OTTAWA COMMERCIAL EPOXY

Downtime & Scheduling

How long a business closes for a new floor, phasing, after-hours work, and why the data sheet sets the times

6 Expert Answers from Coatings IQ

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Q1

Can a warehouse floor in Kanata be done in phases?

Phased floor coating work in a warehouse is possible, but whether it suits your facility depends on the product chosen, the slab condition, and how the contractor plans the sequence. The schedule the contractor proposes must be checked against the data sheet for each product, because the data sheet sets the return-to-service times, not the contractor's estimate.

A few things shape whether phasing works for this building:

- Slab condition and prep: each phase needs its own surface preparation to the profile the data sheet asks for. If the slab has cracks, joint damage or old coatings, those areas need to be addressed before any coating goes down in that zone.
- Return-to-service times: one manufacturer's data sheet for a 100%-solids epoxy lists foot traffic at 24 hours and light vehicles at 72 hours; heavy traffic is listed at 7 days. A polyaspartic data sheet lists light traffic at 24 hours and vehicles at 7 days. Racking, forklifts and loaded pallet jacks need to clear the coated zone for the full period the data sheet requires before operations return to it.
- Moisture: ASTM F2170 notes that test results reflect the slab's condition only at the time and location tested. If the slab moisture varies across the warehouse, each phase may produce a different result, and a moisture-tolerant primer may be needed in some zones but not others.
- Product continuity: ask the contractor how they will handle the seam where a completed phase meets the next one, and whether the data sheet permits coating over a cured edge.
- After-hours or weekend work: if operations cannot stop during the day, phased work may shift to nights or weekends. The data sheet figures are the minimum times; the contractor must confirm the schedule fits them.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, floor coating work in an occupied building is likely treated as construction at a project. Before work begins, obtain a WSIB clearance certificate for the contractor and keep it on file while work is underway; WSIB policy 14-02-19 requires this, and the householder exemption does not apply to a business. Also, under OHSA s.30(1), you as the owner must determine whether any designated substances are present at the site and give the contractor a list before a binding contract is signed. If the warehouse has old vinyl tile or black mastic anywhere on the slab, have it tested before any grinding begins, as it may contain asbestos. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments), s.11 requires that a floor used by workers shall not have any finish that is likely to make the surface slippery. Ask the contractor how the chosen system addresses that requirement in a warehouse where forklifts and foot traffic share the floor.

Local contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory can be reached through the request form on this page.

One line item worth checking in any quote for a phased warehouse job is what the contractor has included for prep and grinding in each phase, since that cost can vary significantly depending on what they find under the surface.

Q2

Will odour keep my Centretown office closed after coating?

Odour and closure time depend on which coating system the contractor proposes, and the data sheet for that product sets the numbers, not a general rule.

Water-based epoxies and water-based polyaspartics carry less solvent odour than solvent-based primers or MMA systems. Whether odour alone forces a longer closure is a product question, not a fixed schedule. What the data sheet does set is when foot traffic is safe: one 100%-solids epoxy data sheet lists foot traffic at 24 hours; one polyaspartic data sheet lists light traffic at 24 hours with a dry-to-touch time of 2 to 4 hours; one MMA brochure (2010) lists cure in about one hour. Those are return-to-service figures, not odour-clearance figures. The two are not the same, and the contractor should tell you both.

A few things shape how long odour lingers in an office environment. Ventilation is the main lever: the Ontario Fire Code (O. Reg. 213/07, s.4.1.7.1) requires ventilation where flammable or combustible liquids are used, and whether a product is flammable depends on its Safety Data Sheet, Section 9 (flash point). Ask the contractor for the SDS before work begins. Section 2 of the SDS will tell you whether the product is a skin or respiratory sensitiser, which matters for any staff who re-enter before full cure. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, your employer obligation is to make the SDS readily available to workers who may be exposed.

Some solvent-based primers and MMA resins may be flammable liquids. If your building has gas pilot lights, heating equipment or any open-flame device, the Fire Code (s.4.1.5.2) says open flames, sparks or heat shall not be permitted in an area where flammable or combustible liquids are used unless controlled in a manner that will not create a fire or explosion hazard. Confirm with the contractor and your building manager which systems are in the space.

