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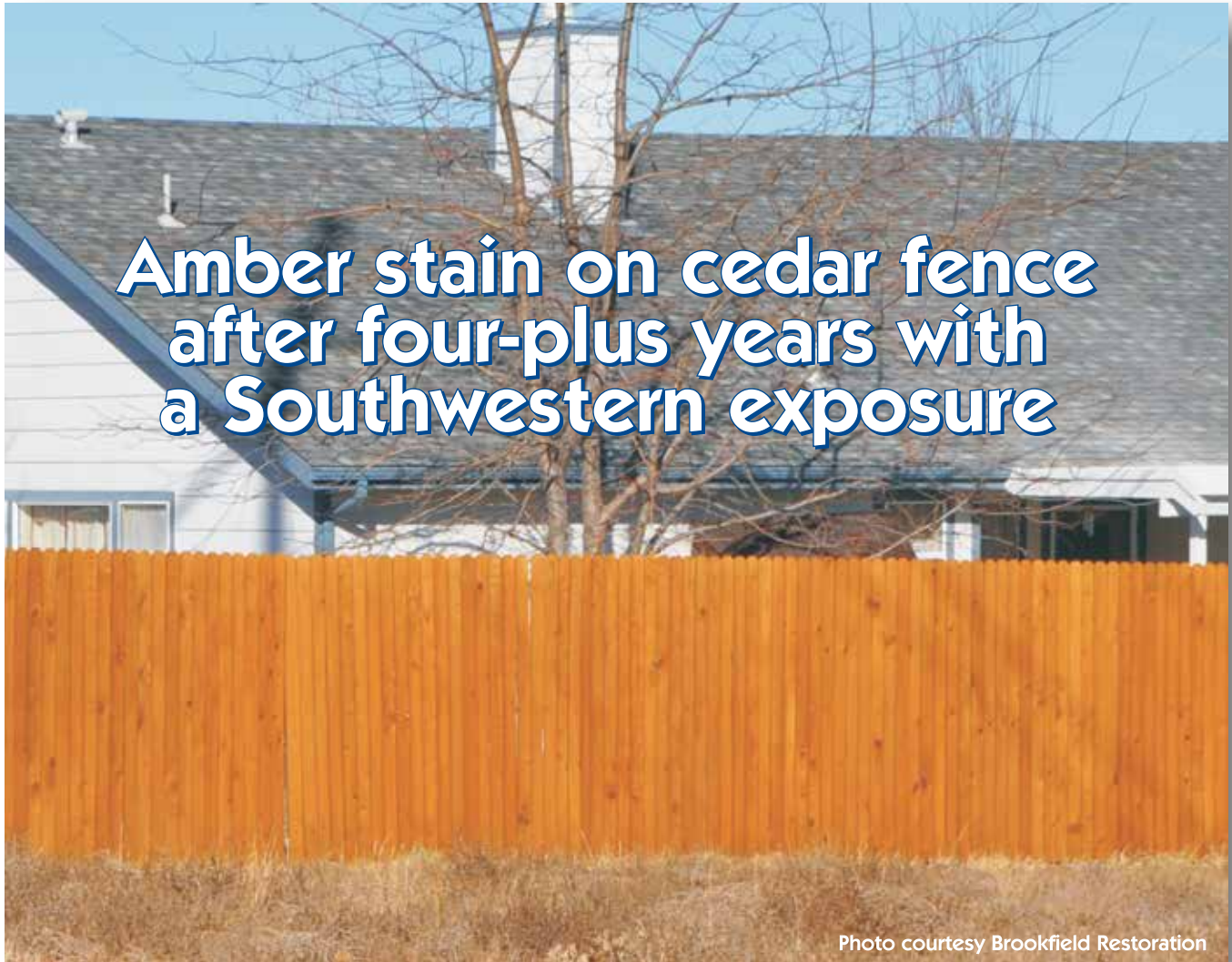
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Allison Hester

Editor

What Else Ya Got?

This is the time of the year that for many of our readers, business either slows down dramatically or just flat stops.

