



# A Consumers Guide To Concrete Resurfacing

Tips and techniques on how to hire a skilled resurfacing specialist

It's easy to be ripped off by some slick talking salesman whose intentions aren't in the right place. The restoration industry is no different. Everyone wants to make a quick buck at your expense... but how do you know who's legitimately qualified or who's trying to pull a fast one on you? This consumer awareness guide was created to help you learn about the concrete resurfacing industry, what to look out for, what questions to ask, and to help you pick a competent restoration specialist.

## Four concrete resurfacing rip offs:

Here are four examples of ways companies can rip you off and how to defend yourself from these tactics.

### 1) Bidding low then raising the price after starting the job.

This is a widely used tactic for shady companies in the service industry. After they submit an inexpensive estimate and get the job booked, they get on site and run into unseen trouble... then the price skyrockets. This legitimately happens occasionally, but for the vast majority of jobs this should not happen. If the restoration company is experienced they should be able to anticipate things going wrong and include that into their estimated price.

One way to fight against this unethical technique is to ask for a bid in writing with a minimum and maximum price for the service. This should include anything that goes wrong and if the job goes smooth the final price should be on the lower side of the bid. Getting the contractor to agree to a maximum price will save headaches later on.

### 2) Overpricing the products used.

Many contractors charge a premium price for the products they use. They make more profit this way knowing almost no one actually checks the prices on the products used.

How do you combat this practice? It's pretty easy... just check the prices! Many resurfacing companies get their products at a discount because they're ordering straight from the manufacturers. You might not know the price they are getting but at the very least they should not be charging more than retail price for the products. Ask if they order in bulk straight from the manufacturers and if they pass that savings on to you, the customer. Any ethical company will do this so they can stay competitive with their prices and offer you the best deal possible.

### 3) Cutting corners in the preparation.

Masking and covering areas that can be damaged from acid stains, water based stains, sealers, and grinders is important. Making sure these steps are taken can save time and money after the resurfacing project is completed. Who wants to get the bottoms of their walls painted after a restoration company gets concrete stain overspray all over the exterior of your house?

Some examples to be aware of are... acid stains will instantly corrode metal and wood so proper masking is extremely important. Laying out drop cloths over grass areas while doing outdoor staining and sealing is what experienced companies will do. If the company is doing a wet grind the base of the walls should be masked so slurry doesn't damage the walls and baseboards. Dry grinding requires good quality vac systems so the interior of your home isn't completely covered in concrete dust.

Ask the contractor what kind of area prep they do to ensure that they don't damage other surfaces at your home.

### 4) High pressure up-sells.

After getting their foot in the door ( usually from a low bid ) the contractor will push high pressure up-sells on you. This aggressive tactic works well on non-confrontational or elderly people. This doesn't work on everybody but it works enough that it's consistently tried. This is how these companies can make extremely low bids up front but still make good money in the end.

Examples of this is pushing to resurface other areas that weren't included in the original bid like cleaning your grout, pressure washing areas, cleaning showers and counter tops, etc.. Another example is up-selling a better quality sealer for an inflated price.

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### **4) High pressure up-sells continued:**

The high pressure up-sell technique comes in many different forms but as long as you're aware of this it's going to be harder to fall for their shenanigans. One way to combat this is by only having the company do what was originally agreed upon in the original bid. If they try to up-sell you on other services just tell them that you need time to discuss this with your partner before going ahead with any additional service. You can use practically any excuse to buy yourself more time to think about the service and if it's truly needed or wanted. Being aware and ready for the aggressive up-sell will save you money for services you really didn't need.

### **Four dangers of getting your concrete resurfaced:**

There are dangers that you should be aware of before getting your concrete resurfaced. Here are four major dangers and how to prevent them.

