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An illustration on a dark background. At the top, a rolled-up document or scroll is shown, partially unrolled. Below it, a grid of floor tiles is depicted, with one tile in the upper left corner of the grid tilted at an angle. The text is centered over the grid.

**RECOMMENDED
WORK PROCEDURE
FOR RESILIENT
FLOOR COVERINGS**

RECOMMENDED WORK PROCEDURES FOR RESILIENT FLOOR COVERINGS

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR INSTALLERS OF RESILIENT FLOOR COVERINGS

Introduction

The member companies of the RESILIENT FLOOR COVERING INSTITUTE are manufacturers of the following forms of resilient floor coverings which may contain some asbestos:

1. Sheet Vinyl
2. Vinyl Asbestos Tile
3. Asphalt Tile

WHY ASBESTOS IN RESILIENT FLOOR COVERINGS?

Asbestos fibers have been used in the manufacture of resilient floor covering products for more than 50 years. Asbestos fibers are used to provide durability to tile products. In addition, asbestos fibers in sheet vinyl backings permit these products to be installed on all grade levels. The presence of "locked-in" asbestos fibers in resilient floor coverings provide the versatility and economy for which they have been noted throughout the years.

WHAT ABOUT ASBESTOS?

In the past decade much attention has been focused on the relationship between exposure to asbestos fibers and respiratory ailments. It has been determined that inhalation of free airborne asbestos fibers may be injurious to health. However, the asbestos fibers contained in the above types of resilient floor coverings are *not free*, but firmly encapsulated or *locked-in* the product during the manufacturing process. Asbestos contained therein will not become airborne during the lifetime of the product when these products are used and maintained as recommended by the manufacturer*.

*See "Monitoring for Airborne Asbestos Fibers: Vinyl Asbestos Floor Tile" and "Monitoring for Airborne Asbestos Fibers: Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering," report prepared by SRI International, 1978-79. (Available on request from the Resilient Floor Covering Institute, 1030 15th Street, NW - Suite 350, Washington, DC 20005).

It is essential that certain precautions be observed, however, when installing a resilient floor covering or when preparing or removing an existing resilient floor covering. It is the purpose of this Work Procedures Manual to provide those precautionary steps necessary to assure the safest way to accomplish the work involved.

Recommended Work Procedures

PREPARATION OF FLOORS WITH EXISTING RESILIENT FLOOR COVERINGS TO RECEIVE NEW RESILIENT FLOOR COVERINGS

Follow the installation instructions published by the manufacturer of the new floor covering when a new resilient sheet or tile floor covering is to be installed on a surface presently covered with a resilient floor covering. These instructions will tell you what must be done to the existing surface before the new resilient floor covering can be installed.

Of the four general procedures listed below, Items 1 and 2 are covered by manufacturers' instructions; Items 3 and 4 are covered specifically in this Work Procedures Manual*:

Resilient Floor Covering Installed Over . . .

1. *The Existing Surface.* Follow the manufacturer's instructions for removing wax, filling in low spots, etc. *Use wet scrubbing. Never sand an existing resilient floor covering.*
2. *New Underlayment.* Install panels on top of the existing surface (wood subfloors only) and apply new floor covering directly over this. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
3. *Partially Removed Existing Adhered Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering.* See instructions below under heading "Partial Removal of Existing Adhered Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering," page 8.
4. *Completely Removed Existing Resilient Floor Covering*
(a) *Sheet Vinyl*—See instructions below:

*In case of minor variations, the manufacturer's instructions should be followed.

1. "Complete Removal of an Unadhered (Loose-Lay) or Peripherally Adhered Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering," page 6.
2. "Complete Removal of an Existing Adhered Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering," page 11.
- (b) *Tile*—See instructions under heading "Complete Removal of an Existing Resilient Tile Floor Covering," page 14.

SHEET VINYL FLOOR COVERING

Preparation of Floors With Existing Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering to Receive a New Resilient Floor Covering.

