

# TECHNICAL INFORMATION

## *DPM WITH TOPFLOW SCREED A*

Using a surface DPM (Damp Proof Membrane) on Topflow Screed A is a viable option - providing key criteria are met.

Within this article we use the term 'moisture suppressing'; this describes all surface DPM systems currently available. In general, surface applied DPM systems do not stop the passage of moisture, they actually allow the passage of moisture from the screed to the floor finishes, but at a greatly reduced rate. Tarmac recommend that it would be better to dry the screed rather than use a surface DPM.

### **DON'T FORGET**

Unlike sand/cement screed, Topflow Screed A can be force dried after just one week by use of good ventilation, heaters, dehumidifiers and even underfloor heating. This can often be far more cost-effective than utilising a vapour suppressing DPM. Obviously Tarmac cannot guarantee the performance of somebody else's DPM, indeed, reassurances should be sought from the DPM manufacturer that the product is suitable for Gyvlon/Topflow Screed A with regards to overall performance and vapour transmission rates. We can however comment on the effect that trapping moisture within the screed has on the binder. There has always been a fear that Topflow Screed A degrades when it gets wet and then dries. Independent studies have been carried out on generic materials confirming that this is untrue. Tarmac is able to confirm that following trials of our material there is no apparent deterioration in the screed when a moisture suppressing DPM is applied at moderate background moisture levels (see below). Care must be taken regarding the amount of moisture trapped in the screed, as this will have an effect on the strength attainment. Applying a moisture

suppressing DPM will effectively cap the strength of the screed and so it should not be applied until the screed has attained sufficient strength to be suitable for the finished application. This time period will vary depending on site conditions, but bearing in mind that the strengths quoted by screed manufacturers are based on 28 day tests carried out in lab conditions, and that site conditions may be considerably worse, we recommend that the screed is at least older than this and that the moisture content is less than 1.5% (or 87% RH).

### **HEATED SCREEDS**

Heated screeds remain a little more complex. There are currently very few DPM manufacturers who are comfortable in offering a surface DPM to go over a heated screed, whether it is a calcium sulphate screed or sand/cement screed. Indeed, we would recommend that the underfloor heating system be commissioned and run prior to the application of surface finishes regardless of the type of screed used. We are unable to offer advice on the use of surface DPMs on heated screeds. NB: It is Tarmac's recommendation not to use DPMs on floors with underfloor heating.

Tarmac guidance on the use of liquid DPM systems over Topflow Screed A

- Screed must have been installed for 28 days
- Screed A must be tested for moisture using a digital/hair hydrometer or carbide bomb test as detailed in BS8204 and must be below 87% RH (moisture content 1.5%).  
This should be conducted in line with BS8203 – section 1.4.9 testing
- Underfloor heating must not be installed within the screed
- The screed must be sanded to give an open, lightly abraded texture to ensure a mechanical key for the DPM
- The DPM manufacturer chosen must warranty his product as suitable for use with Topflow Screed A in line with the above criteria
- For further information and advice on DPM products compatible with Topflow Screed A please contact your local Tarmac representative.

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