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments), s.11 applies to any floor surface used by a worker, including office floors, and says the finish shall not be likely to make the surface slippery. That is a floor-performance rule, not an odour rule, but it is worth confirming the chosen system meets it before you sign.

Before the work starts, obtain a WSIB clearance certificate for the contractor and confirm they carry liability insurance. Under WSIB policy 14-02-19, a business that retains a contractor for construction work must have a clearance in place before work begins; the householder exemption does not apply to a business.

Across the quotes you receive, line up: the specific product and its data sheet, the prep method and surface profile the contractor will achieve, whether a moisture test is included and what happens if the slab reads high, the number of coats and thickness from the data sheet, whether cove base is in scope, any anti-slip texture broadcast, and the closure window the contractor commits to based on the data sheet return-to-service times. You can submit a project request through this page and contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory will reply by email.

Before you commit to a schedule, ask each contractor to give you the ventilation plan in writing alongside the data-sheet cure times, so you know exactly when staff can safely return.

Q3

Weekend versus weekday floor work in an Orleans clinic?

Scheduling a floor coating in an occupied Orleans clinic comes down to two things: how long the data sheet says the coated area must stay clear of foot traffic, and whether your patients and staff can be safely separated from the work area and its fumes during that window.

One manufacturer's data sheet for a 100%-solids epoxy lists foot traffic at 24 hours after application; one polyaspartic data sheet lists light traffic at 24 hours as well, with vehicles at 7 days. One MMA brochure (2010) lists cure in about one hour. Those figures assume roughly 21 to 25 degrees C; the contractor must confirm the schedule against the actual data sheet for the product they propose, because the data sheet for your product governs. Whether a weekend closure is long enough depends on the system chosen, the phasing and the data sheet for the product.

Some solvent-based primers and sealers may be flammable liquids. The Ontario Fire Code (O. Reg. 213/07, 4.1.5.2) requires that open flames, sparks or heat-producing equipment not be permitted in areas where flammable or combustible liquids are used unless controlled so as not to create a fire or explosion hazard. Ask the contractor for the Safety Data Sheet for every product; Section 9 gives the flash point and Section 2 lists the hazards. If any staff will remain in the building during the work, OHSA s.38(1.1) requires that a copy of the SDS be readily available to workers who may be exposed.

For a clinic specifically, weekend work reduces patient exposure to fumes and wet surfaces, but it does not eliminate the scheduling risk if cure is incomplete by Monday. Ask the contractor to propose a system and a phasing plan, then check the data sheet cure times against your actual reopening window before agreeing to a schedule.

When the work is finished, hold on to the written contract, the product data sheets and SDSs for every material applied, any written warranty the contractor provides, and dated photographs of the floor before work began and

after it was completed.

Q4

Our Barrhaven kitchen is closed Sunday to Tuesday, is that enough for a floor?

Whether three days is enough depends on the system chosen and what the data sheets say, not on the calendar alone.

One manufacturer's data sheet lists foot traffic return at 24 hours for a 100%-solids epoxy, and one urethane cement data sheet lists light foot traffic at 18 hours. One MMA brochure (2010) lists cure in about one hour. But those clocks start after surface preparation is complete and the coating is applied, and prep work, moisture testing and any crack repair all happen before the first coat goes down. Three days gives more room than a single overnight closure, but whether it is enough for your specific system, your slab condition and your prep requirements is a question for the contractor to answer against the data sheet, not a general yes or no.

What the rules say for a commercial kitchen in Barrhaven

Ontario's Food Premises regulation, O. Reg. 493/17, s.7(1)(c), requires that floors in food preparation and service areas be tight, smooth and non-absorbent. A seamless resinous floor with an integral cove base is one way to meet that standard; the regulation does not name it as required. Ottawa Public Health enforces O. Reg. 493/17 and asks to be notified when a food premises is being significantly renovated. We found nothing that says whether re-coating an existing kitchen floor counts as a significant renovation, so ask OPH before booking the work.

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments), s.11 says a floor used by any worker shall not have any finish or protective material that is likely to make the surface slippery. Ask the contractor how the system they are proposing addresses that requirement.

Floor coating work is likely treated as construction under OHSA.