Sheet vinyl floor covering is installed in several ways:

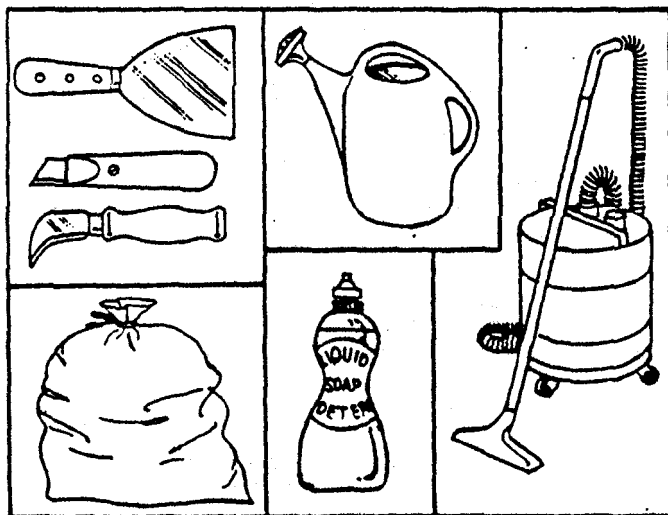
1. Unadhered or Loose-Lay.
2. Adhered or Cemented.
3. Peripherally adhered.

Some resilient floor covering can be installed over existing resilient sheet vinyl floor covering under certain conditions. Be sure to follow the floor covering manufacturer's instructions, regarding the conditions and floor preparation required.

If partial or complete removal of the existing sheet vinyl floor covering is required, the following instructions are to be followed:

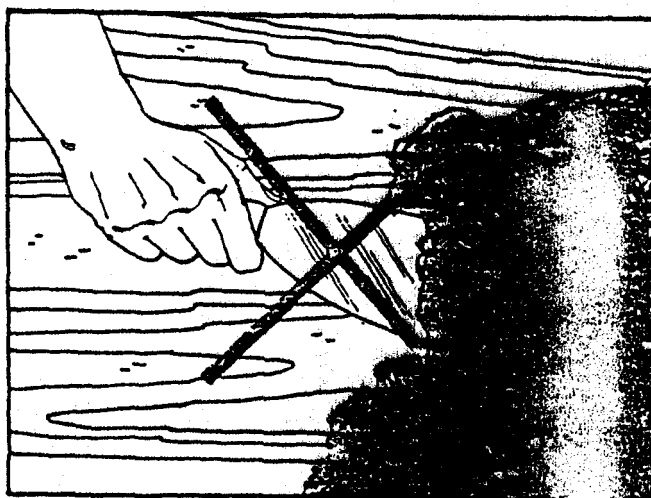
Supplies and Tools (refer Sketch 1.)

1. Broad, stiff-bladed wall scraper, or floor scraper.
2. Utility or hook knife.
3. Tank type vacuum cleaner with disposable dust bag and metal floor tool (no brush).
4. Large size heavy duty impermeable trash bags (or closed impermeable containers) with ties, tapes, or string to tie shut, and tags for labeling.
5. Hand sprayer or sprinkling can.
6. Liquid dishwashing detergent or liquid wallpaper remover mixed with water to make a dilute solution (1 oz. liquid in one gallon of water).



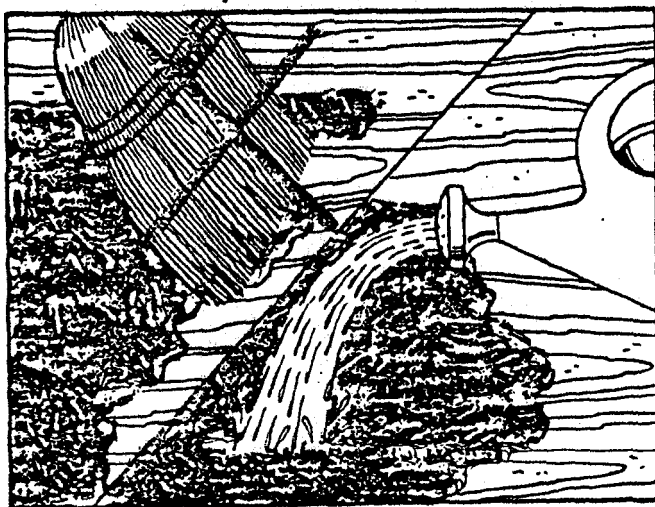
Sketch 1. Tools and supplies for sheet removal.