#### **1) Spending a lot of money and having the concrete look ugly.**

This can happen when the contractor doesn't spend enough time figuring out exactly what look you're wanting to achieve. Don't be rushed! This step is very important and if the contractor doesn't know what look you are going for, how will they be able to accomplish it? Send them pictures of other projects you like from websites like Google Images, Instagram, and Pinterest. Discuss what colors, sheen, texture, and properties you would like your concrete to be. If it's important to get a stain color perfect, the contractor should be willing to do some test swatches for you, which will increase the likelihood the colors will match the look you're going for. Spend time on this step and there will be a better chance your resurfacing project will come out great.

#### **2) Having to go through the process year after year because substandard products are used.**

Many companies will resurface concrete using substandard products... specifically sealers and stains. Low quality stains and sealers are not UV stable and will fade over time. Many acrylic based sealers need to be reapplied every year or two just to maintain the protection desired. A lot of companies love this because it means repeat business for years to come... but don't be fooled. It's not necessary!

This isn't the case with high quality stains and sealers. Quality stains are UV stable and will fade very little over time (under full sun exposure), if at all. Quality sealers are the same way. High end sealers will last between five to ten years or longer before they need to be reapplied. This will save you money in the long run and prevent the nightmare of having this process redone every year.

Always ask what products the contractor will be using and do research on the products. Check out product reviews and watch videos about the products. This will help you identify if the contractor will be using sub-par products bought at the local hardware store or if they're using high quality products specific to the industry.

#### **3) Having the system fail and being worse off then before the service.**

In the resurfacing industry, preparation is everything. The concrete prep is extremely important and IT IS the difference between a great job or a failed job. If a sealer is put down wrong it is painstakingly difficult to remove the sealer and re-seal.

An example of this is if an acid stain is not properly neutralized it can cloud the new sealer and break the bond between the sealer and the concrete.

Another example is not properly cleaning the concrete after the grinding process. This can leave a fine powder on the concrete which breaks the bond of the sealer.

One more example is applying a sealer to concrete that isn't completely dry. After pressure washing the concrete has to dry out completely before applying a sealer or stain. Some people will rush this process which can break the bond of the new sealer leading to peeling and chipping of the sealer.

These things can leave the whole project completely in shambles, looking horrible, and a nightmare to fix. Prevent these disasters from happening by doing research on the company you'll be hiring. Modern companies should have their entire portfolio displayed online for you to see. Online reviews help as well. Another option is to ask for references so you can get a real person's testimonial on their experience with the contractor. These will all help when hiring your next resurfacing company.

#### **4) Feeling like you've been ripped off.**

It has happened to all of us at one point or another but no one likes the feeling of being ripped off. It's that unsettling feeling in your gut, knowing that you didn't get the value for the price you paid. It's unpleasant and nobody likes it. Remember, this service is suppose to improve the quality of your life.

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### **4) Feeling like you've been ripped off continued:**

Whether it's a garage floor coating that makes your garage more pleasant to work in, or a stained concrete patio that makes the entire back yard look more beautiful, or a polished concrete living room that makes clean up easier than when it was carpeted. These all make your life a little better and you should feel good knowing that you got the value from the service you paid for. So here's a couple of tips on how to avoid the feeling of being ripped off.

Spend a decent amount of time with the contractor before they start the service. Being able to see eye to eye will help them know what kind of look you would like and what the benefits are of the service. The resurfacing company should be able to clarify what these benefits are so you understand them before starting on the job. They should also go over the limitations of the products they'll be using and how to mitigate them through proper maintenance and care.

The resurfacing company should offer some type of satisfaction guarantee as well. This gives you leverage as the customer in case you are not satisfied with the service. Sometimes it might be a small change or touch up that you suggest that makes the entire project feel complete. Other times the project might be completely screwed up and need to be redone to make you satisfied. The restoration company should be willing to work with you to make sure that you're completely thrilled with the work they completed.

### **Four costly misconceptions about concrete resurfacing:**

There are misconceptions about every industry but some misconceptions can be much more costly than others. Here's four misconceptions about the resurfacing industry that will help you when picking a skilled restorationist.