For some, this is a welcome break – allowing time to work on planning for next year, as well as just enjoy a little downtime. For others, however, it's a difficult time financially – which is why contractors are always looking for additional ways to make money during the cold seasons.

I recently surveyed our readers to find out what types of services – beyond the norm – they offer, as well as those they'd like to learn more about. The results were very helpful.

The number one industry contractors wanted to learn more about was hanging holiday lights, which makes sense given the time of year. Because that season was already about to get underway, I quickly put together a basic guide that I posted on the *eClean* website. (Just type in “holiday” in the search box and you should find it.)

Another popular want-to-learn-more-about topic was the broad industry of sealing concrete and pavers. One specific sealing topic mentioned – which particularly makes sense during the colder months – is sealing garage floors. For that, I turned to the extremely knowledgeable (and super nice guy) David Phillips of Southern Stain and Seal, who is one of my top go-to guys for any and all sealer-related questions. His excellent article on the nitty gritty of this lucrative market can be found on page 12.

Some of the other add-on services mentioned will be featured in the next few issues, so keep reading. In the meantime, I also want to encourage you to not only think about new services you can offer, but new customers you can serve. That was my key takeaway in this month's cover story, “Cleaning Patriot Plaza.” When one of the Gorilla Kleen's staff members suggested they go after the Sarasota National Cemetery contract, the company's owner honestly didn't think there would be much work there. Turns out it not only included a large amount of work, it's a lot of work that requires regular cleaning.

So keep your eyes open this season. Think about what else you could be doing – whether it's a different service you should offer, a different customer base you could serve, or just a smarter way to spend your slow season.



Cleaning Patriot Plaza

By Allison Hester

John Cloud founded Gorilla Kleen of Sarasota, Florida, three years ago with the goal of helping “professionalize an industry that is often fragmented and unprofessional.” It’s this kind of thinking that has helped Cloud and his 15 employees land some of the largest jobs in the area and put them on track for earning \$1 million in sales this year alone. For example, Gorilla Kleen’s recent cleaning jobs include all four parking garages (1.1 million square feet) of the Sarasota Memorial Hospital; all three, 11-story county jail buildings; an entire half-mile long bridge, spanning the intercoastal waterway; and most recently, the beautiful National Cemetery in Sarasota.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) oversees 131 national cemeteries, which provide a final resting place for eligible veterans. One of the most beautiful of these cemeteries is in Sarasota, Florida. The 250-acre national cemetery, which held its first funeral in 2009, dedicated the Patriot Plaza earlier this year. The Plaza – which was donated by the Patterson Foundation – features a \$12 million covered amphitheater, a 2,800 seat pavilion, and a 20,800 square-foot glass covering consisting of 792 glass panels – all of which must be regularly cleaned.

Pursuit of the National Cemetery contract began after Steve McCallister of Gorilla Kleen drove by the beautiful location, then suggested to Cloud that they try to get the pressure washing and glass cleaning contract for the property. “Honestly, I thought the idea was nuts,” Cloud admitted. “I didn’t think they would produce much business for us.”

However, the VA is extremely dedicated to keeping the national cemeteries as close to spotless as possible. The Sarasota National Cemetery is in a rural area punctuated with retention ponds and grass. The buildings quickly become covered with cobwebs and similar contaminants. The beautiful Patriot Pavilion has a huge metal supporting structure that quickly gets covered with cobwebs, dirt, etc. Also, the pavilion’s glass needs to remain clean to prevent any accumulation of dirt that will detract from its beauty.

The cemetery’s general maintenance is provided by Knight Solutions, which was awarded the national contract to maintain the cemetery and other government facilities. It took Gorilla Kleen almost a year to gain the pressure washing and glass cleaning elements of the Sarasota National Cemetery contract, partly because Knight Solutions’ predecessor lost the contract halfway through the process. This was after Gorilla Kleen had gotten an “in” with the first general maintenance contractor and completed one job for them. While the change was a bit of a setback, Gorilla Kleen was soon

able to build a positive relationship with the new maintenance contractor as well. The VA also has their own staff on site, and Gorilla Kleen has been able to develop a good reputation with them too. Gorilla Kleen’s patience and goodwill eventually paid off.

