

Help and advice



**Derek Saville on UV curable coatings**

# 'Mark your territory' invite to floorlayers

TO remain competitive in today's market, manufacturing, retail and warehouse facilities cannot afford to be out of action while a floor coating is re-laid, repaired or maintained.

Technology has made a dramatic impact on the floor coating industry – not least in terms of developing fast curing coatings; but now there is a new advance with the introduction into the UK of RapidShield, a UV-curable floor coating system which is well established in North America.

Developed, tried and tested in automotive, heavy equipment manufacturers, aerospace and food factories and distribution warehouses throughout the USA, UV-curable high performance coatings are designed for use on any new or existing concrete floor.

The one-component formulation is a blend of oligomers, monomers, additives, photo initiators and pigments that produce a film with cross-link density that when exposed to the latest UV light technology hardens so rapidly that the 'wet-look' of the coating is locked in place.

It is dry, almost instantaneously, leaving a gloss surface with a perfect balance of hardness and flexibility.

It is applied by roller or squeegee to a prepared, clean floor. It is then



**RapidShield UV-curable floor coating used in two projects**

cured instantly by a portable unit that emits UV-light, turning the coating into a solid film which creates a strong bond to the substrate.

This fast cure means that within minutes, the floor can be used again. This is vital where lengthy shutdowns or interrupted production cannot be tolerated. The product can be applied at almost any temperature and areas of up to 400sqm a day can be coated and cured with a single unit.

UV-curable coatings produce a durable, non-slip, gloss finish with excellent chemical resistance. They maintain their shine and do not allow dirt and debris to penetrate.

The final finish can be modified to produce a matte finish and/or enhance skid and slip resistance. They can be used on floors

exposed to direct sunlight without the loss of gloss and fading associated with epoxies. They are also more durable meaning that a floor does not have to be recoated as frequently.

RapidShield is available as clear and in a range of standard colours so it can be used to create safety stripes, warning signs or simply coordinate a floor with other building colours.

The current product is a thin film system with the typical thickness of 50-100 micron per coat, allowing a maximum of 375 micron to be built up in multiple layers.

As a one-component formulation, there is no mixing and the product has a long 'pot' life, so at the end of a contract the tin can be re-sealed, stored and the remaining product used on the next contract.

There are no half used containers to be disposed of and all rollers, squeegees, trays etc can be cleaned and reused. For experienced contractors minimal training in its use is required.

During application, the coating has advantages over traditional methods for operator safety. It is non-flammable, low odour and contains no solvents or isocyanates and complies with all the latest VOC and HAP regulations. **CFJ**

**Quaker Chemicals is setting up a European network of certified European flooring contractors to apply this product.**

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**Peter Allan on exporting to the marine sector**

# Keep your overseas business afloat

THE international specialist flooring market is growing and offers UK manufacturers considerable opportunities in the marine sector, ranging from small private boats to superior, luxury super liners, which are essentially floating hotels.

Today, cruise tourism represents one of the fastest growing sectors worldwide. According to the statistical and economic analysis, US Department of Transportation, the cruise industry tripled in size during the 1990's.

In order to cater for a sophisticated audience, these luxurious liners need to be able to offer every facility, even more so than land hotels, from casinos, shopping malls, restaurants and bars to ice rinks and golf driving ranges.

Flooring requirements in this

market differ significantly and cover a wide range of wants and needs. From resilient vinyl flooring for crew working and recreation areas where the footfall is heavy, and potentially hazardous areas such as kitchens which require safety flooring, to passenger accommodation and communal living areas which demand the ultimate in luxury – 100% wool carpet.

A major consideration for the marine industry is fire. Substantial and stringent certification is required in order to supply this sector and it's essential that manufacturers can support their products with the relevant fire test certification to satisfy the safety requirements set by the International Marine Organisation (IMO).

As such, manufacturers looking

to enter this buoyant market really do need to do their homework and consider the on-costs to cover the additional expenditure to meet the fire certification.

Competition in the cruise liner arena is particularly high and in order to compete for business, the luxury liners need to offer customers the highest level of services and environments. Interiors is a major influence in creating the desired sense of luxury, and as the market grows towards ever more exclusive and luxurious offerings, the expectations placed on flooring products to complement and impress increase.

In order to achieve a breathtaking interior experience the use of strong design together with high quality flooring fabrics and furniture is essential. The

conundrum is that consistently meeting the wants and needs of designers requires ever more creative solutions from suppliers.

The new build programme for cruise ships over the next 10 years is already extensive and provides long term niche market opportunities for UK flooring manufacturers. While nothing is more impressive than the sight of a magnificent cruise liner, considerable potential also exists within the industry for ferries, roll-on roll-off vessels, yachts etc.

Clearly the marine sector is just one part of a world-wide transport sector such as air crafts, trains and buses where British manufacturers can establish an export presence. **CFJ**

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