What You Need to Know About Silicon Impregnator Removal

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When it comes to silicon impregnator removal, the results will vary depending on what type of surface the impregnator was applied to, how long it has been there, and what methods you are using to remove it. Regardless, silicon impregnator removal can be a challenge.

Fred Hueston, Chief Technical Director of Surface Care Pros and owner of Stone Forensics explains, “There is no effective way to remove one hundred percent of a silicon impregnator from stone.”

Why Silicon Impregnator is Hard to Remove

The definition of impregnate, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is “to cause to be filled, imbued, permeated, or saturated… to permeate thoroughly.” Think about it. The pores of natural stone are filled and permeated thoroughly with silicon impregnator. Removing silicon impregnator is sort of like trying to extract only the eggs from a baked cake.

Chemicals May Partially Remove Silicon Impregnator

Hueston warily suggests using solvents such as mineral spirits or methylene chloride to remove silicon impregnators, but he warns, “Solvents will only remove the silicon from the surface to a few millimeters below the surface. The solvents have to be flooded and allowed to sit on the surface for several hours. The results may not be acceptable, and the process can actually be quite dangerous.”

The Dark Side of Solvents

Before you use solvents, weigh the risks and benefits. Do you have the time to invest in silicon impregnator removal, especially considering you may not be able to achieve the results you want?

There are many other reasons you may want to reconsider using solvents to remove silicon impregnator. Solvents contain toxic, volatile chemicals that can cause all sorts of health problems, and they can be hazardous to the environment.

Hueston explains one the most compelling reasons to avoid using solvents: “Many of the solvents used to remove impregnators are flammable, combustible, and explosive.” If you are going to go ahead and use solvents, Hueston warns, “You should not use machines such as floor buffers, vacuums, or hand-held buffers with solvents.” These machines can generate sparks or heat that can ignite solvent vapors. A manual application method, such as using a brush or cloth, will minimize the possibility of a fire or an explosion.

The catch is that manual methods require more time and exposure, which means increased health risks. Be sure to use the appropriate protective gear and that the area is well-ventilated, should you choose to work with solvents.

Learn More

For more information, register to earn a Stone Restoration Master Course Certificate. You'll learn how to restore natural stone floors, countertops, and walls, engineered stone, and granite floors, using the most efficient and effective restoration procedures. Also included in this program is the Stain Care Pro course with a one-year subscription to the Stain Care Pro app and Understanding Sealers.

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