In early November, Gorilla Kleen completed the first installment of a five-year contract that involved cleaning “just about every single aspect” of the 250-acre cemetery, every 90 days. This includes all of the curbing, sidewalks, and administrative and maintenance buildings. (The headstones are also



“Patriot Plaza”

cleaned regularly, but not yet by Gorilla Kleen.) However, the most demanding aspect of the contract is cleaning the beautiful Patriot Plaza.

Patriot Plaza had some unique challenges, so Gorilla Kleen called on John Lee of Window Cleaning Resource for help on how to tackle the job. “All the water on site comes from retention ponds, so you can imagine how bad it would be to work with in terms of streaking and water spotting,” Cloud explained. “John helped us select a good pure water system and the tools and equipment to go with it. This allowed us to clean the pavilion and rinse it with pure water, to ensure that the glass panels dried as close to spotless as possible.”

Cloud selected an RHG wall-mount pure water system, which they mounted in their large trailer. “This allowed us to

either generate almost two gpm of water, or to fill our large tank ahead of time and work out of the tank, or do both at the same time, if needed. The people at RHG were very helpful with a few questions on getting things set up.”

Cleaning the top of the glass was accomplished completely with pure water and 24-inch brushes, which were used to remove the dirt and allow it to run down the glass. Cleaning of the underside was accomplished using Ecover, a plant-based soap, injected into the water stream, then pressure rinsed and finally rinsed again with the pure water, delivered this time from Gorilla’s 500-gallon tank with their pressure washer hoses.

It took the full 15-member Gorilla Kleen team two days to clean the pavilion. The first day, two different teams on two separate lifts cleaned the underside of the pavilion, while another crew cleaned the paver bricks in the auditorium area.

“There is always at least one more person on the ground that keeps all of the equipment running, moving hoses, and bringing lunches for the crews who are on the lifts and off the ground,” Cloud explained. “I am a big believer that when we are doing large jobs such as this one – where almost all of the crews are pitching in – that I provide drinks and lunch. It is a good way to ensure a strong ‘team’ ethic.”

On day two, Gorilla Kleen used a crew of four to clean the top surface with pure water. “We still had to utilize both of the lifts – one for access, the other to move and resecure the safety lines to the top edge of the pavilion.”

And, most importantly, the whole process will be repeated every 90 days. “We have built the largest company in the area by far and have four cleaning rigs that operate daily, including weekends. Because of this we can tackle large jobs like the National Cemetery and complete them in a very short time,” Cloud concluded. ☺





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Why Does a Powerwasher Need Insurance in the Winter?

By Darla Renk & Amy Vollmer, Joseph D. Walters Insurance

This time of year, we get a lot of phone calls about canceling general liability coverage for the “off season.” Why should you carry coverage when you aren’t even working, right?

The assumption is that once a job is finished without incident, you are “off the hook.” But in reality, a claim can be made at any time that might be traced back to a job completed six days, four months or even two years ago.

The date of the claim would be the date that the damage occurred, *not* the date the wash was done. For this specific reason, it is critical to maintain uninterrupted coverage despite the seasonal nature of the powerwash business.

By standard definition, Products and Completed Operations coverage gives a contractor coverage for bodily injury or property damage that is a direct result of their product or their completed work.

A contractor providing power washing, roof or window cleaning services should understand

what completed operations coverage is and how it can impact their business. It is an insurance product that covers the legal liability incurred by a contractor for property damage or injuries that may happen to a third party once contracted operations have ceased or been abandoned. Even though the operations are deemed to be “completed” by the contractor, the loss or injury is deemed to be a result of those operations.

Let’s look at some examples of claims that might be made after the work is “completed”:

1. **You are doing flatwork in and around a bank parking lot.** Once all the stains have been removed and everything looks clean and new, you pack up your equipment and move on to the next job. Then a bank customer slips on the wet pavement. Because you have already left the site, the ensuing claim would be filed under Completed Operations liability coverage.

2. **A month after a roof wash is completed, the shingles start to fade.** The customer alleges

that the contractor's work was incorrectly performed. This claim would also be filed under Completed Operations liability coverage.

