

Toby Technical Bulletin 19

Cleaning of Application Equipment

A finished timber floor has to be free of dust and other contaminants. A nicely finished job guarantees not only a happy end customer but also increases the chance that the floorsander gets paid without headaches and excuses, furthermore it creates an ongoing business by word of mouth referral.

Clear coatings for timber flooring enhance the beauty of the timber but also highlight imperfections like dust, grit, hairs or other contaminants on the floor especially in front of windows or under lighting.

Many floorsanders take every possible precaution towards the right preparation including thorough vacuuming the floors or sealing off doors etc prior to the coating application, but sometimes they seem to be less careful regarding the cleanliness of their application equipment.

New rollers lose a lot of fibres and should be cleaned with the right cleaning solution prior to the first use. They must not be used for the final coat until they have stopped losing fibres.

The right cleaning solvent is a very critical part of the job and often decides between success or failure of the floor. Polyurethane's react with various substances including water and alcohol. The reaction product forms gel particles particularly if a roller or brush is not properly cleaned and afterwards stored in the wrong solvent. Methylated spirits chemically is a blend of ethanol (ethyl alcohol), methanol (methyl alcohol) and water, and contains small proportions of other products to make it undrinkable.

Some cheap grades of hardware store methylated spirits contain a substantial quantity of water. Methylated spirits is not recommended as a cleaning solvent as it can cause severe problems especially with the formation of gel particles. These are small transparent lumps that stick to the roller, brush or applicator. They can't be re-dissolved and will be transferred to the floor if the contaminated equipment is used for the application.

Polyurethane's are rather complicated chemicals and there can be significant differences between products depending on the used raw materials or the manufacturing process. The same cleaning solvent may not work as good for all polyurethane's.

Recommended Procedure

1. Remove excess finish from roller using a ring roller cleaner.
2. Wash the roller thoroughly in a drum or bucket using Toby Super Solvent.
3. Discard the solvent used for the first wash and rinse roller a second time in clean solvent.
4. Place the roller in a separate container with fresh Toby Super Solvent for storage. **Note: it is a good idea to keep finish coat equipment stored separate from Initial equipment.**
5. Another simple way to store rollers is to suspend them above the solvent in a closed container, this way they are kept moist by the solvent fumes without actually having to sit in the solvent itself. The roller must be perfectly clean to be stored that way.

To minimise the amount of solvent used, rotate it down the chain each week - discard the dirtiest material and replace it with solvent from the next wash step. Make sure that you always use fresh solvent to replenish the final coat storage container.

Toby Super Solvent is a special blend of different strong acting polyurethane solvents and is designed specially for the cleaning of Toby solvent based polyurethane's.

For further technical advice call our 7 Day a Week Technical Hotline on 1800 073 530.

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