



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CARE, USE AND TRANSPORTATION OF DUST CONTROL MATS

This code of practice describes the responsibilities of the service provider and customer in respect of the provision of a dust mat service. It includes the level and quality of information and training, which should be given by the service provider to ensure a satisfactory service and to be able to demonstrate that all reasonable steps have been taken to make that service as safe as possible. Equally, customers need to understand their responsibility for the mat during the period after installation in the correct location and the next collection.

Service provider should also familiarise themselves with their duties under two pieces of legislation dealing with the mat. The Product Liability Directive (85/374/EEC amended 1999/34/EC) deals with damage or injury arising from defective products and services. The Product Safety Directive (92/59/EEC amended 2001/95/EC) has the purpose of ensuring that products placed on the market are safe to use for the duration of their useful life.

1. Key stages in establishing the rental service agreement

The service provider (textile rental company) should ensure the following:

- 1.1** A proper survey of the site is carried out by competent staff to identify locations and types of mat to be put in service. Particular attention should be paid to traffic levels and soil types. (Annex A1.)
- 1.2** The correct preparation of each floor location to receive the type of mat selected. (Annex A1. and Table A2.5)
- 1.3** An explanation of the customer's responsibilities is given verbally and in writing. The provision of training of the customer (including relevant contracted personnel) to allow them to meet these responsibilities, especially in respect of the maintenance of the floor location, function and safe use of the mat between changes. (Annex B. and Table B1.)
- 1.4** The establishment of an agreed frequency of replacement i.e. collection of soiled, delivery of clean mats.
- 1.5** The initial laying of the mat in its prepared location and the subsequent checking of the integrity of the floor surface or specific mat locating device at each change. (Annex A and Table A2.5)
- 1.6** The provision of information to the customer relating to the criteria for the withdrawal of the mat service.

- 1.7** A procedure for handling customer complaints forms part of any quality system and it is particularly important to include a frequent review for the dust mat service, making sure that specific cases are notified to the legal department or representative.

2 Key stages and recommendations from collection to delivery

The dust control mat should normally pass through the following key stages, further information on which is given in Annex A)

- 2.1** Collection (soiled) from the customer's premises in an appropriate storage system and transport to the laundry. During transport clean mats should be stored separately from soiled mats.
- 2.2** Processing in accordance with the service provider's documented methods; sensibly dried and rolled or folded before storage/ despatch. During rolling/folding checks on the integrity of the mat (e.g. edge tears, prominent creasing) should be carried out and unsatisfactory mats sent for repair or removed from service.
- 2.3** Handling and/or otherwise conveying into an appropriate storage system. Handling equipment, containers and vehicles should be maintained in a clean condition.
- 2.4** Container-loading onto a vehicle and delivery to the customer. Drivers and other service employees should pay close attention to personal hygiene and should ensure that mats remain dry and clean whilst in transit.
- 2.5** Delivery to the customer's premises with due care to maintain cleanliness, for placement in the correct location (see 1.5).

3. Key recommendations for the dustmat in use

- 3.1** The points in clause 1.5 should be addressed each time a mat is laid at the time of delivery or re-laid for whatever reason whilst in service.
- 3.2** The customer assumes responsibility for the mat and location after the mat has been installed by the textile rental staff. The points in clause 1.3 should have been addressed by the textile renter. The customer is responsible for ensuring the continued safety of users of the mat as outlined in Annex B and Tables A2. and B1.
- 3.3** In particular, attention should be given to
- a) checking for wear and tear, curling and wrinkling
 - b) the functioning of special fixings – recessed mats, fixing plates, double-sided tape, cleats
 - c) the correct procedures for lifting, moving and replacing mats
 - d) approved cleaning products and methods
 - e) the condition of the mat and substrate after cleaning e.g. not wet or slippery
 - f) other hazards which the mat may be obscuring such as holes, uneven surfaces, sharp objects
 - g) the presence of unwanted items e.g. that dust, banana skins etc. have not been swept under the mat

Annex A. Hazard and risk assessment, training requirements for textile rental staff

Annex A outlines the elements for hazard and risk assessment for mats, mat-handling, processing, placement and collection. The assessment may be used as shown in the following tables to form the basis of a training programme for staff.

A1. Mat location surveys

The site survey is one very important element in setting up a mat service contract. Staff must be well trained in the characteristics of the different types of mats and their performance properties. They must be able to advise on locations for mats on the customer's premises and estimate accurately the traffic density and soiling types and levels to be expected on a seasonal basis. Any special fixing requirements in the location must also be specified and trained fitters used to install these where required. The work must be properly inspected before the placing of the first mat and at each subsequent mat change. (The customer has responsibilities for the location between changes (Annex B and Table B1.)

A2. Processing staff

Processing staff are exposed to other hazards than those presented by the mat service and these should be documented in the service company's Management of Health and Safety at Work and COSHH assessments. (Table A1.)