3. **Your last job of the season is washing a wooden deck.** You cancel your General Liability policy for the "off-season", but we have an unseasonably warm few days in December, and the homeowner decides to have a party on the deck you washed. The deck collapses and several people are injured. Even though it is unlikely that washing the deck could compromise its structural integrity, the injured parties (and their lawyers) are going to sue everybody that could have been involved.

Since the date the injury occurred is the day of the party, and the policy is cancelled prior to the date of loss, there will be no coverage. And if there is no coverage, there is no defense. You would be on your own to prove your case, or to pay any damages a judge assesses against you for the incident.

Completed Operations coverage is usually included in a standard General Liability policy, but the policy must be in force continuously for effective protection.

You've worked too hard building your business to leave it unprotected when it could be most vulnerable. Paying a large loss out of your own pocket can be financially devastating to a small business, even fatal.

So enjoy your off-season. Travel, spend time with family and friends, learn French cooking or how to ski, but don't cancel your General Liability insurance policy. Having a next season may depend on it. ☹

About the Authors

Amy Vollmer, Marketing Director, and Darla Renk, Account Manager, both work for Joseph D Walters Insurance, America's #1 insurer of power washing contractors. To learn more and to download your free guide to power washing insurance, visit www.JosephDWalters.com,

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Sealing Garage Floors

By David Phillips, Southern Stain & Seal

Residential garage floors are a unique niche in the decorative concrete industry.

At first glance they seem to fit neatly in the “interior concrete flooring” category, alongside all of the other residential, commercial and industrial floors. For the most part, all interior concrete floors are made of smooth troweled concrete, require basically the same prep process, and use similar staining, sealing or coating techniques.

So what makes a garage floor so different from other interior floors? Its unique environment.

Although garages are covered, enclosed, and many times climate controlled, they are much different from other interior spaces. Easy ground-level access, adequate ventilation and secure separation from the home’s living space make a garage floor project easy on both the homeowner and contractor. These differences, along with their manageable size and minimal obstructions, make garage floors the perfect entry point for contractors looking to expand into interior floors.

Stained concrete, solid-colored “epoxy,” quartz and flake are the four main types of flooring systems used in garage applications. Within these are an almost endless number of color, texture,

and appearance combinations you can offer your customers based on their unique needs and desires. Fortunately, this abundance of options doesn’t actually complicate the process for you as a contractor. The tools, equipment, products and prep process used for all four systems are basically the same. This allows you to easily offer a wide selection of options by simply changing the color, texture or combination of colors and textures used in each system.

The Process

We all know prep is the most important part of any project, but this is especially true when it comes to coating interior concrete. Unlike most concrete found outdoors, indoor concrete has usually been troweled smooth and slick. The troweling process creates a hard dense surface on the slab. Unfortunately, it also closes the pores of the concrete surface, preventing stains, dyes, sealers or coatings from being able to penetrate and bond.

Before application of any stain, dye, sealer or coating, *all* troweled concrete *must* first be profiled to ensure proper penetration and adhesion. Mechanical diamond grinding is the preferred

method recommended by almost all coating manufacturers. Diamond grinding produces a clean, smooth, porous surface for the stain, dye, sealer or coating to adhere to.

With their minds filled with visions of spraying beautiful colors and rolling out glossy finishes, this is most often where I lose the interest of the majority of contractors learning about this business for the first time. Along with being the most important step in floor coating, the prep process is also the hardest, most time consuming and miserable part of the job. Aside from getting to use some really cool equipment, there is nothing exciting or glamorous about grinding concrete.

Fortunately, the process is also very simple. In most cases you only need to remove less than the thickness of a business card to adequately open the surface and expose clean porous concrete. The process and time required will depend on the type of grinding equipment used. Concrete grinding equipment can be as simple as a rented Diamabrush or as elaborate as a self-propelled unit that cuts a six foot wide path, weighs more than a car and costs more than a quarter million dollars.

If you are just getting started with garage floors, that last option is probably a little overkill and you'll most likely choose to either rent or purchase a small unit in the 10"-20" range. Check with the rental companies in your area to see what they have available.