Special Precautions (Continued)

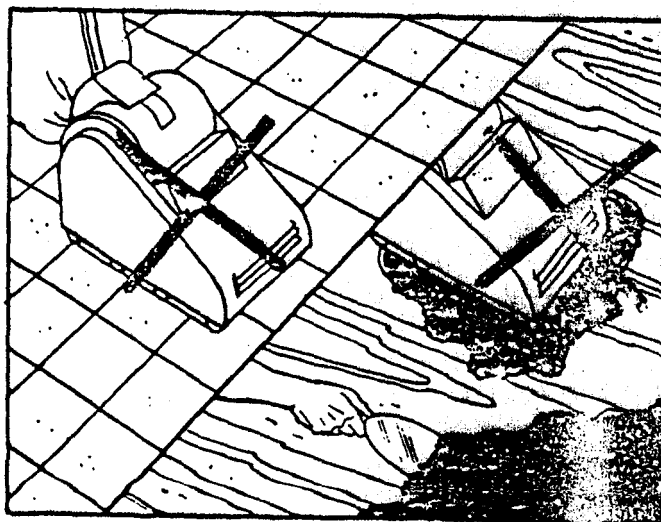


Sketch 3. Never dry scrape adhered areas of floor covering.

Special Precautions

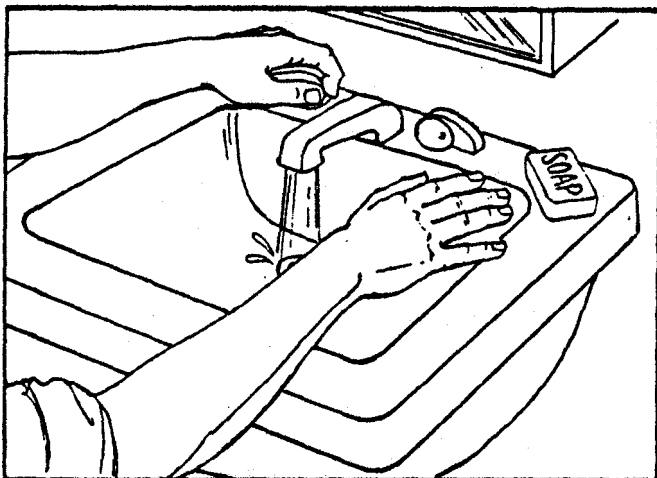


Sketch 2. Never dry sweep. If unavoidable, use water or other suppressants.



Sketch 4. Never sand an existing floor covering; nor sand or dry scrape residual felt.

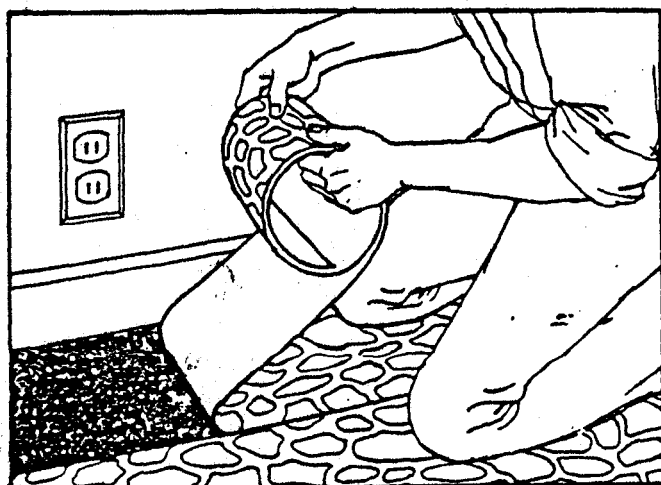
Special Precautions (Continued)



Sketch 5. Wash hands before eating and at the end of the work day.

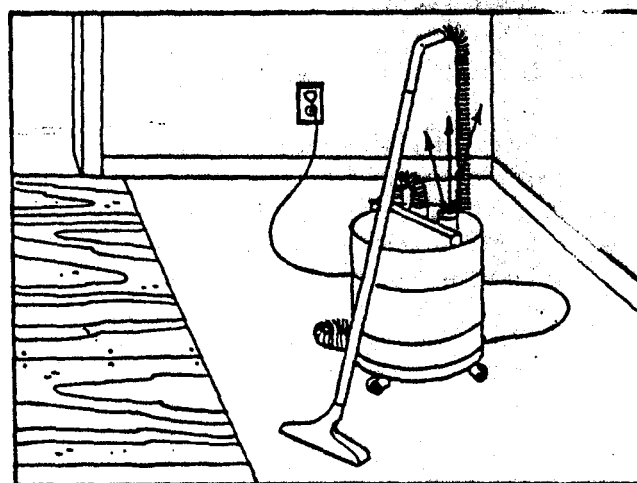
Complete Removal of an Unadhered (Loose-Lay) or Peripherally Adhered Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering.

