

For new schools and other commercial construction

The Following is in consideration for the vast amount of concrete floor slab-on-grade work expected to occur throughout Ohio during 2002, for new public schools and other commercial construction. ORMCA has obtained permission from the American Concrete Institute (ACI) to reprint the following information:

ADDENDUM GUIDE FOR CONCRETE FLOOR AND SLAB CONSTRUCTION (302.1R-96) - Vapor Retarder Location

The report of ACI Committee 302, "Guide for Concrete Floor and Slab Construction (ACI 302.1R-96)" states in section 4.1.5 that "if a vapor barrier or retarder is required due to local conditions, these products should be placed under a minimum of 4 in. (100 mm) of trimable, compactible, granular fill (not sand)." ACI Committee 302 on Construction of Concrete Floors, and Committee 360 on Design of Slabs on Ground have found examples where this approach may have contributed to floor covering problems.

Based on the review of the details of problem installations, it became clear that the fill course above the vapor retarder can take on water from rain, wet-curing, wet-grinding or cutting, and cleaning. Unable to drain, the wet or saturated fill provides an additional source of water that contributes to moisture-vapor emission rates from the slab well in excess of the 3 to 5 lb/1000 ft²/24 h (1.46 to 2.44 kg/100 m²/24 h) recommendation of the floor covering manufacturers.

As a result of these experiences, and the difficulty in adequately protecting the fill course from water during the construction process, caution is advised on the use of the granular fill layer when moisture-sensitive finishes are to be applied to the slab surface.

The committees believe that when the use of a vapor retarder or barrier is required, the decision whether to locate the retarder or barrier in direct contact with the slab or beneath a layer of granular fill should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Each proposed installation should be independently evaluated by considering the moisture sensitivity of subsequent floor finishes, anticipated project conditions and the potential effects of slab curling and cracking.

The following chart can be used to assist in deciding where to place the vapor retarder. The anticipated benefits and risks associated with the specified location of the vapor re-

tarder should be reviewed with all appropriate parties before construction.

