

FAQ FOR TENON® X-TENDER/ EVAPORATION RETARDER

An evaporation retarder is a concrete placing aid that slows surface moisture loss during placement. Tenon® X-Tender helps crews maintain workability, improve finish quality, and reduce the risk of early surface cracking in hot and windy conditions.

What is an evaporation retarder?

An evaporation retarder is a topical concrete placement aid used to slow moisture loss from the surface of freshly placed concrete during screeding. It's commonly described as a monomolecular film-forming product that helps retain bleed water and maintain surface workability.

How does it work?

It forms a very thin film on the surface water or near-surface paste, reducing the rate at which moisture evaporates. This helps keep the concrete plastic longer (reducing the speed at which the surface dries out).

When should it be applied?

It is typically applied after screeding and before or between bull floating operations, depending on site conditions and the manufacturer's instructions. In severe drying conditions, it may be necessary to reapply between bull floating passes.

What conditions make it most useful?

Evaporation retarders are especially useful in hot, windy, low-humidity, or direct-sunlight conditions, and on modern mixes with low-water-cementitious material ratios. They are also helpful when placing dry-shake hardeners or silica fume mixes.

What are the main benefits?

They help reduce surface crusting/drying, plastic shrinkage cracking, and the temptation to add water to the surface. They also support a better final finish on slabs, and make floating and troweling easier at later stages of the finishing process.

Does it replace a curing compound?

No. An evaporation retarder is an initial or intermediate aid during placement and is not a substitute for proper curing. Curing still needs to be conducted in accordance with the project specification and industry standards.

Can it be worked into the surface?

No. Evaporation retarders are not intended to be worked into the concrete or used as part of the finishing operation (steel trowel or panning with power trowel). They are meant to stay as a surface-applied control for moisture.

Is it the same as a surface retarder?

No. A surface retarder slows set at the surface to expose aggregate, while an evaporation retarder slows moisture loss during finishing.





Where is it commonly used?

It is commonly used on flatwork such as floors, slabs, sidewalks, driveways, parking areas, and other concrete placements where rapid evaporation can interfere with placing and bull floating.

Are there any limits or cautions?

Yes. Contractors should avoid over-application, puddling, and use outside the manufacturer's recommended window. Product dilution, coverage, and compatibility should always follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

WHAT TO DO AND NOT DO

DO

- Do apply the evaporation retarder after screeding and before or between bull floating operations.
- Do use it when hot, windy, dry, or low-humidity conditions are accelerating surface moisture loss.
- Do apply a light, even mist to the surface as directed by the manufacturer.
- Do reapply if the slab begins to dry.
- Do follow the product's coverage rate, dilution ratio, and timing requirements.
- Do begin proper curing immediately after final finishing is complete.

DO NOT

- DO NOT WORK THE EVAPORATION RETARDER INTO THE CONCRETE SURFACE. IT IS INTENDED TO REMAIN A SURFACE FILM, AND NOT ACT AS A FINISHING AID.
- Do not use as a surface retarder for exposed aggregate finishes.
- Do not use it as a curing compound. Curing is still required after final finishing.
- Do not overapply or allow puddling, excess material can interfere with floating consistency.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Use only a light, even application and follow the manufacturer's coverage rate and timing. If the slab is drying too fast, reapply as directed rather than aggressively working the product into the surface.

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