- Remove any binding strips or other restrictive moldings from doorways, walls, etc.
- Cut a strip the length of the floor and about 18" wide along one wall. Remove this strip, gently turn it over and roll face out into a tight roll (see Sketch 6). Tie or tape securely so it will not unroll. Place it in a heavy duty impermeable trash bag, or closed impermeable container big enough to accommodate several rolls, for disposition.



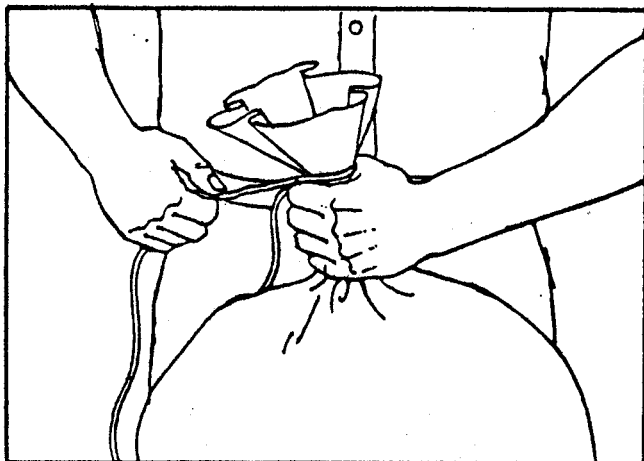
Sketch 6. When removing cut strips, roll face out into a tight roll.

- Clean the exposed floor with a vacuum cleaner positioned so that exhaust air does not blow over the unclean area (see Sketch 7). **DO NOT DRY SWEEP. IF UNAVOIDABLE, USE WATER OR OTHER DUST SUPPRESSANTS.**
- Repeat the above, cutting, removing, rolling, disposing of one strip at a time and cleaning the newly exposed area immediately until the whole floor covering has been removed and the whole floor vacuumed clean.



Sketch 7. Position vacuum so that exhaust air does not blow over unclean area.

- If seams or door openings have been adhered with double faced tape, remove the tape and place in the heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container.
- If any floor covering areas have been adhered with adhesive and remain stuck to the floor, they should be removed by the wet scraping method explained on page 10. **DO NOT DRY SCRAPE OR SAND.**
- Carefully remove the dust bag from the cleaner and place it in the trash bag.
- Close and seal the trash bags tightly for disposal (see Sketch 8). Identify contents with a label stating—"Caution—Contains Asbestos—Dispose in an approved land fill only."



Sketch 8. Seal trash bags securely for disposal.

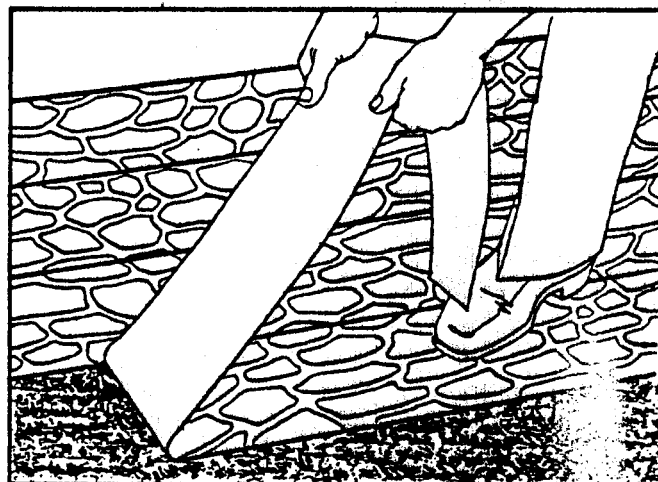
- i. Install the new resilient floor covering according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Partial Removal of Existing Adhered Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering.

Most felt backed sheet floor coverings can be separated in the backing or felt layer. The felt left on the floor presents a smooth surface on which some new sheet floor coverings can be installed directly. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Use the following procedure to partially remove the existing adhered floor covering.

