

Protecting Your Investments: Entrance Mats + ROI

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Facilities managers continue to struggle with budget limitations, and attempting a quick fix can often overshadow return on investment strategies. The rental of throw down mats for building entrances may seem like it would save money, but may not do so in the long run.

Let's compare the cost of a rental mat program to the purchase of a permanent entrance flooring system. If a facility manager were to rent five three-foot by five-foot throw down mats at five dollars per mat, per week for each of three locations, the yearly rental cost would be \$3,900.

The total cost for a permanent system for the same size, quantity and number of locations can be approximately \$4,950 -- a one-time purchase.* There are no additional costs to maintain the system if it is cleaned properly using standard vacuuming and shampooing methods. When a system with inserts begins to show its age, it can easily be refurbished by simply replacing the existing inserts with new ones—even up to ten years after installation.

Building managers for large facilities, such as hospitals, high-rise condominiums, university campuses, convention centers and mixed-use buildings, routinely rent throw down mats to prevent dirt, debris and water from being tracked in through their entrances. These mats are widely used because they appear to be easy to maintain, convenient and affordable, but they can present hidden safety concerns. Rock salt and bulky slush can collect on top during winter and the mats could become saturated during rainy weather. These conditions along with mat movement, wrinkling and curled, cracked edges can contribute to slips, trips and falls.

Permanent entrance flooring systems can offer a much more effective, stable and attractive solution, and should be considered as the first line of defense for trapping the dirt and water entering all building types. These systems also ensure ADA compliance, offer easy maintenance and provide the strength to withstand heavy foot traffic.

There are several different types of permanent entrance flooring systems from which to choose. Some are made from aluminum rails or plates that hold various inserts, such as heavy-duty carpet or recycled rubber. Many different styles and depths are available to integrate with other flooring materials. Most permanent entrance flooring systems are engineered to allow dirt, water and debris to collect beneath the system, keeping the top surface clean and ensuring a safe and attractive entrance. Recess mounted aluminum and stainless-steel grids and tiles can be lifted or rolled out of the recess for easy cleaning.

Additional points to consider for throw down mat rentals:

- Mats have short life cycles and often end up in the waste stream.
- The cleaning process can involve unwanted chemicals.
- Rental mats can interrupt design aesthetics.
- Mats are may not be ADA compliant, which would render them unsuitable for handicapped entrances.
- Mats can quickly develop stains and odors from the dirt and debris build-up that sits on their surfaces.

Additional points to consider for permanent entrance flooring systems:

- Each system can be manufactured according to facility requirements (diagonal cuts, radius, notches, etc.).
- Entrance flooring systems contribute to a positive first impression and enhance a building's aesthetic with a variety of visual options, including logo integration.
- A variety of aggressive, slip resistant insert options are available.
- Third-party sustainability certification and slip resistance testing results can be provided.
- Most manufacturers offer warranties.

Beyond the Entrance

If entrance flooring was not considered during the building's design and construction phase, many facilities personnel think renting throw down mats is their only option to combat dirt. Luckily, this is not the case. Permanently securing an entrance flooring system to a concrete walkway or sidewalk leading up to your building will start the brushing, scraping and cleaning process even before a pedestrian enters the building.

When choosing between rental mats and permanent systems, local weather is a factor to be considered. Some areas in the country don't need a heavy-duty entrance flooring system, but keep in mind, all areas have dirt and all facility managers needs to prevent it from entering their buildings.

Every owner and facility manager is challenged with keeping buildings clean and safe. One of the best approaches is to utilize a permanent entrance flooring system designed to handle any volume of foot traffic, trap dirt, debris and water and save precious budget dollars.

*Price is based on our own Pedimat/Mill Finish/HD Carpet Surface Mounted Frame, approximately \$22 per square foot.