

## Tips and tricks from Armstrong DLW

If you are trying to solve a tricky problem, or need the advice of our technical advisors, do not hesitate to contact our Technical Advisory Department. The team will be happy to help you.

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### **Subject no. 12: Drying times for screeds**

A cause of damage which still occurs frequently and is of great importance for the correct, professional installation of floor coverings is the residual moisture level in the screed. The following rule-of-thumb applies to the drying time for any kind of screed floor up to 40 mm thick:

For each centimetre of thickness of screed: one week's drying time.

4 cm thick = 4 weeks' drying time.

For greater thicknesses, the drying time rises with the square of the additional length of time. This means that, in the case of screed 6 cm thick, the first 4 cm need the above-mentioned 4 weeks but the remaining 2 cm need the square of the extra time – ( $2 \times 2 = 4$ ) so an additional 4 weeks.

**This all applies only under laboratory conditions: a temperature of 23°C and a relative atmospheric humidity of 50 percent.**

In actual practice, the point in time when the screed is ready for the floor covering depends on the composition and thickness of the screed and the drying conditions on the construction site.

The most important factors are:

- temperature
- movement of the air
- exchange of the air
- relative atmospheric humidity.

If the atmospheric humidity is very high – over 75 percent, for instance – the screed will only dry very slowly or possibly not at all.

In practice, therefore, it is best to calculate that a 6-cm thick screed will take 10 to 12 weeks to dry.

Basically, however, the residual humidity should always be checked with the CM machine before the floor covering is installed.

At least one reading should be taken if the area of the screed is 100 square metres. For larger surfaces, one reading for every 200 square metres is usually sufficient. The readings should always be taken at the dampest place which can be checked with an electronic measuring instrument, for instance.