



EUROCORK Technical Questions Answered

BINDERS

EuroCork uses a polyurethane resin as binding agent of the granules and pieces of cork. This is a top quality binder, as it maintains the characteristics of the agglomerated cork very similar to the ones we could expect on natural plain cork. This is a secure binder, as it has no toxicology and an extremely low VOC content.

THICKNESS OF VENEER

Thickness of cork veneers depends, of course, on the type of the cork covering. However, we can say that it is normally between 0.6 mm and 1 mm.

DENSITY

Density of cork floorings is normally divided in 3 categories: low-density 400-450 Kg/m³, medium-density 450-500 Kg/m³ and high-density 500-550 (and above) Kg/m³. The choice of the right density for a cork floor covering has to be made taking into attention the level of use, the type of floor and the type of finishing. For press-cork sheets (underlayment) the density can vary according to the type and application. However, typical values are around 180-220 Kg/m³.

FINISHES

Floorings from EUROCORK can be delivered unfinished (natural) OR coated with WEARTOP (Floating floor) or AQUA2K (Glue-down):

- UV cured scratch resistant WEARTOP "WTMAT"; FLOATING CORK FLOOR
- Two components waterbased PU lacquer "AQUA2K", GLUE-DOWN CORK FLOOR

UV CURED SCRATCH RESISTANT WEARTOP

Using new, state-of-the-art resins which are extremely elastic and advanced nanoparticle technology, WEARTOP finish offers unprecedented performance and an outstanding appearance. Coating hardness and abrasion resistance are not achieved at the expense of flexibility. Furthermore, WEARTOP offers optimal micro-scratch resistance. Rubbing the surface with steel wool has negligible effect and no black marks are formed when the surface is scratched with a metal object. The resistance to scratches and sanding marks caused by hard dirt particles and sand is remarkably high, making WEARTOP the perfect coating for our everyday needs.

In contrast to anti-abrasive top coats with ceramic/aluminium oxide, WEARTOP can be sanded and is therefore easy to re-coat. The optimal balance provided by WEARTOP allows the cork floorings to continue to be easily cleaned and maintained. Furthermore, due to the advanced nanoparticle technology, the cork surface will have an outstanding appearance: smooth, warm, deep-clear and natural. No extra sealant is required.

One major ecological benefit of WEARTOP is that only reactive products are used: this means that it is solvent free and especially environmental friendly. There is no organic solvents and no VOC emission during processing, facilitating compliance with stringent environmental regulations.

WATERBASED 2 COMPONENTS PU LACQUER

Probably, the most advanced waterbased factory-applied finish for cork. It is a two-component PUR waterborne multi-layer coating system. The most remarkable features of "AQUA2K" are the very high abrasion resistance, good compromise between hardness and elasticity and the very high chemical resistance of a two-component product. It's easy to maintain with common maintenance products, has no residual odour and keeps cork with its natural touch. Due to its excellent light-fastness, this finish is especially suited for use on coloured cork flooring.

A common characteristic of all these finishes is that they all are environmentally friendly, have negligible VOC content and are free of heavy metal, formaldehyde and insecticides/pesticides. This finish is compatible with Basic Coatings "Revitalizant" (Satin) which can be used as an extra coating to seal the seams of the glue-down cork flooring.

COLOR DIFFERENCES

Cork, as all natural products, has many different qualities, types and shades. In spite of all the care and control made during the production, these differences are maintained on finished cork coverings. This is an inherent characteristic of cork tiles, and part of its natural beauty. Always verify this by daylight before you start laying the floor. Proceeding in this manner, you can distribute the tiles in such a way that variations in structure and/or shade are not striking

UV LIGHT RESISTANCE

All natural products are affected by UV (sun light). Cork has a natural tendency to discolour. The factory finish has some resistance to UV radiation, but will not prevent the natural discoloration of cork entirely.

INDENTATION

Resilience is a natural characteristic of cork. So, cork coverings have a natural capacity to recuperate after static load. A recuperation of about 90% should be expected and the residual indentation is (normally) below 0.4 mm.

