

Floor Joint Filler Color Change

Most semi-rigid epoxy and polyurea floor joint fillers have the potential to exhibit some change in color in certain settings, and Metzger/McGuire fillers are no different. The most common color change occurrence is when a gray filler exhibits a shift towards a yellowish or green tone (see photo at right).

On some projects the yellowing will occur almost immediately after the filler has been installed. On other projects, the change may be more gradual. When color change does occur on a project it often leads to questions about whether the material is defective or whether the installer "did something wrong." While there are some physical external variables that can lead to filler discoloration, such as the use of temporary propane heat or certain scrubbing compounds, in 99% of the cases the cause can often be traced down to one factor: the lighting.

Certain lighting systems can emit UV rays within a spectrum that can actually cause discoloration of the filler or which simply render the filler's gray color more green or yellow in tone. This phenomena has occurred with far more frequency in the past ten years as lighting system manufacturers have tried to produce more energy efficient lamps.

Verifying The Cause of Color Change

The easiest way to confirm whether the lighting system is responsible is to dispense the same filler in an area that is not subject to the same lighting. If there are no such unlighted areas, dispense the filler on cardboard and promptly shade it from the lighting source. Monitor it for color stability for 1-14 days, then remove the covering. If there are clear differences between the light exposed placement and the covered sample, then lighting can be identified as the cause.

If there is no detectable difference, bring the sample into different lighting conditions to confirm the color remains the same. If the sample color exhibits a truer gray tone then the color rendering of the lights can be established as the cause. If it looks identical (discolored), a new material sample should be placed outside of the floor environment. If this sample shows no signs of discoloration then an investigation of other potential environmental factors should be explored.



Photo above shows yellowing of the gray joint filler caused by the lighting system. The center of the joint was lightly sanded to show original filler color.

Is the Color Change Permanent?

Once a filler changes color it will not revert back to its original gray. If you razor off the top surface (as with the overfill from a new installation) the newly exposed surface will also discolor if lighting has been identified as the source of the color change. Experience has shown that the intensity of the discoloration tends to fade with wear and time and become less objectionable. Discoloration of a filler will not adversely affect its performance or durability.

Please contact our technical service department should there be questions as to the potential causes of filler discoloration on your project.