



LIST OF OTHER QUALITY BULLETINS AND QUALITY NOTES ON THIS SUBJECT:

Issue 01
Concrete Curing – 06.05.2012

Issue 12-2020
Existing Concrete Prep Requirements – 11.13.2020

Issue 29
FF-FL – 02.18.2014

Issue 49
Polished Concrete Lessons Learned – 09.18.2018

Floor Moisture Testing 01 – 06.30.2015

Floor Prep 01 – 06.14.2016

Floor Prep 02 – 10.24.2017

Floor Prep 03 – 06.30.2020

Concrete Curing 03 – 02.28.2017

We are seeing more lightweight concrete in our construction, which is causing several issues with our concrete and flooring installations. In Chicagoland, we are seeing lightweight concrete with air entrainment of 3%-8% ±1.5%. This air entrainment is creating finishing issues with our slab when the Architect specifies the FF >25. It is important to understand FF specifications and the project needs and limitations of the installation. Please use this and other Quality Bulletins on this topic to better understand the risks and how to mitigate them on your project.

*Corey S. Zussman, AIA, NCARB - Director of Quality Management
Scott Kennedy - Senior Vice President SPG*



- ❑ We are seeing a finishing concern and specification conflict on new lightweight concrete floors with an air content of >3%. Typically we are seeing an entrained air content of ±3-8% ±1.5%.
- ❑ The issue is when the specifications call for an FF (Floor Flatness) of over 25, or a rough equivalent of 1/4" per 10', because of the potential surface delamination at the upper concrete surface, the top 1/16" to 1/4".
- ❑ Delamination is caused by flattening the air pockets near the surface when over finished. Over finishing will provide a compressed, dark, and smooth surface which is not conducive for proper floor prep activities. These concerns outweigh any benefit of a higher FF.
- ❑ When the FF is >25 and we are installing lightweight concrete with an air content of >3%, the concrete finisher typically is needing to hard-trowel/over trowel the concrete to get to the >FF25 number. Typically, the finisher is unable to achieve an FF>25 without hard troweling the surface, which is a conflict in the specifications.
- ❑ **Concrete with an air content of >3% should NOT be hard troweled.** ACI 302 documents (Guide to Floor and Slab Construction) states that delamination is possible any time air entrained concrete is given a smooth, dense, hard – troweled finish. Reference ACI 302, article 10.11, 2016 edition, for recommended placement and finishing practices to reduce the risk of surface delamination on an air entrained lightweight concrete.

- ❑ Where to read the "Air Entrainment (A/E)" in the concrete mix design:

| Light Weight Concrete S.O.M.D., Fill Slab, Pad | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| 4000 psi Lt Wt. 110 ±3 lb./ff ² | Mix # | ASTM Specification |
| Cement | 564 lbs. | C-150 |
| Fly Ash | 100 lbs. | C-618 |
| Fine Agg | 1562 lbs.* | C-33 |
| Lt. Wt. Coarse Agg | 725 lbs.* | C-330 |
| Water | 34.0 gals. | Potable |
| HRWR | Variable dosage rate | C-494 |
| A/E | 3 – 6 % | C-260 |
| Slump @ discharge of truck | 8" Max | |

- ❑ **Other than polished concrete locations, which require a FF50**, there is very little, if any, benefit to have the concrete finished to a higher FF number unless the floor requires a high FF, such as in a warehouse or TV studio (however lightweight concrete will likely not be used in these types of spaces).
- ❑ When the FF25 is specified, the concrete finisher is better equipped to be able to finish the floor to a "fuzzy" or "fresno" finish, which will provide a CSP #1 or #2 and keep the concrete surface open, which will also facilitate concrete slab drying. Combine this finish with a moist cure, and there is a chance that moisture mitigation will not be needed based on today's moisture tolerant adhesives and topping mixes.

- ❑ *As a suggestion ONLY...*We have found the following process work well to achieve a "fuzzy" or "fresno" finish: Rider w/pans, once or twice max w/plastic blades or combo blades, walk-behind trowel, & hand trowel to flatten any ridges.

- ❑ Floor prep will still be needed on most floors with an FF50 or less, when installing a topping or floor finish on the concrete. So, by specifying an FF of >25, there is little to gain and little money to be saved and likely more problems and costly repairs.

- ❑ **IF YOU HAVE A PROJECT WITH LIGHTWEIGHT CONCRETE AND AN >FF25, PLEASE RFI YOUR PROJECT TEAM AND OFFER THIS TECHNICAL BULLETIN AS A REFERENCE TO REDUCE THE FF TO 25 OR LESS.**

- ❑ **OR consider talking to the Structural Engineer to reduce the overall air entrainment to 3%, which would make the weight of the concrete from ±110 #/CF ± 3#/CF to ±114 #/CF ± 3#/CF, an increase in about 4#/CF or 2#/SF based on a 6" slab.** This is very minimal and would considerably remove the finishing problems that we are experiencing on our lightweight concrete floors. Pepper Quality still recommends a "fuzzy" or fresno" finish on the slab for better floor topping or moisture mitigation installation.

PLEASE CONTACT THE QUALITY DEPARTMENT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

Concrete Delamination

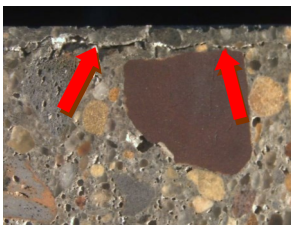


- ▶ Lightweight Concrete
- ▶ Black Surface = Hard Trowel Finish
- ▶ Finishing Created Delamination at the surface

"Blessing the Slab"



- ▶ Delamination could also come from adding water on the slab during finishing



- ▶ This is a Stereomicroscope photo analysis showing the near surface delamination that has occurred because of over troweling the concrete