RESISTANCE OF FLOATING FLOORS TO WATER

EuroCork's GFIX cork floating floors have pre-treated, watertight HDF board. Furthermore, the edges of the panels are factory protected with the "JointShield" technology. Nevertheless, wet mopping should be avoided and spills or any excess of water should be cleaned as soon as possible.

The combination of "JointShield" impregnated joint and the high moisture resistant HDF core makes EUROCORK floating floors the most durable in the industry.

CASTOR CHAIRS

The concern about the effect of castor chairs makes sense, but not only on a cork floor. In fact, how long will any kind of flooring remain attractive under the heavy wear and tear of office castor chairs use? There are many cork installations on these conditions but, of course, protecting measures should be taken if you want your floor to last. So, further to the traditional caring measures like:

- Use of walk-off mats at entrance doors;
- Eliminate particles of dirt/grit;
- Vacuum or sweep as needed;
- Install proper protectors under "feet" of furniture;
- Periodically check floor for signs of wear;

On an office environment we recommend:

- - Use of wide casters on caster wheeled chairs;
- Use of a protective PVC mat under office chairs.

Plus, the cork floorings for commercial use are different than the ones for residential areas.

The bottom line is that regarding wear, cork can be treated like a wood floor: If it will damage a wood floor, then it will damage cork.

WHY FLOOR CARING?

The formation of scratches is a natural process independent on the type of flooring. Thus sooner or later the entire flooring must be worked over or replaced completely. The duration until such measures has to be taken depend on some factors:

- Wear intensity (domestic or public areas);
- Type of shoes that normally walk the floor;
- Quantity of dirt brought onto the floor;
- Kind of dirt brought in;
- How often (and how effective) is the floor being cleaned.

The type of flooring which has been used or the type of surface, respectively, has a major influence. Moreover it is not necessarily an advantage to have an extra hard surface (e.g. laminate) since hardness often also means brittleness. Elastic coatings are possibly able to resist heavy wear much better.

So first of all, a floor can be protected by keeping the mechanical stresses as little as possible. Wearing shoes with soft soles contribute to this aim as well as avoiding bringing in dirt (by using special cleaning mats in the entrance areas) and cleaning the floor regularly and thoroughly.

RADIANT FLOOR HEATING SYSTEM

Cork is normally suitable for under-floor heating. However some care must be taken when applying the floor (see instructions).

The air pockets in cork make it a great natural insulator and will affect slightly the transmission of heat. It is normal that a cork floor takes longer to warm up but the heat will be retained more efficiently.

With radiant heat, heat source is directly beneath the flooring covering which may gain moisture or dry out faster than in a home with conventional heating system. Cork tiles can be installed as long as customer understands that joints between tiles could become more visible during heating season.

The temperature should never be too high as it will give discomfort to feet, it may have influence on the bond of the adhesive used and it may create discoloration of the floor covering.

It's important that the radiant heating system should be turned on for at least 4-5 days before installation. New concrete slabs may require longer periods of time.

The floor temperature should be maintained between 20 to 25 °C. Surface temperature should never be above 28 °C. It must be taken into account that expansion and contraction of the cork flooring will occur. This is a natural consequence of changes in interior temperature as well as in the structure's moisture content.

GLUED TILES

Thick cork tiles can inhibit transfer of heat to floor surface. 6 mm or thinner cork works best.

The heating should be turned off 2 days before installation starts and must be turned on (in steps) again not earlier than 3 days after installation.

Adhesive used for installation of the tiles could lose strength when exposed to high temperatures (above 26 °C).

Customer should understand that gaps between parquet cork tiles could be visible during heating season.

FLOATING FLOORS

Floating floors move as a unit since they are not attached to the sub-floor. That means that visible signs of expansion/contraction take place at the edges of the room.

It is very important that the floor temperature should be maintained during installation at about 25 °C.

VOC's

Floor products from EUROCORK are approved against the criteria of "Kork-Logo" and "Toxproof". So, the volatile organic compounds that are expected on installations with cork floorings are below the limits of security and do not put in question the quality of indoor air.

CERTIFICATION

EUROCORK is certified ISO 9001:2000. This quality International Standard specifies requirements for a quality management system where an organization needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide product that meets customer and applicable regulatory requirements, and aims to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system.