

A Guide to Wood Floor Care

A basic guide to the care and maintenance of wood, cork and wood composite flooring

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Preparation

If the floor has been sealed, and the seal is in good condition, it may be treated with a water based emulsion polish, such as *Carefree Eternum* or *Carefree Satin*. Alternatively, a solvent based wax polish, such as *Traffic/ Bourne Liquid Wax Paste* may be used.

If the floor seal is in poor condition, or it is required to seal an unsealed floor, it is recommended that the following process be carried out.

Sanding and Sealing:

Remove as much of the old polish and loose seal as possible from the floor by using a 1:20 solution of *Carefree Stripper* in hot or cold water. Apply the stripper solution to the floor, using a colour coded mop, and leave for five minutes to penetrate and soften the emulsion polish or wax. **DO NOT ALLOW THE FLOOR TO DRY OUT.** Then scrub the floor using a standard speed rotary machine fitted with a stripping grade pad or brush. Remove the slurry using a wet pick-up. Rinse the floor with clean water, at least twice, until the floor pH is neutral. Allow the floor to dry thoroughly before proceeding to the next step.

Sand the floor with a belt sander using first a course grade of sandpaper, then medium, and finally a fine grade of sandpaper. Allow all airborne dust to settle before removing with a vacuum cleaner.

Seal the floor using *Bourne Aqua Seal*. Ensure adequate ventilation is maintained whilst using the seal. Gently shake the container of *Bourne Aqua Seal* by inverting two or three times before use. Using a clean lambswool or sponge applicator, apply an even thin coat of seal, working well into the wood using the applicator. Note, *Bourne Aqua Seal* will appear milky upon application, but clears as it dries. Allow the seal to dry (typically 60 minutes), then abrade surface by dry buffing with a rotary floor machine fitted with a red or blue pad. Vacuum all dust afterwards. Apply a second coat of *Bourne Aqua Seal* using systematic passes, but do not work into the wood. Allow seal to dry thoroughly (typically 60 minutes) before applying a third coat if necessary, at right angles to the previous. Allow 6–8 hours for the seal to fully cure. The floor is now ready to be protected with a *Carefree* polish.

Sanding the floor will achieve the best results. However if this is impractical, acceptable results can be achieved with *Bourne Aqua Seal* by simply carrying out step 1 above before sealing.

If preferred, a “traditional” oleo-resinous seal, *Bourne Seal* can be used instead of *Bourne Aqua Seal* by the following process.

Follow steps 1 and 2 above.

Apply a coat of *Bourne Seal* using a brush or polish applicator. Cutting the bristles down to approximately 1” in length of a household broom makes an ideal tool for this job. Work the product well into the grain, working in the same direction of the grain. If the product is too viscous, it may be thinned 50:50 with white spirit, in which case, three rather than two coats should be applied.

Allow the floor to thoroughly dry – at least 24 hours.

Lightly abrade the surface of the seal by dry burnishing with a rotary floor machine fitted with a wire wool pad or, if unavailable, a scrubbing grade nylon pad can be used. Allow all airborne dust to settle before removing with a vacuum cleaner.

Apply a second coat of *Bourne Seal*, as before, but at right angles to the first. If applying a third coat, allow the floor to dry for 24 hours prior to abrading the surface etc. as before.

When all the seal has been applied, allow the floor to dry for at least three full days before applying any polish. However, the floor may be opened to light traffic in the meantime.

Before applying any polish, ensure that the floor is thoroughly clean, dry and free from dust.

N.B. Care must be taken when handling any solvent based product such as *Bourne Seal* or white spirit. Avoid breathing fumes and do not smoke in the area.

Note: If the floor has not been sealed, or the seal is in poor condition, and solvent, wax based polishes have been used, then sanding still may not remove all the old wax polish. Therefore, there may be adhesion problems with either the *Bourne Aqua Seal* or *Bourne Seal*. If this is the case, it is recommended to continue sealing and protecting the floor with the wax polishes.

Repairing Seals:

If the seal has worn away in only a few patches, it is sometimes possible to repair those small areas as follows.

Ensure that the area to be repaired is clean and dry.

Abrade the area by dry burnishing with a rotary floor machine fitted with a wire wool pad or, if unavailable, a scrubbing grade nylon pad can be used. Allow all airborne dust to settle before removing with a vacuum cleaner.

Apply *Bourne Aqua Seal*, or *Bourne Seal*, to the area using a paintbrush. Work well into the grain and only apply a thin coat. “Feather” the seal at the edges to blend-in with the original seal surrounding the repair.

If using *Bourne Aqua Seal*, allow 6–8 hours before applying polish. If using *Bourne Seal*, allow three full days before polish application.

Removing Old Polish – Water Based, Emulsion Polishes (*Carefree Polishes*):

Periodically, it is necessary to remove water based, emulsions from wooden floors. This should be done when the polish is worn, dirty, or no longer responds to maintenance. In practice, this would be every 3–12 months, depending on traffic.

