



District Environmental Services

APPROVED FINISHES FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Approved floor, wall, and ceiling finishes are required to be installed in an approved manner in the food establishment areas including (but not limited to):

- Kitchen/cooking
- Food handling/prep
- Food storage
- Warewashing
- Handwashing
- Janitorial
- Self-service food and drink areas
- Walk-in refrigerators/freezers
- Waitress stations
- Employee restrooms
- Customer restrooms that are also employee restrooms

The following standards have been compiled by the Department of Environmental Health to provide assistance to operators selecting finishes for the food establishment that will be in compliance with appropriate sections of California Retail Food Code. **The quality and method of workmanship is just as important as the material itself.** Materials not listed are subject to evaluation and may require submission of samples.

FLOORING

California Retail Food Code section 114268 requires floor surfaces in food establishments to be smooth and of durable construction and nonabsorbent material that is easily cleanable. Floor surfaces shall be coved at the juncture of the floor and wall with a 3/8 inch minimum radius coving extending up the wall at least 4 inches.

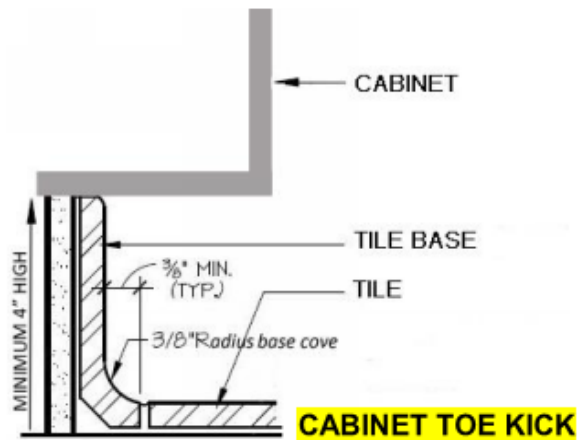
- ❖ Non-skid flooring with an abrasive texture shall be limited to traffic areas only. Floor surface areas under equipment must be smooth.
- ❖ Vinyl tile (VCT, VAT) is **not** acceptable for floors in any area except customer dining or pre-packaged retail display.
- ❖ Materials not listed may be submitted for evaluation by this Department, provided the material is smooth, easily cleanable and non-absorbent.
- ❖ The proposed flooring shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specification and recommendations.

Cove Base:

- ❖ Flooring shall continue up the walls, partitions and cabinetry at least four (4) inches forming an integral 3/8-inch minimum radius.
- ❖ **Vinyl or rubber topset base will not be accepted** in any areas of a food facility in which a smooth, continuous, cove floor is required.

- ❖ For walk in coolers, a metal topset base may be installed in lieu of a continuously covered flooring against the metal walls. The cove base shall be sealed to both the floor and the wall. Galvanized topset cove base is **not** approved.
- ❖ Waitress stations, bussing stations, salad bars and food beverage service areas shall have a continuous, integral coved floor throughout the area and extend a minimum of thirty-six (36) inches beyond the equipment in all directions.
- ❖ Cabinet bases, equipment curbs, toe-kicks and equipment that is designed to be sealed to the floor are required to have an approved coved base around all exposed sides.

Cove base detail at cabinets, curbs, toe kicks, and floor mounted equipment (applies for all types of flooring):

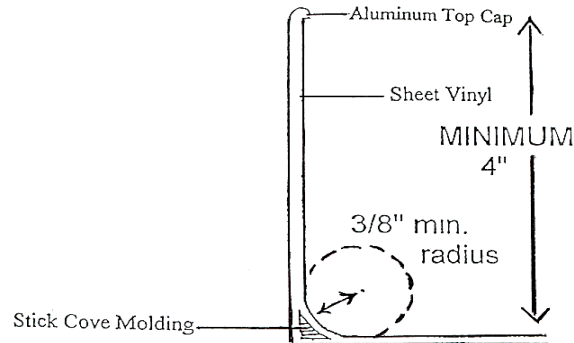


Accepted Flooring Types:

1. Commercial Sheet Vinyl

- i. Inlaid vinyl composition (no embossed imprinting on wear layer surface)
- ii. Minimum .050-inch vinyl wear layer surface thickness
- iii. Vinyl shall not have a “No Wax” manufactured surface coating.
- iv. All seams shall be “heat welded” or “chemically sealed” for a continuous sheet vinyl surface.
- v. Sheet vinyl shall not be installed in areas where floor drains are present, unless the manufacturer’s specifications deem it compatible with floor drain installation.
- vi. The sheet vinyl shall continue up the walls, partitions and cabinetry at least four (4) inches forming an integral 3/8-inch minimum radius. See illustration below.
- vii. The cove base shall be backed with a cove molding and topped with a metal cap.

