

Access Flexibility with Raised Access Flooring

Access floors have come of age. In the 1960's, raised access floors were a necessary evil for main frame computer rooms. These spaces needed a flexible flooring system for wire and cable management, and the natural plenum created under the floor was also used to distribute air to cool computers and other equipment. The floors were more functional than attractive, unless you loved the industrial look. Today, the "information generation" demands connectivity everywhere in the workspace and the flooring industry has responded with access floors that have more benefits, versatility, options and better aesthetics. The new generation of access floors contributes to high performance building designs because the floors integrate features ranging from efficient HVAC distribution at occupant level to modular plug-and-play systems located at individual work stations. This Starlog showcases access flooring — the innovative choice for office, medical, education, high-tech and historical buildings.



The New York City Public Administrator's Office, this year's Starnet Design Award "Unique Installation" category winner, was renovated throughout with low profile access flooring.

Performance Options

Access flooring is available in two basic types: variable pedestal height and low profile. The pedestal style is the original, traditional system. Both systems share some features and benefits, but also have important differentiators. The right system for your new construction or renovation project depends on your budget, timeline, the building's current floor or subfloor, and whether or not you require an underfloor plenum for air distribution.

How do you know if variable pedestal height or low profile is right for you?
Consider these comparisons...

User Friendly, High Capacity Wire Management

Attribute	Low Profile	Variable Pedestal Height
Eliminates the need for power poles throughout the facility. Provides easy access to modular voice and data at any location.	✓	✓
Wiring is designed on the front end to maximize the facility's future needs. Changes are as simple as moving the panel with the electrical box to another location. Does not require an electrician to make changes.	✓	✓
Modular plug-and-play for power, voice and data located at user level may eliminate the need for expensive internal cable furniture systems.	✓	✓
Provides power, voice and data solutions for buildings with low or no ceiling plenum, such as many historical structures.	✓	✓
Modular floor tiles allow for easier access to wiring than the ceiling plenum for space reconfigurations.	✓	✓

Sustainable and Energy Efficient

Attribute	Low Profile	Variable Pedestal Height
Can contribute to LEED points for recycled and/or recyclable materials.	✓	✓
Can contribute to LEED points for energy efficiency.		✓
Delivers clean air at "people level," not in unoccupied space overhead. Accessible, individual diffuser controls employees can manage at their individual work stations.		✓
Under floor air delivery uses 12 to 27 percent less fan energy than overhead air delivery.		✓
Low noise, low downtime and little dust & dirt for renovation installations, especially historical renovations.	✓	

Flexible and Safe Building Interiors

Attribute	Low Profile	Variable Pedestal Height
Can be covered with carpet, laminate or resilient finishes.	✓	✓
ADA compliant – low height minimizes the need for ramps to transition from space to space, in many cases.	✓	
Approved for use in US GSA buildings.	✓	✓
Uses UL-listed Thomas & Betts electrical box for wire management.	✓	
CSI MasterSpec listed.	✓	✓
Quiet underfoot.	✓	✓

Initial Cost and ROI Savings

Attribute	Low Profile	Variable Pedestal Height
Helps improve churn rates, reducing costs associated with reconfiguring spaces up to 70%.	✓	✓
Held in place by gravity; not attached to the floor; can be dismantled/removed when building owner or tenant leaves.	✓	
Can be laser leveled and/or adjusted for installation over rough or unlevel concrete slabs.	✓	✓
Eliminates the need to remove old asbestos floors before installing new floors.	✓	✓
Can be depreciated for tax purposes. Consult with your legal/tax advisor.	✓	✓
Can reduce overall construction costs and building height (in new construction) because using under floor space for HVAC and wire management requires less space than locating these services overhead in the ceiling plenum.		✓

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Architects and building owners looking to design, build or renovate structures that are cost effective, sustainable and occupant-friendly know the value of “intelligent” products and systems like access flooring. Because access flooring is specialized, installing it requires a great deal of product knowledge and skill. Protect your investment and ensure the integrity of your access floor performance by working with a Starnet member contractor.



Today’s access floors are as attractive as they are functional. The decorative floor finish hides a system that delivers modular power, voice and data, and HVAC to individual workstations.

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One in a series of bulletins from your Commercial Floorcovering Professionals at:



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