Comparing quotes, line up: the specific products named and their data sheets and safety data sheets, the prep method and the surface profile the contractor is targeting, whether a moisture test is included and what happens if the slab fails it, the number of coats or the system thickness from the data sheet, whether cove base is in scope and how many linear feet, the anti-slip texture method, and the closure window the contractor is committing to based on the data sheet, not a general estimate.

Q5

When can forklifts drive on a new epoxy floor in Nepean?

One manufacturer's data sheet lists heavy traffic return at 7 days for a 100%-solids epoxy at around 21 to 25 degrees C. That is the figure to plan your forklift schedule around, and the data sheet for the specific product being applied governs.

Prep and moisture testing come before any coating, so ask how many days they add. One epoxy data sheet requires the slab to be at or below about 80% relative humidity before application; if the test comes back above that, a moisture-tolerant primer is an extra step. The data sheet also sets temperature limits for application, so the contractor should confirm the schedule against the data sheet for your Nepean facility.

When you review quotes, ask each contractor to provide the product data sheet and safety data sheet for every product they plan to use, confirm the surface profile they will achieve and how they will verify it, and get the cure schedule in writing tied to those data sheets. A fair quote for a Nepean warehouse or distribution facility should address:

- moisture testing results and what happens if the slab fails the threshold
- surface preparation method and the ICRI concrete surface profile targeted
- number of coats and total system thickness
- anti-slip broadcast if forklifts and foot traffic share the floor
- the closure window and phasing plan tied to the data sheet cure times
- proof of liability insurance

When comparing quotes, ask each contractor to break out the cost of crack and joint repair separately so you can see what that line covers before you commit.

Q6

What should I ask about downtime before signing in Kanata?

A useful first downtime question: what does the data sheet for each product in this system say about return to service, and will the contractor commit to that schedule in writing before work starts?

Downtime is not one number. It has several parts that stack on top of each other, and a quote that gives only a single "back open in X days" figure is leaving things out.

Here is what to work through with the contractor before signing:

- Surface preparation comes first. Grinding, shot-blasting and crack repair happen before any coating goes down. That work produces dust and noise and may need the area cleared. Ask how many days prep takes on its own.
- Moisture testing adds time if the contractor follows ASTM F2170 or ASTM F1869 protocols. In-situ relative humidity probes under ASTM F2170 need to equilibrate in the slab before a reading is valid. Ask whether moisture testing is in the schedule and how long it adds.
- Ask for the return-to-service times from the data sheet of each product in the system. One manufacturer's data sheet for a 100%-solids epoxy lists foot traffic at 24 hours and heavy traffic at 7 days, at around 21 to 25 degrees C. A self-levelling urethane cement data sheet lists light foot traffic at 18 hours and heavy traffic and chemical exposure at 72 hours. A polyaspartic data sheet lists vehicles at 7 days despite a fast initial set. The data sheet for the specific product on your floor governs, not a general claim.
- Temperature matters. One epoxy data sheet says not to apply it below 10 degrees C, or when the surface is less than about 3 degrees C above the dew point. Ask what the contractor will do if the building is below the product's minimum.
- Phasing and after-hours work can shorten the closure if the floor is divided into sections or if coating happens overnight. Ask whether the quote includes phased or after-hours work, and if not, what that would add to the cost.
- Ask about ventilation. Some solvent-based primers may be flammable liquids; the Ontario Fire Code requires ventilation where flammable or combustible liquids are used, and the SDS Section 2 will say whether a product is a sensitiser or presents a vapour hazard. Ask for the SDS for every product before work begins.

Floor coating in an occupied commercial building is likely construction work under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Before any contractor starts, obtain a WSIB clearance certificate and confirm it stays in effect for the full duration of the job.
The form on this page sends your request to local floor coating contractors, who reply by email.

Last, ask the contractor to show you the line in the quote that covers what happens if the moisture test comes back above the product's limit, because a moisture-mitigation primer or a system change can add cost that a tight initial number does not include.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Commercial Epoxy. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa or your own municipality), and Ottawa Public Health for a food premises, before starting any floor coating project. Read the product's data sheet and safety data sheet before work starts. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawacommercialepoxy.ca** for the latest answers.