OTTAWA COMMERCIAL EPOXY

Kitchens & Food Premises

Floors in Ottawa restaurants, commercial kitchens and food plants: O. Reg. 493/17 wording, Ottawa Public Health, SFCR for licensed plants, drains and cove base

6 Expert Answers from Coatings IQ

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Q1

Could a slippery kitchen floor in Gloucester break workplace rules?

Yes, a slippery kitchen floor in a commercial premises in Gloucester can break workplace rules. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments), s.11(b) says a floor used by any worker shall not have "any finish or protective material used on it that is likely to make the surface slippery." The Occupational Health and Safety Act defines an industrial establishment to include a shop or office, so a commercial kitchen falls within that definition.

That rule does not set a slip-resistance number. No DCOF value, pendulum score or other test figure is written into Reg. 851, the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) or the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act as a legal threshold. A slip-resistance figure in a contractor's quote is a product claim to compare, not a legal minimum. The obligation in s.11(b) is the wording itself: the finish shall not be likely to make the surface slippery.

O. Reg. 493/17 (Food Premises), s.7(1)(c) adds a separate requirement: a food premise shall be operated and maintained so that floors in rooms where food is prepared, handled or served are tight, smooth and non-absorbent. That rule is enforced by Ottawa Public Health, which inspects food premises in Gloucester. If you are planning to re-floor the kitchen, ask OPH before booking the work, because OPH asks to be notified when a food premises is significantly renovated, and we found nothing that settles whether a re-coat counts as significant.

A few things worth checking before any work starts:

- If the floor has old vinyl tile or black mastic, have it tested for asbestos before any grinding. O. Reg. 490/09 lists asbestos as a designated substance, and OHSA s.30(1) requires the owner to determine whether designated substances are present and prepare a list before a project begins.
- Floor coating work is likely treated as construction under the OHSA. Before work starts, obtain a WSIB clearance certificate from the contractor and keep it on file. WSIB policy 14-02-19 says a principal who retains a contractor for construction work must have a clearance in effect throughout the job. The householder exemption does not apply to a business.
- Ask the contractor for the safety data sheet for every product being applied. OHSA s.38(1.1) says the employer shall make a copy of the SDS readily available to workers who may be exposed. Section 2 of the SDS covers hazards; Section 9 covers flash point.

Anti-slip texture is added by broadcasting aggregate such as aluminium oxide or quartz into a coat. Ask the contractor which aggregate they propose, what surface profile they will achieve, and how they will confirm the result meets the s.11(b) standard for your specific conditions, including wet areas and any grease exposure.
If your floor is in a barrier-free path of travel, the 2024 Ontario Building Code, s.3.8.1.3.(2), also requires that walking surface to be stable, firm and slip-resistant.

The request form on this site sends your details to local floor coating contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory, if you want quotes from contractors familiar with Gloucester commercial kitchens.

Q2

Which joints in a kitchen floor matter for Ottawa inspections?

O. Reg. 493/17, s.7(1)(c) requires that a food premise floor be "tight, smooth and non-absorbent" in rooms where food is prepared, handled, served or sold, and where utensils are cleaned. That word "tight" is what makes joints a concern: an open or cracked joint is a gap where liquid and food debris can collect and where the floor is no longer tight.

Ottawa Public Health enforces that regulation by inspecting food premises. We found nothing in the regulation that names specific joint types or sets a maximum gap width. What an inspector looks at is whether the floor, taken as a whole, meets "tight, smooth and non-absorbent" and is kept clean and in good repair under s.7(1)(g). A joint that holds water, harbours debris or cannot be cleaned to the inspector's satisfaction is the practical problem, not the joint's engineering classification.

The joints that tend to draw attention

Control joints and saw cuts are the most visible. In a kitchen that has been tiled, the grout lines between tiles are joints too, and grout is porous. Construction joints where two pours meet, and any crack that has opened over time, present the same issue. If a resinous coating has been applied over any of these and the coating has lifted, bridged or cracked at the joint, the floor is no longer tight at that point.

