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Newsline

LIFCA Meets To Discuss Concrete Moisture

East Meadow, N.Y.—At its most recent meeting here, members and guests of the Long Island Floor Covering Association (LIFCA) gathered for a session on concrete moisture. The spring seminar, titled “Moisture Testing Update, How and Why Do You Test For Moisture In Concrete and Wood?” covered a wide variety of points regarding concrete moisture, including when, how and what to test. Leading the way was industry consultant Christopher Capobianco of Flooring Answers, who is also a member of the ASTM Resilient Flooring committee, as well as executive director of LIFCA. Capobianco discussed with the group the different ways concrete moisture has proven to be such a problem for the flooring industry, and ways to prevent it. Also making a presentation was Chris Ranwell of GE Sensing, manufacturer of GE Protimeter brand moisture meters. “Moisture emissions from new or old concrete slabs can cause adhesive to reliquefy, leading to bubbles, adhesive oozing and indentations in the finished floor,” Capobianco warned the crowd. “Natural products like wood can expand from excess moisture, causing buckling, cupping or loss of bond in the case of glue down floors. In addition to flooring failures, there is always the possibility of mold and bacterial growth beneath the floor when excess moisture is present.” Capobianco presented a slide show featuring pictures showing the different ways moisture on a job site can manifest itself, as well as some of the ways the problem can be avoided, including new technology in testing. “First, make sure the floor has been tested and tested properly according to ASTM standards,” he told the audience. “That means testing clean concrete slabs in climate controlled buildings—and that does not mean the flooring industry needs to be doing the testing. In fact, per

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the industry white paper on moisture testing, it is better for everyone if the testing is done independently. “Second,” he added, “the flooring industry needs to say no to installing floors over slabs with moisture problems. “Third,” explained Capobianco, “we need to continue a dialogue with the design and construction industries to come up with better constructions practices that mandate concrete testing and methods that will allow concrete to dry faster.” He explained that industry professionals need to be more diligent in its testing methods before giving the go-ahead on jobs. “The flooring industry needs to take charge of this issue by learning how to do proper testing. “I am continually amazed by the lack of knowledge,” he concluded, “like people using moisture meters to decide if a concrete floor is ready to install resilient flooring, or even worse, saying ‘it looks dry to me’ and going ahead with a flooring installation.” —Louis Iannaco

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