#### **1) Epoxies**

Epoxy sealers are an old technology that many experienced companies have moved away from. They aren't very flexible and chip really easily. Epoxies also yellow over time and become brittle when exposed to UV light. So, if you hear a company talking about using an epoxy sealer run for the hills. They most likely don't know what they are doing or are just stuck in some by gone decade from years past. With all of the modern advancements in sealer technology there's only a couple of reasons to use epoxies. For all other applications there's many other better quality sealer options available to you.

The only two applications of epoxies in our modern world are either for a primer coat beneath a garage floor coating or a metallic epoxy. Primer coats can have good bonding abilities and hold back hydrostatic pressure. These specialty epoxy primers are usually covered with a colored polyurea, polymer flake, or some other type of opaque coating that won't allow UV light to damage the epoxy over time.

Metallic epoxies are 100% solids and can be poured on thicker than any other coating which adds depth and unique effects. All metallic epoxies should be coated with a urethane or polyurea clear coat to add UV, scratch, and chemical resistance.

#### **2) Acid stains**

There are many misconceptions about acid stains. Most people ask for an acid stain or acid washed concrete. Little do they know, most concrete stains they'll see in homes and stores are water based stains. Water based concrete stains are of a higher quality these days and are much more cost effective to apply. Here are some facts about acid stains that might help you decide if it is right for your application.

Acid stains are expensive. They usually need to be bought locally since the shipping costs are extremely expensive due to their corrosiveness. They also take longer to apply since they have to cure for 24 hours after application. After curing, they have to be neutralized with water and baking soda or some other neutralizing agent, then thoroughly cleaned again. Then the concrete has to dry out again after the cleaning process. This means there's multiple days of additional labor involved in the process compared to a fast curing water based stain.

Acid stains work best with new virgin ( not ground ) concrete. Acid stains react with the minerals on the top of the concrete ( the cream ) to create a chemical reaction that creates the vivid unique colors and patterns. If the concrete is old it contains less of the minerals the acid stain needs to react with. Same goes for concrete that has been ground down with a floor machine. This removes the cream from the top of the concrete which contained the majority of the reactionary minerals.

Consider these things before deciding to go with an acid stain for your concrete. Making the wrong choice can set you back thousands of dollars and leave you with unsatisfactory results.

#### **3) Anyone can stain concrete.**

What could be the most costly misconception in resurfacing is that you can "Do It Yourself". University of YouTube is great but most of the failures don't make it to the videos. On a small area with new concrete it's much more feasible to do it yourself. Taking on a large project with hundreds if not thousands of square feet is a different story.

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### **3) Anyone can stain concrete continued:**

With so many factors involved ( like was the concrete ever sealed, if it was sealed properly removing the old sealer, how old is the concrete, does it need to be ground down and with what grit level, are there moisture problems in the concrete, what stain or coating option is right for this project, etc. ) you might end up saving money by having it professionally done rather than screwing up a DIY project.

There's also a learning curve to every product and there are thousands of different products on the market. The preparation of the concrete is the most important part of resurfacing so if it's not done right you can have the whole system fail. Many things can go wrong when taking on a big DIY project, so if you're not on a tight budget, it's better to just hire a professional.

### **4) Products on the market are all the same.**

People think that since companies bring products to the market that they must all be comparable. Nothing can be further from the truth. Many chemical and paint companies make spin off products because they're cheap to bring to market. A lot of these products are inferior to the industry made products. The concrete / masonry industry has done a good job creating products that solve problems in their field. These industrial strength products are usually sold at specialty stores or exclusively online.

If your restoration specialist is worth their weight in salt, they will have this knowledge and won't be buying their products from the big box stores or the local hardware store. They most likely have experience with the product lines they carry and have gotten good results with those specialty products.

Inquire about the products the contractor will be using and where they get them. If they buy them from the local paint store or hardware store then don't hire them! When hiring you're paying for expertise in the field, not some guy grabbing products from the hardware store and slapping them down onto your concrete.

