pound bag - 38 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
40-pound bag - 64 sq ft at 1/8" thick
- Pot Life:** 20 minutes
- Compressive Strength:** 4,500 psi after 28 days
- Single Layer Application Range Thickness:** 0-1/4"
- Maximum Thickness:** 1/2"
- Unit Size:** 3- and 10-pound box; 25- and 40-pound bag
- Mix Ratio:** Three parts powder to one part water  
One pound powder to 5 ounces water
- Shelf Life:** One year if not opened
- Floor Preparation:** All surfaces must be clean and free of dirt, oil, grease, plaster, curing compounds, polish, wax and other foreign matter. Old asphaltic "cutback" adhesive\* residue may either be removed or covered directly with S-184. Concrete floors

\* Some previously manufactured asphaltic "cutback" adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions, refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute's publication "Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings."

must be free of excess moisture and/or alkali. Dampen concrete floors with clean water or prime with S-185 Latex Primer. Do not leave standing puddles of water or primer. Apply underlayment while floor is still damp with water or when primer is dry to the touch. When filling small voids in wood floors, prime areas to be patched with S-185 for a superior bond. Allow primer to dry before underlayment is applied.

**Mixing:**

Powder and water are easily mixed in a pail or mortar box. Mix three parts of S-184 to one part cool water. Mixing containers must be clean at all times, since unused material in the container will contaminate newly mixed underlayment. Mix to a smooth, lump-free consistency; do not over mix. S-184 should remain workable for 10-15 minutes. Do not add extra water after proper consistency has been achieved. If underlayment starts to set up before it is used, discard it. Do not attempt to remix.

**Application:**

Pour the thoroughly mixed S-184 from the mixing container and apply using a smooth edge trowel such as the Armstrong S-890. Finish flush with the adjacent subfloor. Apply sufficient pressure to the patch with the trowel to secure adequate bonding to the cleaned, damp-mopped or primed subfloor surface. During troweling, it is helpful to dip the trowel in clean water from time to time to keep the mix from sticking to the trowel. S-184 may be applied in single layers to a maximum thickness of 1/4" or the total of two layers (up to 1/4" each) not to exceed a thickness of 1/2". Allow the first layer to dry for at least 60 minutes before applying the second layer.

**S-184 Over Existing Cutback Residue:** Remove all ridges, puddles and high spots to a point that the adhesive looks like a stain on the surface of the concrete. Using the S-184 mixed with **water**, apply the underlayment using a 1/8" x 1/8" x 1/8" square-notched trowel over the cutback adhesive residue. Let dry completely. Again using S-184 mixed with **water**, apply a second coat of underlayment using a smooth-edge trowel filling in the recessed areas to provide a smooth finished substrate and covering the cutback completely to prevent bleeding through the new flooring.

**Precautions:**

1. Most water-based adhesives applied over S-184 will exhibit shorter working times than expected.
2. When using S-665 or S-670 Adhesive, the underlayment must dry at least 2 hours.
3. When using S-89 Adhesive, allow adequate open time for the adhesive to set up before installing Armstrong tile.
4. Warm or hot water will shorten the working time of S-184.

- Type:** Latex-based liquid primer and additive for S-172
- Use:** Commercial/Residential
- Armstrong S-185 Latex Primer and Additive is recommended for use as a primer with all Armstrong patches, underlayments and latex-based adhesives
  - Can be used on all grades of concrete, poured in place gypsum underlayments, approved wood underlayments, ceramic tile, quarry tile, terrazzo and marble.
  - Primer for wood and concrete with self-adhering tile
  - Additive for S-172 Floor Patch/Skim Coat
- Coverage:** Quart - 100 sq ft  
Gallon - 400 sq ft
- Coverage depends on the porosity of the subfloor
- Unit Size:** Quart and gallon
- Shelf Life:** One year if not opened
- Floor Preparation:** All surfaces must be clean and free of dirt, oil, grease, plaster, curing compounds, adhesives\* and other foreign matter. Concrete floors must be free of excess moisture and/or alkali.
- Usage:** Apply S-185 liberally with a short nap paint roller or a coarse fiber brush. Avoid puddling. Use at full strength. Do not dilute. Do not apply at temperatures below 32°F (0°C) or above 100°F (38°C). **Allow to dry thoroughly** before applying patches, underlayments or latex adhesives. Drying time will vary with job site conditions. Use this product with positive fresh air ventilation. A slight odor of latex may be present until material dries.

\* Some previously manufactured asphaltic “cutback” adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions, refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute’s publication “Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings.”