A seamless resinous floor that fills and bridges surface cracks and control joints is one way to achieve a tight, smooth, non-absorbent surface. Whether a given product can bridge a particular joint without cracking depends on the joint's width, whether it is still moving, and what the product's data sheet says about joint treatment. That is a question for the contractor, not something to assume.

Before booking a kitchen re-floor, ask Ottawa Public Health whether your planned work counts as a significant renovation requiring their notification. OPH has a Renovation Notification form for this purpose, and their plan approval does not substitute for any other permit or approval the City may require.

What to confirm with a contractor before work starts: ask them to show you the product data sheet for whatever they plan to use over or at each joint, and ask specifically how they intend to treat control joints and any cracks that are still moving, so you can see whether the proposed method will leave the floor tight and cleanable to the standard OPH will inspect against.

Q3

Do federal food rules cover my Kanata food plant floor?

Whether federal food rules govern your Kanata plant's floor depends on one question: does your establishment hold a licence under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SOR/2018-108)? If it does, and the floor is in an area covered by that licence, then section 57 of the SFCR applies. If it does not, the Ontario Food Premises regulation, O. Reg. 493/17, is the rule in play, enforced by Ottawa Public Health.

Under the SFCR s.57, floors in a licensed establishment must be smooth, non-absorbent and impervious to moisture (except where there is no contamination risk), must provide or permit good drainage except where there is no risk of liquid accumulation, and must be made of materials that are durable and capable of withstanding repeated cleaning. Under O. Reg. 493/17 s.7(1)(c), a food premise must be operated and maintained so that floors in food-handling, food-service, utensil-cleaning and sanitary-fixture rooms are tight, smooth and non-absorbent. The Ontario standard does not use the word "impervious" and we found nothing in it requiring drains, coving or slope. The two sets of rules describe the floor's performance differently, so knowing which one applies to your plant changes what you need to confirm.

A few things to sort out before booking any floor work:

- Check with your quality lead or CFIA contact to confirm whether your Kanata establishment is named in an SFCR licence and which areas of the plant fall under it.
- Ottawa Public Health asks to be notified when a food premises is established, built, changed or significantly renovated. We found nothing that says whether re-coating an existing floor counts as a significant renovation: ask OPH before scheduling the work.

Ask the contractor for the product data sheet and safety data sheet for every product going on the floor, and ask them to show you how the system meets the performance standard that applies to your plant, whether that is the SFCR or O. Reg. 493/17.
The request form on this site sends your project to local Ottawa floor coating contractors, who reply by email.

Q4

Brewery floors in Hintonburg, which food rules matter?

For a Hintonburg brewery, the Ontario food premises rule is the one to check first, and a few workplace and building rules sit around it.

A taproom or brewpub that serves food or drink to the public is covered by Ontario's Food Premises regulation, O. Reg. 493/17; for a production-only area, ask Ottawa Public Health whether it applies. Section 7(1)(c) of that regulation requires that floors in rooms where food or beverage is prepared, processed, packaged, served, handled, sold or displayed shall be tight, smooth and non-absorbent. Section 7(1)(g) requires those floors to be kept clean and in good repair. A seamless resinous floor with an integral cove base is one way to meet those requirements; the regulation does not name it as required, nor does it require floor drains, coving or slope. Ottawa Public Health enforces O. Reg. 493/17 and says its approval is required when planning to establish, build, change or significantly renovate a food premises. We found nothing that settles whether re-coating an existing brewery floor counts as a significant renovation: ask OPH before booking the work.

Shipping beer to another province does not by itself bring the federal Safe Food for Canadians floor rules into play: the Regulations exclude beverages with more than 0.5% alcohol by volume from their licence requirement (SOR/2018-108, ss.7(2) and 15(2)), and their establishment rules, including the floor wording in s.57, apply to an establishment named in a licence. If you also make non-alcoholic products for other provinces, check with CFIA.

For the production floor itself, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments), s.11 applies: a floor used by any worker shall not have a finish that is likely to make the surface slippery. No slip-resistance number is set in that regulation; it describes a performance obligation, not a test value.

Ask the contractor for the safety data sheet for every product they plan to use; Section 2 covers hazards and Section 9 covers flash point. The Ontario Fire Code (4.1.5.2) does not permit open flames, sparks or heat where flammable or combustible liquids are stored or used, unless controlled in a manner that will not create a fire or explosion hazard, so ask about pilot lights and gas equipment.

