

27th April 2018

Is your floor cleanroom compliant?! Industry flooring by Gerflor.

Both flooring manufacturers and flooring contractors have a crucial role to play in delivering cleanroom industrial flooring solutions says Roger Harrington, Industry Specialist, Gerflor Limited.

As a manufacturer of industrial flooring solutions, to help a room achieve the desired purpose that meet cleanroom standards we are seeing a greater requirement for cleanroom solutions some being the and as a result of need for sophisticated and increasingly small, precision-based electronic equipment.

Historically, the pharmaceutical industry, which is a large and very important sector big player in the UK, has demanded a controlled atmosphere that can affect and be affected by flooring, where certain levels of contaminants are out of the question. The need to work in a controlled atmosphere, however, extends to other research, development, manufacturing and life science industries like the electronics, cosmetics, food processing, aerospace, automotive and micro-engineering sectors, and anywhere where sensitive processes take place and contamination could be disastrous.

Cleanroom standards

A cleanroom must have low and controlled levels of pollutants like dust, airborne particles and VOCs which are specified by the number and size of particles per cubic metre. They are classified according to the ISO 14644-1 standard and the ISO 14698. These standards define cleanliness classes particularly in terms of particulate concentration.

The ISO 14644-1 classification is measured by the concentration of particles suspended in the air ranging from ISO Class 1 to ISO Class 9. It provides valuable re-assurance that the atmospheric quality will not be detrimental in research, testing and manufacturing areas.

When designing, building or refurbishing a controlled atmosphere a flooring solution should provide excellent microbiological performance, low molecular and particulate emissions and extreme resistance to damage from chemicals, heavy traffic and mechanical wear. Most importantly, it must withstand the cleaning and disinfection processes used regularly for decontamination.

The right PVC floorcoverings are better able to deal with these issues than any other floorcovering materials. Added to which, unlike Resin based floors, they are very simple to repair without having to shut down the area for an inconveniently long, and probably very costly period.

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Complete solution

However, as the most strictly controlled cleanroom should be a watertight, impervious 'sealed box' effectively covering walls, floors, ceiling materials and its components, with nowhere for spores, bacteria, etc. to hide, flooring is just one element. And, as nothing should be considered in isolation, all materials should conform to necessary standards for cleanrooms.

Although achieving a strong, watertight welded joint is very simple with Vinyl floorcoverings for a reputable installer, it can prove problematic at the internal and external corner joints.

Corners and coving systems are therefore a crucial part of contamination control as smooth joints and chamfered corners avoid the acute angles that harbour dirt, making them hygienic and easy to clean. The best corner solutions find the correct balance between 'too flexible to be supportive' and 'too rigid to curve into corners'.

To address the growing need for controlled atmospheres in industry, specialist advice should be sought from manufacturers of fully tested, CERTIFIED, compliant flooring solutions.

Flooring contractors play a vital part

Specifying an appropriate cleanroom flooring and corner system is only the beginning, as a fully effective, quality system is reliant on the skills of the installer, whose role is vital. It is only by fully understanding contamination issues and installing systems according to cleanroom requirements, that the best possible solution can be achieved. To this end, we as manufacturers, are ready to offer advice on best practice concerning both products and installation. We also offer on-site testing for a 'peace-of-mind' evaluation to ensure that the installation is watertight, fully welded and 'good-to-go'.

Evidently, the need to work tirelessly to provide flooring solutions that protect industrial processes and those working within this and associated sectors, must remain a priority.

Learn more about Gerflor solutions, ask for a free sample or contact us to speak to a specialist today by calling 01926 622 600, emailing contractuk@gerflor.com, or visiting gerflor.co.uk for the latest innovations.

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