# S-194 PATCH, UNDERLAYMENT AND EMBOSSING LEVELER/S-195 UNDERLAYMENT ADDITIVE

**▲ WARNING**    **S-194** INJURIOUS TO EYES  
CAUSES SKIN IRRITATION  
RESPIRATORY HAZARD BY INHALATION

- Type:** Fast-setting, Portland cement-type material mixed with plain water or S-195 Underlayment Additive.
- Use:** Commercial/Residential
- Patching, skim coating and overall leveling concrete on any grade level, ceramic tile, marble, quarry tile and terrazzo (except metal terrazzo strips) when mixed with water or S-195.
  - Patching, skim coating and overall leveling all grade levels of steel, stainless steel, brass and lead when mixed with S-195.
  - Covering existing asphalt cutback adhesive residue over concrete only when mixed with water.
  - Patching, repairing small voids, and skim coating wood underlayments; may be used for overall leveling of approved suspended wood underlayments when mixed with S-195. Not recommended for use on stripwood floors.
  - Filling and leveling the embossing of single-layer existing resilient flooring prior to the installation of new **residential** resilient flooring when mixed with S-195.
- Coverage:** 3-pound box - 5 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
10-pound box - 16 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
25-pound bag - 40 sq ft at 1/8" thick  
embossing leveler:  
10 lb powder to 2 quarts S-195 – 580 - 815 sq. ft.
- Pot Life:** 12-20 minutes at 73°F (23°C) when mixed with water; 14-20 minutes at 73°F (23°C) when mixed with S-195
- Compressive Strength:** > 5,000 psi after 28 days
- Single Layer Application Range Thickness:** 0-1/2"
- Maximum Thickness:** 1"
- Unit Size:** S-194: 3- and 10-pound box; 25-pound bag; S-195: Quart, Gallon
- Mix Ratio:** Three parts powder to one part water  
One pound powder to 5 ounces water  
Two and one-half parts powder to one part S-195  
One pound powder to 6.5 ounces S-195 (10 pounds powder to 2 quarts S-195 or 25 pounds powder to 5 quarts S-195)
- Shelf Life:** One year if not opened

**Floor  
Preparation:**

All surfaces must be clean and free of dirt, oil, grease, plaster, curing compounds, polish, wax and other foreign matter. Old asphaltic “cutback” adhesive\* residue may either be removed or covered directly with S-194. Concrete floors must be free of excess moisture and/or alkali. Dampen concrete floors with clean water or prime with S-185 Latex Primer. Do not leave standing puddles of water or primer. Apply underlayment while floor is still damp with water or when primer is dry to the touch. When filling small voids in wood floors, prime areas to be patched with S-185 for a superior bond. Allow primer to dry before underlayment is applied. For a superior bond when flashing and skim coating, mix S-194 powder with S-195. Do not prime existing resilient flooring.

**Mixing as a  
Patch or  
Underlayment:**

Powder and water or latex are easily mixed in a pail or mortar box. Mix three parts of S-194 to one part cool water or mix two and one-half parts of S-194 to one part S-195. Mixing containers must be clean at all times, since unused material in the container will contaminate newly mixed underlayment. Mix to a smooth, lump-free consistency; do not over mix. S-194 should remain workable for 12-15 minutes. To extend the pot life, periodically continue stirring the unused patch in the mixing container. Do not add extra water after proper consistency has been achieved. If underlayment starts to set up before it is used, discard it. S-194 must be mixed with S-195 when using over wood underlayments, filling wood underlayment joints and over metal substrates. Flooring can be applied after the underlayment has dried 60 to 90 minutes.

**Application  
as a Patch or  
Underlayment:**

Pour the thoroughly mixed S-194 from the mixing container and apply using a smooth edge trowel such as the Armstrong S-890. Finish flush with the adjacent subfloor. Apply sufficient pressure to the patch with the trowel to fill defects and to feather-edge the patch to the subfloor. During troweling, it is helpful to dip the trowel in clean water from time to time to keep the mix from sticking to the trowel. S-194 may be applied in single layers to a maximum thickness of 1/2" or the total of two layers (up to 1/2" each) not to exceed a thickness of 1". Allow the first layer to dry for at least 60 minutes before applying the second layer.

**S-194 Over Existing Cutback Residue:** Remove all ridges, puddles and high spots to a point that the adhesive looks like a stain on the surface of the concrete. Using the S-194 mixed with **water**, apply the patch using a 1/8" x 1/8" x 1/8" square-notched trowel over the cutback adhesive residue. Let dry completely.

\* Some previously manufactured asphaltic “cutback” adhesives contained asbestos (see **WARNING** statement on page x). For removal instructions, refer to the Resilient Floor Covering Institute’s publication “Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings.”

Again using S-194 mixed with **water**, apply a second coat of patch using a smooth-edge trowel filling in the recessed areas to provide a smooth finished substrate and covering the cutback completely to prevent bleeding through the new flooring.

**S-194 Over Metal:** Metal substrates must be cleaned and roughened before applying the S-194. Using the S-194 mixed with S-195, apply the patch over the metal and allow the patch to dry completely before installing the floor covering.

**Mixing as an  
Embossing  
Leveler:**

Mix two and one-half parts powder by volume to one part S-195 using a clean mixing container at all times. Mix to a smooth, lump-free consistency; do not over mix. Do not add extra latex additive after proper consistency has been achieved. If embossing leveler starts to set up before it is used, discard it.

