

FLOORS FOR SHOW CONCEPTS

by Erick Bacon & Tim Mikan

A professional floor can add many interesting qualities to your color guard or dance team performance. It not only hides those gymnasium lines which distract from your program but also provides the element of color and texture to your show. Using a floor increases your show's general effect for both the general audience and for adjudicators at competitions.

A new floor will cost from \$900 to \$3,000. This wide range in price depends upon the material you choose, its weight, and surface area. If you have a limited budget, you might consider purchasing a used floor from another school or guard. Many organizations are eager to sell their used floor at a low price often less than \$1,000.

Floors are basically made from a heavy-duty vinyl material. Some of the less expensive floors are laminated and thus unable to be painted. This grade floor usually comes in black and white and is ideal for younger guards. They can use the white side one year and the black side the following season.

All floors are reversible. However, the texture is not the same on both sides of the material. The textured side will hold paint better than its sister side but will be tougher on the performers' feet. Students can easily learn to adapt to the textures of both sides. If you decide to paint your floor with flat paint, provide a spacious workspace as well as ample time to cure.

Remember, the average floor material weighs 400 pounds. After the floor has been painted, allow several days for drying. It is not unlikely that the floor will still feel "tacky" days after it has been painted. This will disappear when the drying process is completely finished. As a general rule, for every coat of paint applied to the surface of the floor, add another 50 - 100 pounds to the total weight of the material. Obviously for transportation and storage, it is necessary to properly fold the floor. Before you fold the floor for the first time, sprinkle baby powder or talcum powder on its surface and spread it around using your hands and feet. This will help prevent the seams or creases of the floor from sticking to each other when folded.

To properly fold a floor:

1. Place an equal number of people on both ends
2. Pull the floor tautly to eliminate wrinkles or creases
3. Have the group at one end of the floor lift in unison and pull to meet the other end so that the floor is now folded in half
4. Repeat so now the floor is actually folded in a fourth
5. Keep folding until the width of your floor is between 1 - 3 feet
6. Put two groups on each end of the floor and have one of the groups lift and fold the "tube-like" floor in half
7. Repeat Step 6 until the floor is of the size that can be lifted and carried off of the performance venue or placed on a small cart for transport.

Some companies have begun to sell transportation carts with the purchase of a new floor. Most color guards or dance teams utilize their parents to simply build a cart. Carts may be constructed of metal or wood. It is important to ensure that the wheels of the cart are large enough to support the heavy floor and roll on wood, concrete, gravel, and sand. You should purchase your wheels from a hardware department. These wheels must be made of hard rubber. Do not use metal wheels! Metal wheels scratch gym floors and are difficult to maneuver. The mobility of a cart is significantly increased if it is only 6 inches above the ground. Attach a rope or some handle device that will make pulling and steering easier.

*For new floor information, visit
www.colorguardfloors.com on the internet.*

*If you want to price a used floor, go to
www.theguardroom.com.*