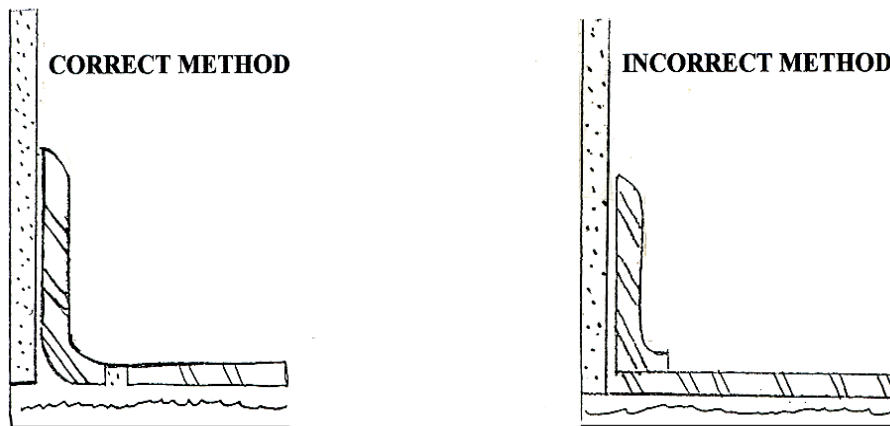
Commercial sheet vinyl cove base detail:



2. Quarry or Ceramic Tile

- i. Shall have a minimum thickness of ¼ inch.
- ii. Shall be impact and slip resistant.
- iii. The grout spacing width between tiles shall not exceed ¼ inch.
- iv. Grout between ceramic tiles and quarry tiles, without a glazed surface finish, shall be sealed to be impervious to water, grease and acid.
- v. Approved cove base shall be installed
- vi. The tile shall have a “Bull Nose” design at the top where it meets the wall.

Quarry or ceramic tile cove base detail:

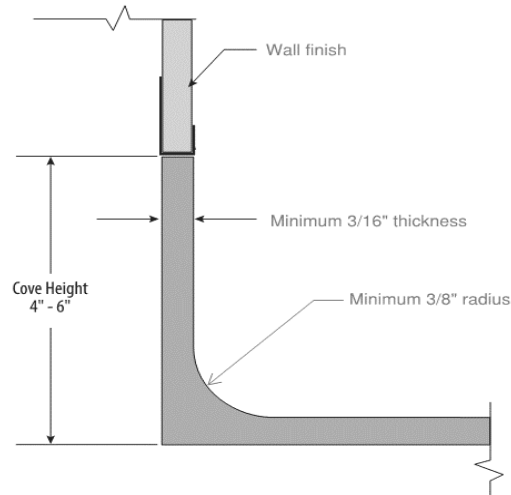


3. Troweled Epoxy

- i. Minimum finish thickness shall be 3/16 inch.
- ii. The surface shall be sealed to be impervious to water, grease and acid.

- iii. Depending on the degree of abrasive finish texture, a high-pressure cleaning system and floor drains may be required.
- iv. The epoxy shall continue up the walls, partitions and cabinetry at least four (4) inches forming an integral 3/8-inch minimum radius.

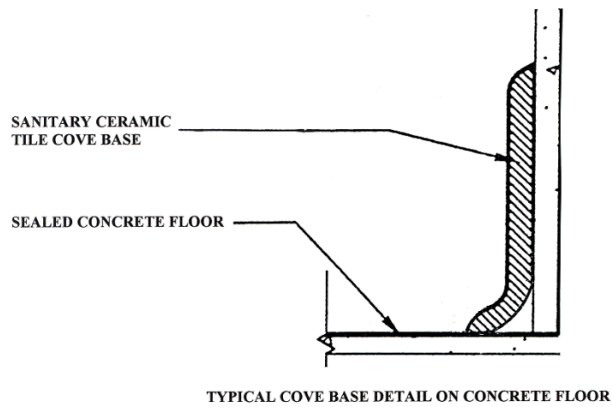
Troweled epoxy cove base detail:



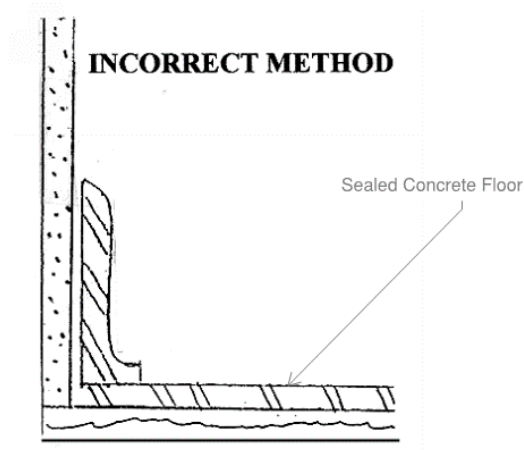
4. Sealed Concrete

- i. The finished surfaces shall be smooth, easily cleanable and sealed to be impervious to water, grease and acid.
- ii. The floor shall be a smooth single pour variety.
- iii. The floor shall be sealed with a **two (2) part water-based epoxy concrete sealer**, that is Environmental Health Department/USDA approved.
- iv. Concrete floors with cracks, open seams, pitted, chipped, or rough surface areas, shall be repaired prior to installation of the sealer.
- v. **Slim foot** types of cove base may be installed with concrete floor finish (i.e. slim foot quarry tile; slim foot ceramic tile).
- vi. Integral concrete cove shall be rounded at the top.

“Slim foot” sanitary ceramic tile cove base detail:



**Concrete floors shall NOT have cove base that is intended for installation with a tile floor.
See detail:**



WALLS & CEILINGS

California Retail Food Code, Section 114271 (a) requires that walls and ceilings in all rooms shall be of a **durable, smooth, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable surface**.

Requirements:

- i. All walls behind and adjacent to sinks, dishwashers, and janitorial facilities shall be protected with at least an 8-foot-high water-resistant material measured from the top of the cove base (i.e. FRP, stainless steel, ceramic tile, or other approved material). At handwash sinks the material can be to a height of 4 feet.
- ii. Walls behind and adjacent to cooking equipment shall be heat resistant (i.e. Stainless steel, ceramic tile.) FRP and painted drywall not permitted in these areas.
- iii. Brick, concrete block, rough concrete, rough plaster, grooved paneling, wallpaper or vinyl wall covering are not acceptable.
- iv. The following areas of the food establishment are **exempt** from the above requirement:

- At bars where alcoholic beverages are served directly to the consumer, the wall and ceiling above the height of the bar top.
- Areas where food is stored only in unopened bottles, cans, cartons, sacks, or other original shipping containers.
- Dining, sales areas, and offices.
- Restrooms that are used exclusively by the consumers, except that the walls and ceilings in the restrooms shall be of a nonabsorbent and washable surface.
- Dressing rooms, dressing areas, or locker areas.

Accepted Wall Types:

1. Paint

- i. Shall be light in color, gloss or semi-gloss finish.
- ii. Lead-Free
- iii. Applied to smooth surface such as drywall. Do not paint wall paneling or ceiling panels.
- iv. Do not “texture” or “stipple” surface.
- v. Paint is not acceptable on food contact surfaces or refrigerated areas.
- vi. Paint alone is not acceptable for high moisture or wear areas, such as at sinks or utensil washing areas.

2. Wall Panels

Shall be smooth, non-grooved, cleanable surface with a durable wear layer (vinyl covering/coating not permitted). Paneling shall be installed as per manufacturer’s standards. All gaps and voids between panels, connector strips or adjacent surfaces are to be sealed to exclude insect harborage and to maintain cleanability.

❖ FRP (Fiberglass Reinforced Polyester) paneling

- i. Commonly used behind “wet areas” such as sinks, dishwashing, janitorial areas, and restrooms.
- ii. Must include panel edges, inside and outside corners, and division moldings between panels.
- iii. FRP cannot be painted.

❖ Stainless Steel

- i. Commonly used for refrigeration, cooking and utensil washing areas.
- ii. Acceptable in all areas of the kitchen.

3. Ceramic Tile

- a. Minimum thickness of ¼ inch, and impact resistant
- b. Grout shall be sealed to be impervious to water, grease, and acid.
- c. Tile is commonly used in restrooms, adjacent to food handling counters, utensil washing sinks and machines, and food preparation sinks.

Accepted Ceiling Types- Food Preparation Areas:

An approved ceiling with approved finishes shall be installed above any open food preparation areas. All conduit, plumbing lines, HVAC ductwork, piping shall be contained within the ceiling. Open ductwork and conduit is not permitted (ie. warehouse style open ceilings).

1. Suspended Ceiling Panels

- i. Panels shall have a smooth vinyl faced washable surface.
- ii. Light color
- iii. Non-absorbent (non-perforated)
- iv. Shall be installed as per manufacturer's instructions for level suspended ceiling grids.
- v. Hold down clips are recommended.

2. Soffit or Suspended Ceiling

If a soffit or suspended ceiling is proposed over waitress and bussing stations, salad bars, food serving or self-service beverage areas and open food or drink counters, or other similar stations, the final finish shall be smooth, easily cleanable and non-absorbent.

3. Drywall Ceiling (Hard Lid)

- i. Shall be painted with a light-colored gloss or semi-gloss paint.
- ii. Texture or "popcorn ceiling" is not permitted.