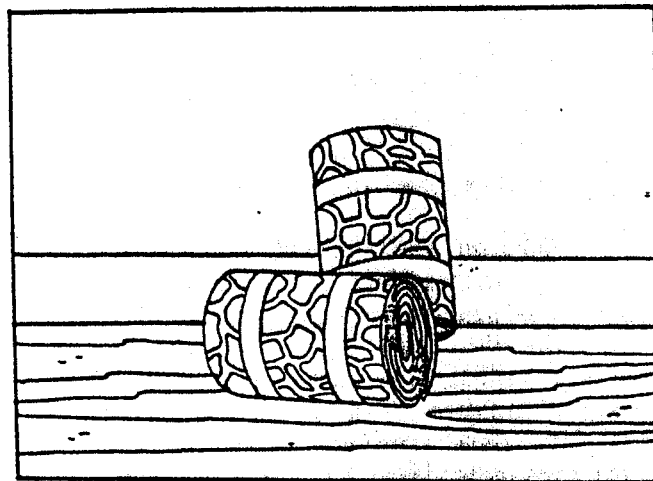
Reminder: Never Sand an Existing Floor Covering

- a. Remove any binding strips or other restrictive moldings from doorways walls, etc.
- b. Make a series of parallel cuts 4 to 8 inches apart through the top layers and about halfway through the backing, parallel to the wall.
- c. Start at the end of the room farthest from the entrance door, and pry up the corner of a strip, separating the backing layer. Pull the top layer back upon itself slowly and evenly at the angle that permits the best separation, and half the backing and the top layers will pull free (see Sketch 9). After it is removed, roll up the strip face out into a tight roll. Tie or tape securely (see Sketch 10) and place in the heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container for disposal.



Sketch 9. Separating top layer from backing.

- d. Each succeeding strip should be removed in the above manner. Avoid walking on the exposed felt as much as possible. Roll up each strip as it is removed and place it in the trash bag or closed container. Close full bags tightly and seal securely for disposal. Identify with a label stating "Caution—contains asbestos. Dispose in an approved land fill only."



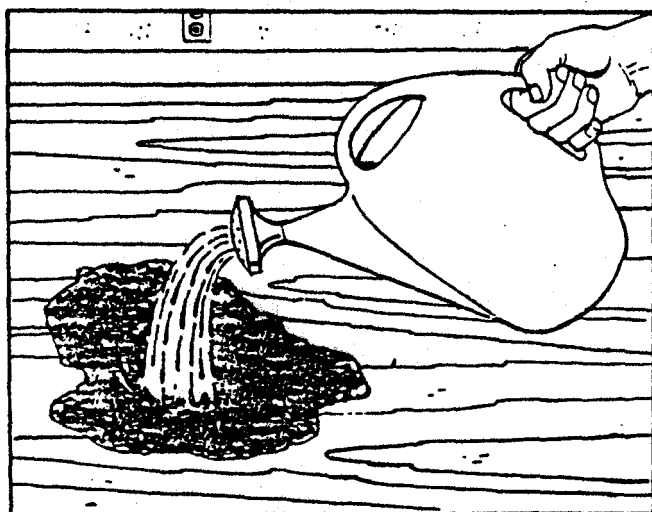
Sketch 10. Rolled up strips must be tied or taped securely.

- e. Occasionally, parts of the top layers will stick to the backing. This can often be eliminated by peeling from the opposite direction. The stiff-bladed scraper will help in stubborn areas.
- f. Any high spots of felt on the floor can be levelled by wet scraping.

Reminder: Never Sand or Dry Scrape Residual Felt

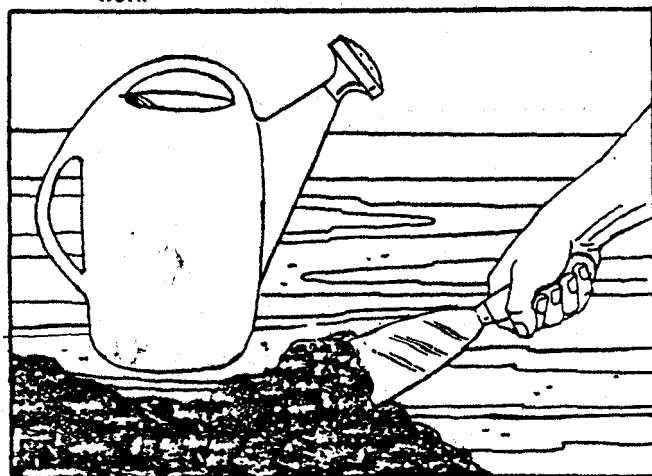
Wet scraping is done as follows:

1. Pour the detergent solution into the sprayer or sprinkling can.
2. Thoroughly wet the high felt spot with this solution. Wait a few minutes to allow the solution to soak into the felt (see Sketch 11 below).



Sketch 11. Thoroughly wet dry felt before removal.