A3. Staff on customers' sites

Staff (specialist or delivery) on site will be subject to or responsible for hazards associated with the preparation of mat locations and the placement and lifting of mats. Table A2. provides an illustration of the hazard assessment which may be required.

Annex B. Hazard and risk assessment, training requirements for the customer

Annex B describes the key points for customers with respect to checking the condition of mat locations. The hazard and risk assessment illustrated in Table B1. together with the points in clause 3.3 a) to g) will help define a suitable training programme for the customer. During the programme it should be made clear to customer that the training and the responsibility for the mats and locations between changes becomes part of their contractual obligations. It will be their responsibility to keep the situation safe and to notify the service supplier if any problems arise with a particular mat or mat location between changes. It is strongly recommended that the training content and responsibilities of the customer be put in writing.

B1. Hazards in use

The particular characteristics of the mat and the traffic pattern in its location will have a great bearing on the hazards it may present and the actions needed by the customer, in the first place, to limit the risks. The principal hazards are in respect of slips, trips and falls and an illustration is given of these in Table B1.

B2. Mat handling, lifting, placing

The Customer's staff or contractors may be required to reposition, or in extreme cases remove mats and will be subject to similar manual handling and training needs as indicated for rental staff on site in Table A2.clauses 2 – 5.

Section 2 of the TSA Health and Safety Management Guidelines gives comprehensive information on hazard recognition and risk assessment required under the Management of Health & Safety at Work and COSHH regulations. The following tables are intended to serve as an illustration of the points that need to be addressed in demonstrating a responsible approach to the provision of the service.

A five point scale of risk assessment is suggested: Very High, High, Medium, Low, Very Low

Table A1. Hazard assessment in processing mats

Hazard	Risk assessment	Action	Risk re-assessment	Training need
1. Processing – washing, drying, finishing, rolling/folding, storing, loading delivery vans	Medium	Washing and finishing and related activities should be dealt with during assessments for Management of Health & Safety and COSHH	Very Low	Refer to the TSA Guidelines and your own training assessment records
2. Handling, lifting of mats, loading/unloading machines	Medium	Table A2.	Low	See TSA Guidelines and Table A2.

Table A2. Hazard/risk/training for rental staff on customers' sites

Hazard	Risk assessment	Action	Risk re-assessment	Training need
1. Injury to customer's staff or public e.g. stock falling from delivery vehicle	Low	Park vehicle safely and securely. Report to site reception. Obtain and familiarise self with local site rules	Very Low	Appreciation of the need to respect obligations as a contractor on customers' sites
2. Manual handling of soiled and clean mats, individually and severally (including lifting, transporting and placing)	Medium	Use a mechanical aid if available/appropriate. In any case do not lift more than may be handled comfortably	Low	See TSA Guidelines. Train in the use of mechanical aids provided. Train in manual handling and lifting techniques.

3. Transport of mats to and from location	Low	Ensure that the route to and from the mat location is free from hazards and obstacles before transportation.	Very Low	Ensure that the staff member has an appreciation of the likely hazards.
4. Soiled mats				
a) contamination – soil, sharps etc	High	Protective equipment against sharps must be worn	Low	Training in protective equipment and the safe handling of contaminated mats
b) cross-contamination	Medium	Vans should be organised to store clean and soiled mats separately. Drivers must ensure that mats are stored correctly to avoid contamination of clean by soiled.	Very Low	On-the-Job training in good housekeeping
5. Placing mats at location	High	Mats must be correctly placed, flat and free from wrinkles and curling, in well maintained locations, which are fit for purpose, including any special fixings – recessed mats, fixing plates, double-sided tape, cleats	Low	Training in assessing the continuing fitness of the mat location with ability to recognise deficiencies.

Table B1. Hazard/risk/training for customers

Hazard	Risk assessment	Action	Risk re-assessment	Training need
1. Handling, lifting, placing of mats	Medium	Table A2.clauses 2 - 5	Table A2. 2 - 5.	Table A2.2 - 5
2. Slips, possible fall				
a) Mat becomes clogged with soil	High	Mats should be frequently checked for soil build up, especially during inclement weather or e.g. if building work is going on nearby	Low	Training to recognise situation and call for replacement. Remove from service

b) Inappropriate cleaning method for location	Medium	Procedures for cleaning should be agreed. Appropriate equipment and cleaning products should always be available. A check should be kept on cleaning practices and supplies to ensure that both are correct.	Low	Training in appropriate cleaning practices. Appreciation of the need to maintain integrity of location
3. Trips, possible fall				
a) Mat curl	Medium	Regular inspection and corrective action. Remove from service	Low	Appreciation of mat characteristics and how to correct. When to call renter and/or remove mat from service
b) Mat wrinkling	High	Regular inspection and corrective action. Remove from service	Low	