



## TECHNICAL BULLETIN – TB199

### Smoothing Cements over Flexible Waterproof Membranes & Similar Flexible Materials

Date, Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

#### INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

Ardex gets inquiries on a fairly regular basis as to whether smoothing cements can be applied over flexible waterproof membranes. This is usually because the floor slopes (falls to waste usually) have not been set correctly before the waterproofing has gone down, or because the membrane has too rough a surface for the floor covering.

Occasionally Ardex receives an inquiry for the installation of liquid smoothing cements over materials such as pre-existing resilient flooring.

This bulletin clarifies the long-standing position with regards to these application requests.

#### RESILIENT FLOORING

It is not acceptable to apply any liquid smoothing cements or patch mortars (Ardex A45, A46) over pre-existing resilient flooring. Such coverings must be removed before the smoothing cement is applied.

The only exception is Ardex Feather Finish, and its usage is defined in Technical Bulletin TB80 along with associated risk factors.

Irrespective of this concession, when referring to the revised Australian Standard A.S.1884 2021, section 3.2.3, the following advice is provided on the general application of resilient over resilient flooring:

*“Resilient sheet and tile finishes are not considered a suitable surface for adhering resilient Coverings”.*

#### FLEXIBLE WATERPROOF MEMBRANES (Including Liquid Applied Class II & III as per AS4858)

The application of all Ardex smoothing cements with the exceptions of Ardite NA and Feather Finish over flexible waterproofing membranes is not acceptable. Experience has shown that the smoothing cement surface develops cracks when used in this way, and in some cases can de-bond and lift.

In these cases, where a stiffer smoothing cement than Ardite NA or Feather Finish is called for, the membrane needs to be removed, and the substrate fixed with the smoothing cement before re-installation of the membrane. This has been observed to be a problem where Ardex LQ92 is requested to create falls after the membrane has gone down for ceramic tile systems.

Feather Finish is only intended to be used in this way where resilient flooring is being installed over the membrane (see Technical Bulletin TB178). Ardite NA can be used for resilient flooring situations (keeping in mind potential indentation issues), and also for ceramic tiles. When used for ceramic tiles, falls must be correct, and no areas of ponding water are acceptable.

The application of Ardite and Feather Finish is only acceptable over acrylic, latex or cement/acrylic membranes. Acrylic modified water borne polyurethane membranes need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Application over fully polyurethane and sheet membranes (e.g. torch-on bituminous, self-adhesive bituminous, or rubber) is not acceptable.



## SCREEDS

Where the membrane cannot be removed, the options then become to use:

- Arditex NA +/- aggregate within its limitations,
- For ceramic tile installation, to apply a sand-cement screed (minimum 15mm) bonded topping, or 40mm with welded wire mesh reinforcement to be self-supporting (un-bonded) topping.
- An Ardex A38 screed (minimum 45mm to be self-supporting) for a range of floor coverings and systems.

### **IMPORTANT**

This Technical Bulletin provides guideline information only and is not intended to be interpreted as a general specification for the application/installation of the products described. Since each project potentially differs in exposure/condition specific recommendations may vary from the information contained herein. For recommendations for specific applications/installations contact your nearest ARDEX Australia Office.

### **DISCLAIMER**

The information presented in this Technical Bulletin is to the best of our knowledge true and accurate. No warranty is implied or given as to its completeness or accuracy in describing the performance or suitability of a product for a particular application. Users are asked to check that the literature in their possession is the latest issue.

### **REASON FOR REVISION**

Standard changes, product deletions and ARDEX Logo and address update.

### **REVIEW REQUIRED**

36 Months from date of issue

**Australia:** 1300 788 780

**New Zealand:** 643 384 3029

Web: [www.ardexaustralia.com](http://www.ardexaustralia.com)

email: [technical.services@ardexaustralia.com](mailto:technical.services@ardexaustralia.com)

Address: 2 Buda Way, Kemps Creek NSW 2178