3. Use the stiff-bladed scraper to remove the excess felt (see Sketch 12). If felt dries out, or dry felt is exposed during scraping, re-wet with more solution.



Sketch 12. After wetting felt, use stiff-bladed scraper to remove.

4. Pick up the larger pieces by hand and place in the trash bag immediately.
- g. Non-adhered felt left on the floor can be cut open and re-adhered to the floor with adhesive.
- h. If small areas of backing pull free from the floor, the depression should be filled with latex patching compound, as recommended by the floor covering manufacturer.
- i. Clean the floor with the vacuum cleaner using the metal floor tool. **DO NOT DRY SWEEP WITH A BROOM.** Position the vacuum cleaner so that discharge air does not blow on the felt. Carefully remove the dust bag from the cleaner immediately and place in a heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container.
- j. Close and seal trash bags tightly for disposal. Identify contents with a label: "Caution—contains asbestos. Dispose in an approved land fill only."
- k. Do not walk over the felt unnecessarily, as this might scuff the felt and raise dust.
- l. Install the new resilient floor covering immediately following the manufacturer's instructions.

Complete Removal of an Existing Adhered Sheet Vinyl Floor Covering.

If complete removal is required, follow these instructions:

Reminder: Never Sand an Existing Floor Covering

- a. Remove any binding strips or other restrictive moldings from doorways, walls, etc.
- b. Make a series of parallel cuts 4 to 8 inches apart and almost through the backing, parallel to a wall.
- c. Start at the end of the room farthest from the entrance door, and pry up the corner of the first strip, separating the backing layer. Pull the top layer back upon itself slowly and evenly at an angle that permits the best separation and most of the backing and top layers will pull free (see Sketch 9). Remove this strip, gently turn it over and roll face out into a tight roll. Tie or tape securely (see Sketch 10) and place in a heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container for disposal.

- d. Repeat the above on the next two strips but do not remove anymore than a total of three strips at this time.
- e. Remove the felt remaining on the floor in the stripped area by *wet scraping*.

Reminder: Never Sand or Dry Scrape Residual Felt

Wet scraping is done as follows:

1. Pour the detergent solution into the sprayer or sprinkling can.
2. Thoroughly wet the residual felt with this solution. Wait a few minutes to allow the solution to soak into the felt (see Sketch 11).
3. Stand on the remaining floor covering (not the felt) and use the stiff-bladed scraper to scrape up the wet felt (see Sketch 13 below).



Sketch 13. Stand on the remaining floor covering, not the felt, during felt removal

Reminder: Do Not Scrape Dry Felt

Re-wet the felt if it dries out or if dry felt is exposed during scraping. Pick up the scrapings as they are removed from the floor and place in a heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container. Scrape *all* felt from this floor area before proceeding further.

4. Repeat the above on the next series of strips. Do only *one* three-strip area at a time. Stand on the remaining floor covering or clean floor (do not stand on the felt) to scrape up the felt.
5. Repeat this operation until the felt has been removed from the whole floor. Close full bags tightly, and seal securely for disposal. Identify with a label stating "Caution—Contains Asbestos. Dispose in an approved land fill only."
- f. When the whole floor has been cleaned free of felt, let it dry and vacuum up any dirt using the vacuum cleaner with the metal floor tool.

Reminder: Do Not Dry Sweep.

Position the vacuum cleaner so that the discharge air does not blow on the floor being cleaned.

- g. Carefully remove the dust bag from the cleaner and place in a heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container for later disposal.
- h. When the floor is dry, it is ready to have a new resilient floor covering installed. Follow the floor covering manufacturer's instructions.

RESILIENT TILE FLOOR COVERING

Preparation of Floors With Existing Resilient Tiles to Receive New Resilient Floor Covering.