If at all possible, always dry-grind instead of wet-grinding. Concrete is very porous and wet-grinding can saturate the entire slab with water very quickly. Once a slab is saturated, it can take weeks for moisture levels to drop to a safe level for sealing or coating. ***Never forget, moisture is always the number one reason for coating failures.***

Now that we've covered the boring stuff, let's move on to the good part and look at each of the four systems and how they are installed.



Stained/Dyed Concrete

Although stained concrete is most commonly found in high-end commercial spaces like malls, boutiques and coffee shops, it is

quickly gaining popularity for garage floors as well. The rich natural look of stained concrete allows it

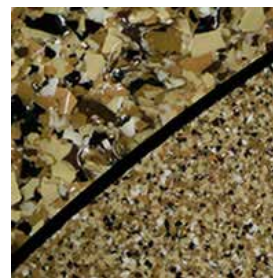
to work well with any style from modern to rustic. The process includes first coloring the concrete with a transparent stain or dye, then applying a clear protective top-coat to seal the surface and protect the colored concrete from spills, leaks and wear. Traditionally, this staining process has been done with messy, dangerous and labor intensive acid stains, but in recent years this process has been transformed by the development of concrete dyes. Unlike acids, dyes are easy to use, produce consistent results and allow the floor to be sealed immediately after coloring, instead of waiting days for the floor to dry after acid staining.

Solid Color "Epoxy"



Solid color floors are the easiest and simplest garage floor system to install. After prep, you simply apply the colored coating to the floor in either a one or two coat process depending on the type of system you are

using. Solid color coatings typically produce a slick high-gloss finish, or can be used with various texture additives to improve traction, add texture or reduce gloss.



Quartz and Flake Floors

Both quartz and flake floors are installed using basically the same process, but with different materials. Depending on the type of coating system you choose,

these floors can be done in either a two- or three-coat process. In most cases, the three coat process will always produce superior results, but requires a bit more labor and product.

The process first begins with a thin primer coat to seal up the slab. After the primer coat has dried, a heavier coat is then applied to the floor, into which colored quartz sand or colored paint flakes are immediately broadcast into the wet coating. In most cases, the sand or flake is broadcast very heavily over the floor until the coating is completely saturated and covered with a thick layer of sand or flake.

As the coating cures and hardens, the sand or

flake is locked into the coating, creating a beautiful textured surface. The floor is then scraped, swept and vacuumed to remove any loose sand or flake. The final step is to then apply a final top-coat to lock the system together and protect the surface from spills, leaks and wear.

Products

Although you still have many choices when it comes to choosing the right product or combination of products for a particular garage floor project, there are fortunately far fewer choices than there are for other types of surfaces. Since garage floors must be hard, durable and chemical resistant, you only need to focus on the high-performance products suited for this environment. For the most part you will be using one or a combination of three types of coatings: epoxies, polyaspartics and urethanes. All three are available in many different formulations based on your specific needs and desires. Which product or combination of products you choose will ultimately depend on the specific needs or constraints of each job.

Some projects may require low-odor or low-V.O.C. choices, while others may demand an ultra fast cure time and quick return to service. You

can read more about each type of coating and the differences between them in the article *Sealers 101* from the July 2013 issue of E-Clean Magazine.

Like all things in business, concrete floors are a delicate balance of risk versus reward. Although the service demands a premium price and has the potential to be very profitable, it also brings with it more liability and responsibility. The level of workmanship and attention to detail required for interior floors is much different than what is required for other services such as driveway or paver sealing. Hopefully, this quick overview has inspired you to learn more about installing garage floors and how to make this very profitable service a part of your business. If you are interested in learning more about these services, talk to your local product distributor or give us a call anytime, that's what we're here for. Getting the right advice, guidance and training is always the key to being successful. ☺

About the Author

David Phillips founded Southern Stain and Seal in 2007 as a service company specializing in wood restoration and concrete sealing. In 2011, he shut down the service company and began sharing what he had learned. Phillips' focus is now on bringing both contractors and homeowners the products, training and guidance they need to be successful. To learn more, visit their website at www.SouthernStainandSeal.com.



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