### **Why you want beautiful concrete floors:**

"Beauty will save the world" Fyodor Dostoevsky

Adding beauty to your life can enhance your mood, bring happiness to your home, peace to your soul, and make your life more joyful in general. Making your concrete surfaces more beautiful gives you these same results. The tranquility from having an aesthetically pleasing home is worth the time and effort.

Concrete is an industrial building material that wasn't really ever meant to have a nice aesthetic. It was durable and long lasting and for years the construction industry treated it like that. It was gray, bland, cold, and generic. Over the years people started figuring out that you can add depth to concrete by stamping it into different patterns. Usually these patterns mimicked the natural patterns in stone. Since then, there has been hundreds of different stamps made to look like paver stone, slate, wood paneling, bamboo, and other organic materials. Large box stores also figured out that polished concrete was a durable but visually pleasing flooring option for their commercial sized buildings. The modern day decorative concrete industry is growing faster than ever.

Now a days decorative concrete has taken on a life of its own. There are metallic epoxies that can make your floor into a glimmering work of art. There are acid stains that create organic vibrant patterns in the concrete similar to patterning found in natural stone. Water based stains provide a wide array of colors and pattern combinations unmatched to anything in the past. Faux patterns can be done with these stains as well, which try to replicate patterns found in nature. Polymer flake systems have become extremely popular and offer an industrial strength option for an old garage floor. Even plain concrete that has been either polished or sealed looks amazing and can change the feel of a home or store. There are so many options out there, which one is right for your concrete surface? Maybe a metallic epoxy across your concrete counter top? Or could it be a beautiful bronze stain with a high gloss sealer to make your stamped concrete patio look better than new? Maybe just a deep grind across the living room floor to expose the aggregate in the concrete and a nice matte finish sealer over top? The options are endless.

Looking at websites like Pinterest can give you great ideas for your concrete, which you can then pass along to your resurfacing specialist. After the restoration service is completed you will have a beautiful, durable, long lasting surface. This small step towards tranquility and peace will not only make your home look nicer, but make your everyday experience more pleasant. In this fast paced, high stressed time in human history, every little thing we can do to relieve some of that stress, will add longevity to our lives and help us rest better. There are scientific studies that have come to this very conclusion. Beautiful aesthetics create happiness. Anytime we can increase the beauty in our lives, it will translate to a happier, more peaceful existence on earth.

## Resources:

Below are some additional blog posts, articles, and websites where you can find more information on these topics.

Here are some websites you can visit to find images of stamped, stained, polished concrete, polymer flake, metallic epoxy, or practically any other type of concrete finish on the planet:

Google Images: <https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&ogbl>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/>

Flickr: <https://flickr.com/>

Here's some articles about how beauty and aesthetics make people happier:

Aesthetics and Well-Being: How Interior Design Affects Your Happiness

<https://psychologytomorrowmagazine.com/aesthetics-and-well-being-how-interior-design-affects-your-happiness/>

The Beauty-Happiness Connection

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/08/the-beautyhappiness-connection/375678/>

Aesthetics and Happiness: How Space Affects Well-Being

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-to-be-happy\\_b\\_650578](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-to-be-happy_b_650578)

Why Does Beauty Matter?

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/why-does-beauty-matter/>

Here are a handful of blog posts going over some of the topics discussed in the consumer awareness guide and more:

Acid Stain vs. Water Based Stain

<https://sweetconcrete.com/acid-stain-vs-water-based-stain/>

Polyaspartic / Polyurea Coatings

<https://sweetconcrete.com/polyaspartic-polyurea-coatings/>

Concrete Polishing

<https://sweetconcrete.com/concrete-polishing/>

Radon Mitigation in Concrete

<https://cretoseal.com/radon-mitigation-in-concrete/>

Protect Concrete From Freeze / Thaw Damage

<https://cretoseal.com/protect-concrete-from-freeze-thaw-damage/>