On permits, ottawa.ca lists new flooring among projects that do not need a building permit, but does not say whether that covers commercial buildings; confirm with the City of Ottawa. Adding floor drains is plumbing work that needs a permit. If this job is part of a change of use, talk to the City first.

When you review quotes, ask the contractor to break out the line item for moisture testing and what they will do if the slab reads above the product's limit, since a moisture-mitigation primer is one place where cost can appear after the original number is agreed.

Q5

Do Ontario food rules say anything about floor colour?

O. Reg. 493/17 (Food Premises) does not mention floor colour anywhere in its text. The regulation requires that floors in food preparation, handling, service and related areas be "tight, smooth and non-absorbent" and "kept clean and in good repair." Colour is not part of that requirement.

Ottawa Public Health enforces O. Reg. 493/17 by inspecting food premises. We found nothing in OPH's published guidance that sets a required or prohibited floor colour. If your facility is a federally licensed plant shipping food interprovincially, the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SOR/2018-108, s.57) describe floors as needing to be "smooth, non-absorbent and impervious to moisture" and capable of withstanding repeated cleaning. That regulation also says nothing about colour.

Colour can come up in two separate areas. First, safety line markings: R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments) requires floors used by workers to be kept free of hazards, and coloured floor markings can separate pedestrian paths, equipment zones or hazard areas. The regulation does not prescribe which colours to use for those lines; colour choices there are an internal safety decision. Second, if you want certainty about colour for a kitchen or food area, ask Ottawa Public Health directly before booking any work.

One thing worth confirming with a contractor before you commit: ask them to show you the product data sheet for the finish coat and confirm in writing that the colour you are choosing is listed as an option in that system's data sheet.

Q6

An Ottawa inspector flagged our floor, what are the next steps?

The first step is to find out exactly which regulation the inspector cited and what the floor must do to meet it, because the right coating system follows from the specific finding.

If the inspector is from Ottawa Public Health, the applicable rule is O. Reg. 493/17 (Food Premises), section 7(1)(c), which requires that floors in food preparation, service, cleaning and washroom areas be tight, smooth and non-absorbent, and section 7(1)(g), which requires them to be kept clean and in good repair. OPH also asks to be notified before you establish, build, change or significantly renovate a food premises. We found nothing that says clearly whether re-coating an existing kitchen floor counts as a significant renovation, so ask OPH before booking any work. Their plan approval, if they require one, does not substitute for a City of Ottawa building permit.

If the inspector is from the Ministry of Labour and the finding relates to a slippery surface, the applicable rule is R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments), section 11(b), which says a floor used by any worker shall not have a finish likely to make it slippery. No slip-resistance number is set in that regulation or in the Ontario Building Code.

Once you know the citation, a floor coating contractor can assess whether the existing floor needs grinding, patching, a full re-coat or a new system.

On the permit question, ottawa.ca lists new flooring and painting among projects that do not require a building permit, but that page does not say whether it covers commercial buildings, so confirm with the City. If the repair involves adding a floor drain, that is plumbing work and a permit is required. If the building is a designated heritage property, the standard exemptions do not apply.

Before work starts, obtain a WSIB clearance certificate for the contractor and keep it on file; WSIB policy requires a clearance before construction work begins, and without one the business may be liable for the contractor's WSIB payments up to the labour portion of the contract. Ask for proof of liability insurance and references on similar commercial floors.

Here is what to line up side by side when you receive written quotes:

- The product name and data sheet for each coat, including the primer
- The prep method and the ICRI concrete surface profile the contractor is targeting
- Whether a moisture test is included, which standard (ASTM F2170 or F1869) will be used, and what happens to the price if the slab fails
- The number of coats and the thickness each data sheet specifies
- Whether cove base is included and at what linear footage
- The anti-slip aggregate type and broadcast rate
- The closure window the contractor is committing to, referenced to the data sheet return-to-service times

Once quotes arrive, ask each contractor to show you where in the product data sheet the closure window they are promising actually comes from.

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.