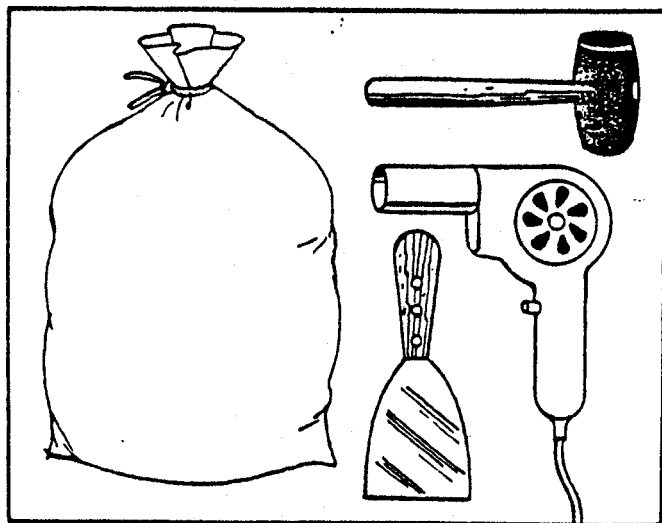
Some resilient floor coverings can be installed over existing resilient tile installations. Follow the installation instructions published by the manufacturer of the new floor covering when a new resilient floor covering is to be installed on a surface presently covered with a resilient floor covering. These instructions will tell you what must be done to the existing surface before the new resilient floor covering can be installed.

Caution: Never Sand an Existing Tile Installation
(see Sketch 4).

Complete Removal of Existing Resilient Tile Floor Covering.

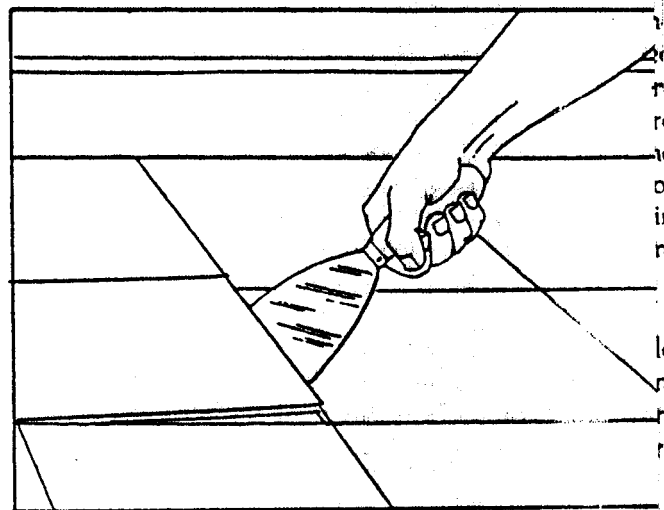
Supplies and Tools (refer Sketch 14)

1. Heavy duty wall scraper with approximately 4" blade and 6" to 8" handle.
2. Hammer
3. Commercial type hand held hot air blower.
4. Heavy duty impermeable trash bags (or closed impermeable containers), ties and labels.



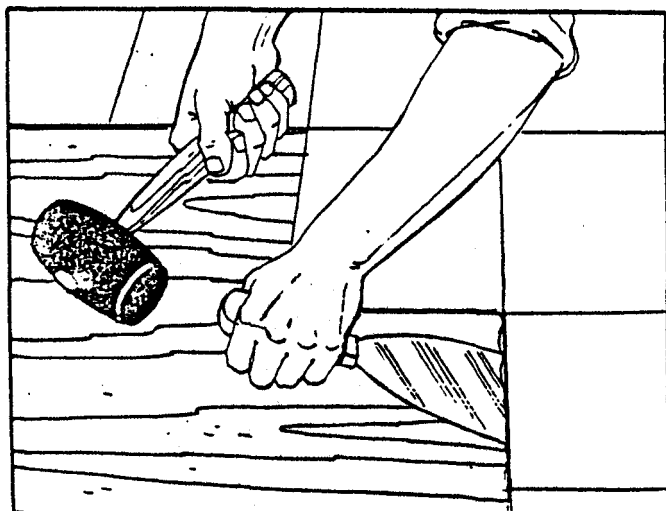
Sketch 14. Tools and supplies for tile removal.

- a. Those areas normally exposed to heavy foot traffic patterns usually have tiles adhered the tightest. As a matter of good practice in starting the tile removal, those sections which receive least traffic should be the locations selected for starting the removal of the tile. Since tiles are normally in a 9" x 9" or 12" x 12" dimension, it should be the goal to remove individual tiles as a complete unit.
- b. Start the removal by carefully wedging the wall scraper in the seam of two adjoining tiles and gradually forcing the edge of one of the tiles up and away from the floor (see Sketch 15). Do not break off pieces of the tile but continue to force the balance of the tile up by working the scraper beneath the tile and exerting both a forward pressure and a twisting action on the blade to promote release of the tile from the adhesive and the floor.



