



Stripping & Re-Sealing Procedures

Stripping the sealer from a floor is a costly, labor-intensive process that should only be attempted when all other reasonable methods of repair have failed. Before attempting to strip a floor, ask yourself these questions: (1) Is it absolutely necessary to strip the floor, or does it simply need sprucing up? Most floors fall into the "sprucing up" category. (2) Are there any areas that have worn through to bare tile? If so, can just these areas be stripped and repaired successfully, without stripping the entire floor? (3) Is this a project that can be started and completed in a safe and timely fashion? If not, consider the services of a qualified strip and re-seal crew.

Unlike stripping old wax build-up with an all purpose wax remover, stripping today's tough sealers requires the use of more harsh, sometimes hazardous chemicals in order to effectively remove all the layers of sealer from the surface of the floor. Ideally, knowing the specific name brand and type of sealer being removed would greatly reduce your labor costs, by reducing or eliminating time in the field spent on experiments for the right products and removal techniques. We at RoVal have developed a systematic approach to choosing the correct materials needed for the type of sealer being removed. By judging the unique reactions of several types of sealers when subjected to a methylene chloride based paint-and-varnish remover, we can determine the best recommendation. Here are a few descriptions of the more common types of sealers in today's marketplace and their reactions when exposed to methylene chloride strippers. References to RoVal products are made when possible.

WATER BASED ACRYLICS, such as *RoVal Saltillo Sealer Formula 1044*, will "gel and swell", becoming an opaque, sticky, gooey substance. On smooth surfaces, use a straight edge razor scraper and gently scrape the sealer/stripper residue from the surface. On rough surfaces, such as wire cut brick, use a steel wire brush instead of a paint scraper. Start at the grout joint closest to you and scrape away from you, being careful not to scratch or gouge the tile surface. Collect the sealer residue into a waste container, allow to dry and discard. Briskly wipe the surface of the tile with a wet rag soaked in lacquer thinner or xylene. The tile will temporarily get darker where it absorbs the solvent. Areas that do not absorb will look like off-white, lighter colored areas. Firmly rub these spots with the solvent soaked rag to remove them from the tile.

PETROLEUM BASED ACRYLICS, such as *RoVal Saltillo Sealer Formula 1088*, dissolve and can be easily removed by wiping the tile surface with a clean terry cloth rag. Follow up with a damp rag soaked in lacquer thinner or xylene.

PETROLEUM BASED URETHANES AND ALKYDS, such as *RoVal HGS-450*, have a much more violent reaction than most other sealers do. Typically, within seconds upon contact with a methylene chloride based stripper, these sealers blister and peel, turning into a powdery substance that can be easily removed by brushing the surface with a stiff bristle brush or scraping the residue off with a razor edge. Do not rush it! Let the stripper do the work for you.

WATER BASED AND PETROLEUM BASED SILICONE IMPREGNATORS, such as *RoVal Unique 281, Penetrating Tile & Grout Sealer or Hydro-Block WB* cannot be "stripped". Their effectiveness can only be diminished by a high pH (alkaline) rinsing of the surface. These sealers are generally unaffected by methylene chloride based strippers. Use *RoVal Nu-Clean Concentrate* diluted 1:1 with water. Apply solution to the area, allow to stand for several minutes and double rinse with clean water.

SEALER REMOVAL AND RE-SEAL PROCEDURES FOR MEXICAN SALTILLO TILE:

LIST OF MATERIALS:

Methylene chloride based paint and varnish remover (1 gallon per 50 square feet)
1 gallon lacquer thinner or xylene per 350 square feet
Blue painters masking tape
One flexible metal paint scraper or razor scraper
Several abrasive stripping pads
Several clean white terry cloth rags
A small metal bucket or a metal paint-rolling tray
A clean 4 inch paint brush
A straight edge to gather residue (try a piece of firm cardboard)
A stiff nylon bristle brush
Proper protective clothing and safety equipment

Always use the proper respiratory mask, safety goggles, gloves, etc. when using these products. Follow all precautions on labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) before attempting their use. Contact your RoVal representative for best procedures.

1. Always work in small (about one square foot), controlled area. If only a few specific tiles or a small area is to be stripped, isolate each tile or area by taping it off with masking tape and plastic sheeting (e.g. visqueen). Tape only onto the grout joints! Do not allow tape to adhere to the sealed surface of the surrounding tiles!
2. Pour ample amount of stripper into a paint roller tray. Use a clean paintbrush and apply the stripper liberally to the surface. Apply a sufficient amount of stripper to form a liquid film of approximately 1/16 to 1/8 inch thick.
3. Allow the stripper to stand for 10 to 20 seconds and watch for one of the specific reactions to occur. Choose the best removal method to suit your needs. If the stripper dries before you are able to remove the sealer, you have waited too long. Re-apply the stripper and attempt to remove the sealer again.
4. Collect the residue, let it dry and discard into an appropriate waste container.
5. Using a white terry cloth rag soaked in lacquer thinner or xylene, briskly wipe the surface to remove any metal marks, residual stripper and dead sealer left behind in the initial stripping process. Areas where the sealer has been effectively removed from the surface will absorb the solvents, temporarily darkening the tile. Areas where the sealer that has not been completely removed will not absorb and will appear as lighter colored blotches. Rub these areas vigorously with an abrasive scrub pad and wipe with a solvent soaked rag.
6. Continue this process until all tiles have successfully been stripped. Inspect the floor for any areas that require additional attention. Repeat steps 1 through 5 if necessary. Once floor has been successfully stripped, sweep away any loose debris and damp mop the floor with a solution of 2 to 4 ounces of *RoVal Tile & Stone Cleaner* to 1 gallon clean water. Allow the floor to completely dry before applying any sealer.
7. Select a sealer suitable for your particular needs. Consult your RoVal Representative for best recommendation.

The instructions and recommendations contained in this literature are based on data obtained from extensive bench testing and actual tests performed in the field by qualified trade personnel. These recommendations may not prove successful in some situations. It is understood that RoVal Manufacturing Corp., its officers or employees make no warranties, either expressed or implied, and the user accepts the product "as is." The suitability of the product for an intended use is solely up to the user.