**DESCRIPTION**

STAINMASTER™ resilient flooring SoftStep Plus Collection is a fiberglass reinforced, vinyl back twelve feet wide resilient sheet flooring product. STAINMASTER™ resilient flooring SoftStep Plus Collection can be installed using one of these installation methods:

- A traditional fully adhered technique, a pressure sensitive “releasable bond” technique or a loose laid technique depending on the size, complexity and intended use of the area.

**GETTING STARTED**

The first step is to determine the amount of flooring product you will require for the job. Draw a simple sketch of the area you wish to cover, including all offsets or alcoves and measure the width and length of the area. Keep in mind that the SoftStep Plus is available only in 12’ wide widths. If the area is less than 12’ wide in one direction just determine the actual length of the area in the other direction. Typically you will want to add at least 3” to this length measurement. Multiply the required length by 12’ to determine the required square feet of product for the project. It is helpful to know that 3” = .25 feet, 6” = .5 feet and 9” = .75 feet. Example: Your room is 11’ wide by 14’6” long. Multiply 14.75 (the actual length + 3”) by 12’ to determine that you will require 177 square feet of flooring product.

Once the product requirements have been determined it will be necessary to prepare the area to receive the flooring product. The conditions and size of the area will determine the exact type of subfloor preparation that will be required, but in all cases the subfloor must be clean, smooth, flat and dry.

**JOB SITE CONDITIONS**

**Environmental Requirements**

SoftStep Plus is designed to be installed in climate controlled, interior locations only. The temperature should be maintained between 65°F and 90°F for at least 48 hours before, during and after the installation is completed.

**Structural Requirements**

The type and method of construction, the grade level, and the flooring system components all impact the installation of the SoftStep Plus. The structural flooring systems are either constructed of concrete (or cement like materials) or wood.

**Wood Subfloors**

Wood subfloors are constructed of stripwood planks or wood composite or plywood panels. Typically, these subfloors will require the use of a ¼” underlayment to provide a smooth, clean surface on which to apply adhesives. In the case where the loose lay flooring installation (see Installation Section) is used these subfloors may be appropriately prepared to provide a solid base for the flooring product. Prepare these subfloors by sanding smooth all panel/ board joints, removing any surface contaminant or stains that have the potential to discolor SoftStep Plus.

When underlayment is being used it should have a minimum thickness of ¼” and meet the following criteria:

- Be specifically designed and warranted for use as a flooring underlayment
- Be dimensionally stable

- Have a smooth, fully sanded top surface so graining or texturing that will not telegraph
- Offer resistance to both static and impact indentation
- Offer uniform density, porosity and thickness

**Concrete Subfloors**

Regardless of age, time in place or grade level, concrete subfloors must be tested for moisture to insure that the concrete subfloor is indeed sufficiently dry. Concrete subfloors may have a minimum compressive strength of 3000PSI and a dry density of at least 100 pounds per cubic foot. The concrete surface must be free of surface defects or surface contaminants. Surface defects include cracks, holes, flaking, or dusting of the concrete surface. Surface contaminants should be considered as any substance that may interfere with the adhesive bond or that may cause bottom up staining of the resilient flooring. Surface defects must be repaired using a Portland cement floor patching compound designed for this purpose. Surface contaminants must be sanded or ground off, do not use any chemicals or solvents to remove these surface contaminants. Surface contaminates are paints, sealing or curing compounds, oils, solvents or existing adhesives.

**Warning:** Certain paints may contain lead. Exposure to excessive amounts of lead dust presents a health hazard. Refer to applicable federal, state, provincial and local laws and Lead-Based Paint Interim Guidelines for Hazard Identification and Abatement in Public and Indian Housing (September 1990) or subsequent editions published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding (1) appropriate methods for identifying lead-based paint and removing such paint; and (2) any licensing, certification and training requirements for persons performing lead abatement work.

**Existing Floor Coverings**

It is always prudent to remove existing floor coverings in order to inspect the soundness of the original subfloor.

**Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings**

Do not sand, dry sweep, dry scrape, drill, saw, bead blast, or mechanically chip or pulverize existing resilient flooring, backing, lining felt, asphaltic “cutback” adhesive, or other adhesive. These products may contain asbestos fibers and/or crystalline silica. Avoid creating dust. Inhalation of such dust is a cancer and respiratory tract hazard. Smoking by individuals exposed to asbestos fibers greatly increases the risk of serious bodily harm. Unless positively certain that the product is a non-asbestos containing material, you must presume it contains asbestos. Regulations may require that the material be tested to determine asbestos content. RFCI’s Recommended Work Practices for Removal of Resilient Floor Coverings are a defined set of instructions addressed to the task of removing all resilient floor covering structures.

SoftStep Plus may be installed over a single layer of existing resilient floor covering if:

- The existing flooring is firmly and fully adhered to a solid subfloor
- The existing flooring is not a foam-backed or cushioned resilient product
- The existing flooring is not perimeter fastened
- The existing flooring is not asphaltic tile, self-stick tile or rubber tile

In many cases it is practical to use an embossing leveling compound to smooth the texture of the existing flooring. Existing ceramic tile flooring may be leveled using a cementious patching compound designed for this purpose. Follow all directions provided by the embossing leveler or patching compound manufacturer.

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DETERMINE INSTALLATION TECHNIQUE
The overall size, the subfloor construction and the complexity of the job site all influence the best installation technique to use with SoftStep Plus.

Loose Lay/ Floating (no glue)
The loose lay technique is really only practical when the work area is less than 12’ wide and there are no seams required in the flooring. The loose lay technique should not be used if the work area is complex with center islands or multiple alcoves and closets. The loose lay system can be used over many types of substrates that would not be acceptable when the flooring product is adhered to the subfloor. When employing the loose lay technique the flooring product must be trimmed back approximately ¼” from all fixed vertical surfaces (this gap will be covered with wall base or quarter round) so that it lays completely flat with no “pinch points” or fullness.

Releasable Bond Fully Adhered (using pressure sensitive releasable adhesive)
The fully adhered “Releasable Bond” option is viable over concrete and most wood panel substrates in use in climate controlled, occupied, existing homes. (Unconditioned wood panel substrates are not dimensionally stable and are subject to too much movement) To achieve a “Releasable Bond” the appropriate adhesive is applied over the substrate with a ¼” nap paint roller and allowed to dry before positioning SoftStep Plus into the adhesive. The flooring is then positioned into the dry adhesive and smoothed out with the use of a clean, soft bristle push broom. Because of the thin, dry adhesive film this method can be used with many types of substrates including clean, lightly embossed existing resilient flooring without the use of a leveler and over clean, dry and smooth OSB substrates without extraordinary floor prep. The coverage rate of the adhesive will be increased to approximately 300 sq. ft. per gallon when applied with a paint roller.

Permanent Bond Fully Adhered
The fully adhered “Permanent Bond” option is the most secure and is the best option if there is heavy foot or rolling traffic or if the layout is cut-up and complicated. Because the Permanent Bond is achieved by placing SoftStep Plus into tacky-wet adhesive applied with a ¼” x ¼” x ¼” notched trowel the substrate must be smooth and have sufficient porosity to receive the adhesive. In most cases this requires the use of an appropriate underlayment over wood substrates, that the concrete surface is smoothed using an appropriate Portland cement patching compound. Additionally, SoftStep Plus must be rolled in both directions with a 50 lb. (or heavier) three section floor cement patching compound.

FINISHING & MAINTENANCE
Molding and Base Installation
Protect all exposed edges of the SoftStep Plus with trim or restrictive molding.
- Always use moldings and transition strips over product edges
- Nail wood moldings into the wall and not into the flooring
- Use transition strips where the sheet vinyl meets different types of floor coverings and at doorways
- Apply a bead of silicone caulk at bathtubs, shower stalls, toilets and patio doors

Cleanup & Maintenance
Remove any adhesive smears with a clean cloth dampened with mineral spirits. If adhesive was used, do not flood the flooring with wash water particularly in the first 48 hours.
Use walk off mats at doorways and entrances.
Use a mild neutral floor cleaner for cleaning.
Do not apply mop & shine type treatments.

For more information
Please see our installation video on YouTube.com for more installation tips or contact us for further information.
(keywords: stainmaster resilient flooring).