

Yellowing of certain floor covering products...For years there has been a question relative to the yellowing of resilient floor covering products when exposed to a variety of conditions. While yellowing and surface discoloration can occur due to a variety of conditions, it was alleged that rugs with certain backing materials when placed on the resilient flooring were one of the causes of this phenomenon. Thus, it became incumbent upon the carpet and rug industry to determine its role (or lack of it).

Controlled Test...Tests were conducted by an independent testing laboratory using a test method which is a combination of ASTM F1514-95 "Measuring Heat Stability Of Vinyl Floor Covering By Color Change" and a test protocol prescribed by the RFCI/CRI*. This test methodology allows researchers and scientists to evaluate conditions over a much shorter period of time. Tests utilizing this test method were conducted during the Fall of 1996 on a variety of both lower and higher priced resilient flooring products from four manufacturers. They were tested with rugs using the following backing applications: clear coat, Actionbac, spray, custom scrape, white rubber, and black rubber. The vinyl flooring products were also tested with other materials in addition to rugs.

Test Results...In all cases, the lower quality resilient products showed signs of yellowing. Conversely, the higher quality resilient samples showed negligible signs of yellowing. Most significantly, however, the lower priced resilient products showed yellowing when other inert materials were tested with them; i.e., corrugated box, wood and plastic pots, etc. The results of these tests suggest that surface discoloration of resilient flooring was not a result of anything in the rug backing. That it is, instead, a problem that relates to certain grades of resilient floor covering products.

Conclusion...Test data suggest that surface discoloration is limited to lower priced resilient flooring. Presumably, this is caused by certain ingredients, or the lack thereof, which gives insufficient protection against yellowing. This research points to the conclusion that rugs are not the cause of yellowing. It is not a result of anything in the rug backing, instead, it is a problem intrinsic to select resilient floor covering products.

*RFCI - Resilient Floor Covering Institute CRI - Carpet and Rug Institute