**Application as  
an Embossing  
Leveler:**

For best results, pour the S-194 from the bucket immediately after mixing. Although the working time is 25 minutes, S-194 when mixed with S-195 has a pot life of 14-20 minutes at 73°F (23°C). After placing the S-194 on the substrate, fill the embossed areas of the existing floor while removing most of the S-194 from the unembossed areas using a smooth-edge trowel such as the Armstrong S-890. Hold the trowel on a 60° angle and apply the leveler with the same motion as spreading a conventional adhesive, troweling at a 45° angle to the embossing. This product should not be over troweled or retroweled. Clean the tools frequently with water and a coarse cloth. Drying time is approximately 1-1/2 to 2 hours depending on atmospheric conditions. To achieve proper bonding, S-194 must be completely dry. Trowel ridges and unevenness in the S-194 can be removed by scraping with a wallpaper scraper or the front edge of a smooth-edge trowel. Under most conditions, one application of S-194 will level the existing resilient flooring sufficiently. Inspect the existing resilient flooring and S-194 for smoothness after the S-194 has dried completely. At that time, you may determine that you will need a second application. The second application will normally dry faster, approximately one hour. Make sure the S-194 is completely dry before proceeding.

**Precautions when used as a Patch and Underlayment:**

1. Most water-based adhesives applied over S-194 will exhibit shorter working times than expected.
2. When using S-665 or S-670 Adhesive, S-194 must dry at least 2 hours.
3. When using S-89 Adhesive, allow adequate open time for the adhesive to set up before installing Armstrong tile.
4. Warm or hot water will shorten the working time of S-194.

**Precautions when used as an Embossing Leveler:**

1. When applying Armstrong adhesives over S-194, use the fine notching of the S-891 or S-892 Notched Steel Trowel.
2. Use S-665 Adhesive when installing Interflex products over the S-194.
3. Do not use S-670 Adhesive over S-194 used as an embossing leveler.
4. Most adhesives will exhibit shorter working times over S-194 used as an embossing leveler.

# S-199 ONE-PART EMBOSSING LEVELER

**▲ WARNING** S-199 EYE AND SKIN IRRITANT

**Type:** One-part latex resin

**Use:** Residential

- Filling and leveling the embossing of existing **residential resilient** flooring prior to the installation of new resilient flooring
- Provides an alternative to the removal of old flooring
- Can be used over all wear layers
- Prevents pattern show-through

**Coverage:** Depending upon the amount/depth of embossing in the old floor, one (1) gallon will cover approximately 24-48 sq. yd.

**Unit Size:** Quart, Gallon

**Shelf Life:** One year if not opened

**Floor Preparation:** It is the flooring dealer's and/or the installer's responsibility to determine that the existing resilient floor is clean, dry, well bonded and free of all foreign matter including dirt, adhesive, paint, wax or similar coatings. Remove old floor finishes completely by wet stripping with a liquid stripper such as Armstrong S-325 New Beginning. Before applying S-199, make sure substrate is completely dry after wet stripping and rinsing. Be sure the existing resilient floor shows no evidence of moisture or alkaline salts. When installing new Interflex flooring, the entire substrate must be smoothed with S-199.

## Existing Resilient Flooring

S-199 is recommended over single layer, fully adhered existing resilient floors with the exception of cushion-backed sheet flooring, perimeter-bonded sheet flooring and below-grade tile. The existing flooring must be properly installed over recommended subfloors and underlayments.

**Only Armstrong adhesives and Armstrong flooring products are recommended over S-199.**

**Note:** Although applying S-199 over felt-backed rotovinyls is recommended, it does not improve the indentation characteristics of that substrate. Secure any installation over rotovinyl floors with quarter-round molding or wall base regardless of the installation system.

**Note:** Stir S-199 before using.

**Application:** Pour a small amount of S-199 onto the floor and fill the embossed areas by using a smooth-edge trowel such as the Armstrong S-890. Continue pouring small amounts on the floor and troweling smooth. Hold the trowel at a 60° angle and apply the Leveler with the same motion as spreading a conventional adhesive, troweling at a 45° angle to the embossing. Smooth any ridges that may form. Remove S-199 from the raised unembossed areas with the trowel. Working time is approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Drying time is one to two hours depending on temperature, humidity and thickness of application. S-199 must be completely dry before proceeding with the installation of new flooring. After the leveler is completely dry, trowel ridges and unevenness can be removed by scraping with a wallpaper scraper or the front edge of the S-890 Trowel.

Under most conditions, one application of S-199 will sufficiently level the existing flooring. If the new flooring has very little embossing, the installer should inspect the initial application for smoothness after it has dried. The installer may determine a second application of S-199 is needed to properly smooth the substrate. The second application must be made after the first has completely dried (1-2 hours). The second application must be allowed to completely dry before proceeding.

**Precautions:**

1. Do not use S-199 for patching holes or cracks, filling floor board joints or overall leveling of concrete or wood subfloors.
2. Use only S-665 Adhesive for Interflex flooring. Staples may be used where applicable. Do not use S-670.
3. Do not apply over tile below grade.
4. Do not use where excessive moisture, alkali or hydrostatic pressure is present.