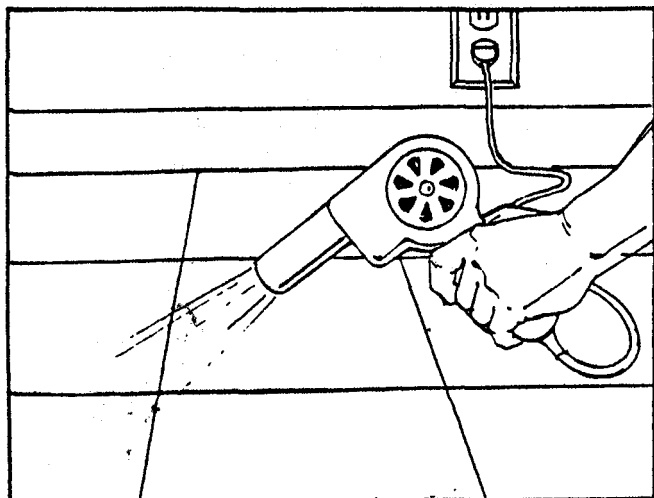
Sketch 15. Wedge the scraper in the seam of two adjoining tiles and gradually force tile upward.

- c. When the first tile is removed place it, without breaking it into smaller pieces, in the heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container which will be used for disposal.
- d. With the removal of the first tile accessibility of other tiles is improved. Force the wall scraper under the exposed edge of another tile and continue to exert a prying twisting force to the scraper as it is moved under the tile until the tile releases from the floor. Again, dispose of the tile, and succeeding tiles by placing in the heavy duty bag or closed container without additional breaking.
- e. Some tiles will release quite easily while others require varying degrees of force. Where the adhesive is spread heavily or is quite hard, it may prove easier to force the scraper through the tightly adhered areas by striking the scraper handle with a hammer using blows of moderate force while maintaining the scraper at a 25° to 30° angle to the floor (see Sketch 16).



Sketch 16. Difficult tile removal can often be accomplished by striking the scraper handle with a hammer or mallet as shown.

- f. If some areas are encountered where even the technique detailed in the previous paragraph proves to be inadequate, the removal procedure can be simplified by thoroughly heating the tile(s) with a hot air blower until the heat penetrates through the tile and softens the adhesive. **NOTE:** Handle the hot air blower carefully to avoid personal burns (see Sketch 17 below).

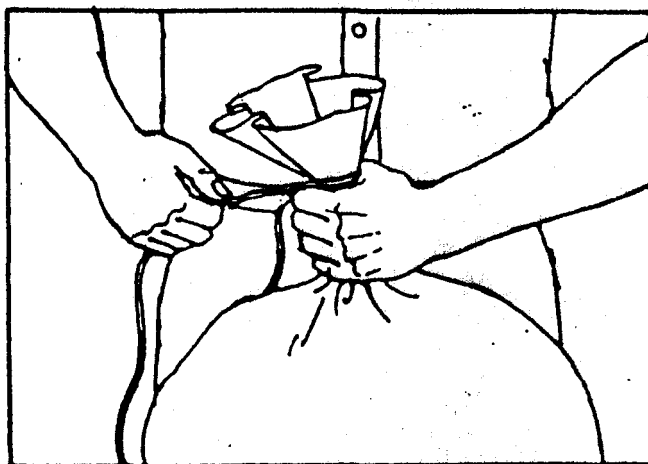


Sketch 17. In very difficult areas, using a hot air blower can simplify tile removal.

- g. As small areas of subfloor are cleared of tile the adhesive remaining on the floor must be scraped up with the 4" hand scraper until only a thin smooth film remains. In those areas where deposits are heavy or difficult to scrape the removal can be expedited by heating with the hot air blower prior to scraping. Deposit scrapings in a heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container.

- h. As indicated in previous paragraphs, tiles should be placed immediately in a heavy duty impermeable trash bag or closed impermeable container. Do not attempt to break tiles after they are in the bag.

- i. When all tiles have been removed from the floor and placed in heavy duty bags or closed containers, seal the bags securely for disposal (see Sketch 18 below) and mark: "Caution—Contains Asbestos—Dispose in an approved land fill only."



Sketch 18. Seal trash bags securely for disposal.

WARNING

Do Not Sand Existing Resilient Flooring, Backing, Or Lining Felt. These Products May Contain Asbestos Fibers That Are Not Readily Identifiable. Sanding Of Asbestos Containing Material Can Place Fine Particles Of Asbestos In The Air. These Asbestos Particles If Inhaled May Cause Serious Bodily Harm.

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