Carefree polishes should be removed from wooden, cork, or wood composite floors using *Carefree Stripper* (**NOT** *Carefree Speed Stripper*) as follows.

Dilute *Carefree Stripper* with hot or cold water at 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the amount of polish present.

Apply the stripper solution to the floor and allow five minutes for the solution to penetrate and soften the polish. **DO NOT ALLOW THE FLOOR TO DRY OUT.** **CARE:** Depending on the amount of polish on the floor, the floor may become extremely slippery!

Then scrub the floor using a standard speed rotary machine fitted with a stripping grade pad or brush.

Remove the slurry using a wet pick-up.

Rinse the floor with clean water, at least twice, each time removing the water with a wet pick-up, until the floor pH is neutral.

Allow the floor to dry thoroughly.

Removing Old Polish – Solvented, Wax Polishes (*Bourne Liquid Wax*).

It is not normally necessary to strip off solvent-based wax polishes. However, over a period of time, they can build-up and may darken due to ingrained dirt or age. Should this happen, it is advisable to remove the wax before re-applying further coats.

This is done as described in a previous section “Sanding and Sealing”. If using the water based, *Carefree Stripper*, dilute with hot water to speed up the operation.

Protection

After sealing with *Bourne Aqua Seal Seal* or *Bourne Seal*, it is necessary to protect the floor with either a *Carefree* or *Bourne* polish.

Water based *Carefree* Polishes, such as *Carefree Eternum* or *Carefree Satin*, require less maintenance than the solvented, *Bourne Liquid Wax*. Furthermore, the amount of maintenance may be varied to suit the particular needs of the floor and cleaning schedule. The *Carefree* polishes are more resistant to spillages of water, alcohol and foodstuffs than *Bourne Liquid Wax*. However, the *Carefree* polishes are not self-colouring and, therefore, do not enhance the appearance of the wood, rather allow the wood's natural colour to show through.

Solvented, wax polishes, such as *Bourne Liquid Wax*, clean and polish in one operation. They provide the more traditional, darker appearance than do the *Carefree* polishes, but are less resistant to spillages, and require more maintenance.

Note: *Bourne Liquid Wax* should not be applied to a wooden floor previously sealed with *Bourne Aqua Seal* or other water based wood floor seals.

Carefree Eternum/Carefree Satin Polishes:

These polishes must only be applied after first stripping off any old polish. Failure to do this may result in a patchy appearance and polish build-up may occur.

Lightly abrade the surface of the seal, Bourne Aqua Seal or Bourne Seal using a rotary floor machine fitted with a blue pad. This will ensure good adhesion between the Carefree polish and the seal. Ensure that the floor is clean, dry and free from dust.

Apply the first coat of *Carefree* polish with a clean, colour-coded mop or polish applicator, leaving an approximately 15 cm (6") gap around the edges.

Allow the floor to dry (typically 20–30 minutes).

Apply a second coat of polish, at right angles to the first. If this is the final coat, apply polish up to edges.

Allow the floor to dry (typically 20–30 minutes).

If required, apply a third coat as before, polishing to edges if necessary.

Allow the floor to dry (typically 20–30 minutes), before allowing any foot traffic on it.

Do not conduct any machine maintenance on the floor for at least 24 hours.

Bourne Liquid Wax

Bourne Liquid wax, should be shaken well before using and if store in a cold area allow the product to reach room temperature. *Bourne Liquid wax*, should be applied using a clean polish applicator or mop. Alternatively, *Bourne Liquid Wax* may be applied through a suitable spraying unit. The floor should then be left to dry which, in practice, takes approximately one to two hours. After drying, the polish should then be well burnished using a rotary floor machine fitted with a buffing grade (red or tan) pad or brush.

The more that the *Bourne Liquid Wax* is buffed, the harder it becomes – the harder it becomes, the more slip retardant and durable the finish. Also, the gloss level of the polish is improved with buffing. Therefore, it is necessary to regularly buff all floors treated with the *Bourne Liquid Wax*.

The *Bourne Liquid Wax* is self-indicative as to when reapplication is required. Scuffmarks should immediately disappear upon passing a buffing machine over them once. If they are not removed, it is time to reapply more polish. This does not necessarily mean over the entire area as it can be reapplied selectively to, for example the main traffic lanes.

In practice, the Bourne Liquid Wax is typically applied every 1–4 weeks depending upon traffic conditions. The best performance is obtained by maintaining a good coating of polish on the floor, and not allowing it to wear off.

Note: Swirl marks in the *Bourne Liquid Wax*, as a result of buffing, are indicative of too much polish being present. If this occurs, then continue to buff to remove excess polish, and review the reapplication schedule.

CARE: NEVER apply a solvented, wax based polish over, or adjacent to, an area protected with a water-based emulsion polish, as the area protected with the emulsion polish may become extremely slippery. If it is necessary to have adjacent areas

protected with these different polishes, ensure sufficient, adequate matting is placed between the two areas.

Maintenance

Carefree Eternum/Carefree Satin Polishes:

The maintenance of a wooden floor that has been sealed and subsequently protected with a Carefree polish, is as with any other resilient floor type. The type and amount of maintenance will be dependent on a number of factors, not least traffic flow and equipment availability. However, at minimum, it is recommended that the floor be daily dust swept, and damp mopped with a 1:30–1:60 solution of *Carefree Maintainer* or Taski 300 diluted at 1:100 and, at least weekly, spray cleaning with a 1:10 solution of *Carefree Maintainer*. For a higher shine, especially on *Carefree Eternum*, the floor should be spray polished, at least weekly, with *Carefree Gloss Restorer*.

Bourne Liquid Wax:

Maintenance of the *Bourne Liquid Wax* is simply to dust sweep and then dry buff. The *Bourne Liquid Wax* is effectively self-cleaning in that when buffed, or more *Bourne Liquid Wax* is applied and subsequently buffed, the dirt adheres to the pad or brush.

For areas where traffic is heavy, it may be necessary to spray polish as follows.

Ensure that the area is well ventilated, and there are no naked flames or incandescent materials.

Dilute *Bourne Liquid Wax* 50:50 with white spirit in a solvent resistant trigger spray.

Spray the diluted wax onto the traffic lanes (avoid breathing fumes) and immediately buff with a rotary floor machine fitted with a buffing grade (red or Tan) pad or brush.

On no account should detergents or water based products be used to maintain floors protected with the *Bourne Liquid Wax*. Such products damage the polish, which then must be repaired (see below). If they must be used, for example to clear up a spillage, then only use these products sparingly.

Any localised damage to the polish (e.g. as a result of water spillage) can be prepared as follows.

Clean off the damaged polish using a clean rag dampened with white spirit.

Allow the floor to dry, then either:

Spray polish the area, as described above, or

Apply *Bourne Liquid Wax* to the area with a clean applicator or mop, allow drying, then buff to a shine.

Common problems and Cures

Preparation:

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	CURE
Poor polish removability:	Incorrect dilution. Insufficient dwell time.	Check dilution of <i>Carefree Stripper</i> . Allow at least 5 minutes contact time before scrubbing.
Poor polish removability cont.:	Heavy polish build-up. Incorrect/worn pad.	Repeat stripping process and/or use a stronger dilution of stripper. Change pad for correct/new one.

Protection:

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	CURE
Slow drying time:	Poor ventilation. Low temperature. High humidity. Coats too thick.	Open doors and windows to improve air flow. Ensure sufficient heating in room (except for under-floor heating). Open doors and windows to improve air flow. Apply thinner coats.
Poor gloss/ patchy appearance:	Inadequate preparation. Dirty floor. Dirty equipment. Coats too thin. Too few coats. Second coat of seal/polish applied too soon. Polish applied before seal has completely dried.	Repeat preparation process. Ensure that floor is clean, dry and dust swept. Use clean, preferably new equipment. Apply heavier coats. Apply further coats to achieve desired appearance. Ensure that first coat of seal is thoroughly dry. Allow at least 6–8 hours (<i>Bourne Aqua Seal</i>) or 3 days (<i>Bourne Seal</i>)

	Previous use of wax polishes.	for seal to fully cure. Strip off all emulsion polish and review sanding and re-sealing or switch to <i>Bourne Liquid Wax</i> .
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Maintenance:

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	CURE
Slippery floor:	Inadequate preparation. Incorrect seal. Adjacent wax and emulsion areas. High levels of dust Too much polish Contamination (spillages etc.)	Repeat preparation process. Do not apply <i>Bourne Liquid Wax</i> on <i>Bourne Aqua seal</i> or other water based seals. Install sufficient, suitable barrier matting between surfaces to prevent wax walking off. Dust sweep. Buff (<i>Bourne Liquid Wax</i>) to remove excess. Review reapplication frequency. Determine cause of contamination, remove/repair as required.
Powdering: (<i>Carefree</i> polishes)	Inadequate preparation. Excessive polish. Slow/fast drying. No/worn seal. Previous use of wax polishes. Insufficient/worn polish	Buff Seal with dry blue pad prior to application. Strip/spray strip to remove excess. Review reapplication frequency. Ensure adequate ventilation/heating (see above). Strip off all polish and re-seal as necessary. Strip off all emulsion polish and review sanding and re-sealing or switch to <i>Bourne Liquid Wax</i> . Re-apply polish as necessary.
Does not respond to maintenance:	Inadequate preparation Polish applied too thinly/insufficiently.	Repeat preparation process. Apply further coats of polish.
Poor durability:	Incorrect/inadequate	Review type and frequency of

	<p>maintenance.</p> <p>Abrasive materials.</p> <p>Unrealistic expectations.</p>	<p>maintenance.</p> <p>Install sufficient, suitable barrier matting, and ensure adequate dust control.</p> <p>Review entire maintenance procedure, including frequency and level of polish application, versus traffic and dirt levels.</p>
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For further, free advice or information on wood floor care, or any other cleaning and hygiene matter, please do not hesitate to contact our Customer Care Team on:

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