



**NFCA ANNUAL REPORT |  
2019/20**

Awareness  
Understanding  
Action

**2020. WHAT CAN ONE SAY** without an eye roll or a heavy sigh? Who among us isn't ready for a good old fashioned face-to-face, hand shaking, back-slapping get together? In the meantime, we have no choice but to embrace technology in all its imperfections and inability to provide us with a truly human experience – something I doubt any of us will take for granted again!

Change is a constant. And it's now happening at an unprecedented speed. We will need to find that balance between what worked before and what needs to happen now. Building agility and resilience in both people and organizations has never been more important. While things continue to shift around, our priorities remain unchanged:

**The Quality Assurance Program (QAP) specified in more projects.** QAP continues to extend its reach (now in five provinces). The lights are going on across the country and we're seeing more and more being specified. This is heartening.

The recently created *QAP in a Box* web page has been set up as a one-stop-shop for understanding the process and accessing supporting documents.

**Getting the Floor Covering Reference Manual accepted as the standard in the industry and specified into every commercial project to represent minimum floor covering standards.** The next challenge will be to connect with enough certified, independent inspectors who will represent those standards well. A good problem to have.

**Education and training made available to as many construction professionals as possible.** Transitioning from in-person education to video/audio like Zoom as the new classroom platform has not been ideal. But it has allowed us to reach more people and offer more sessions to both our members and non-members alike.

The NFCA Education Committee, led by Don Styka of Tarkett, has been working on a plan to build both an enhanced education curriculum and online resource library that will help serve the construction community in a meaningful way.

**A solution to an age-old problem.** 2019/20 also saw the highly contentious issue of the gap between Division 3 and 9 addressed with the formation of the HCU Committee. After a year of meeting and discussions, a new spec guiding best practices is being written by Keith Robinson, FCSC FCSI RSW LEED® AP of DIALOG with input from committee members. This is a big deal. If a proposal satisfies all parties involved, then we are much more likely to have a solution.

**The industry comes together.** I want to thank Chris Maskell, our CEO and the NFCA Board of Directors for their continued commitment and passion for best practices in flooring installations. Their guidance and expertise is critical to getting the message out. I'd also like to thank our National Education Leaders (Ardex, Custom Building Products, Merchant 1 Payments and Wilson M. Beck) without whom it would be much more difficult to build awareness, understanding and inspire action. And I would also like to express my appreciation to our members who give support through their membership, walk the talk and help spread the message that quality work and best practices elevate our entire industry.

It's been a tough year so far - and business as usual for no one. As much as we want to give 2020 the heave-ho, 2021 will continue to present us with challenges. We're re-writing the future daily. If nothing else, we've learned about some of our vulnerabilities as organizations and people, how important relationships built on trust and strong communications are, how interconnected we are, and how working together is at the core of all we do. That's the silver lining. So, at the NFCA, we are trying to reframe this time as an opportunity to do better, find more effective ways of supporting our members and the larger industry, and continue to do work that matters. We are indeed connected in more ways than we are separate, and stronger as a community of like-minded individuals who talk to each other, united in our belief in excellence in workmanship.

## President's Message



# NFCA Board of Directors



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**Thomas Foreman,  
Executive Director, NFCA**



**Chris Maskell,  
CEO, NFCA**



## NFCA Board of Directors In Their Own Words

Candace Hahn, Centura

Never did I imagine that in my lifetime, a pandemic would blanket our world causing sorrow, fear, and economic decline.

Even as the economy is reopening, the pandemic is proving to be more than just a brief setback. It is a downturn that is both painful and stubbornly long-lasting.

However, it has opened the door for many companies and organizations to re-evaluate, rejuvenate, and reconsider. Re-evaluate what are necessities versus wants. Rejuvenate procedures and policies. And reconsider options and decisions. COVID has made companies more resilient and respectful - Centura Western is one of those companies.

As an employee of Centura Western, I've witnessed firsthand management struggle to make decisions that would help the company ride out the storm while attempting not to disturb the lives of their employees. I have never been so proud to be a part of such a great team! Everyone accepted adjustments, grouped together and worked hard to see this through. As we brace for a possible Round 2, we have never been more prepared to face it head on.



## NFCA Board of Directors In Their Own Words

Bob Hunter, Milliken  
Design Inc.

2020 has been an incredibly odd year. So much has changed, so quickly and with an impact that has been felt by everyone all over the world. The way we live, work and play have all been disrupted in various ways and at various levels. Most businesses and associations have seen their revenues fall by no fault of their own. Most have pivoted as best they could. We all struggle with what the future is going to look like. But then again, we always have. The one thing we know for sure is this is not the new normal. It will change again.

A few good things have happened because of the pandemic. More people have realized that they could work effectively from home, while others have realized that working from home is not all it's cracked up to be. Milliken was slow to allow many of our administration duties to be done remotely. Thanks to technology and the need to provide an excellent experience with our customers during this pandemic, we pivoted and are better for it.

Looking back is always a good exercise to do when we want to understand the question “why were the results different than what we expected”. Looking forward is always harder to do. Knowing that things will change again means we have to ask ourselves what is the best thing to focus on? The answer is really a simple one. If you know what the “things that Matter” and the “things you can control” are, then the **focus** must be on that section that overlaps the two. That is what your Association is doing and it's what we hope you are doing too.



## NFCA Board of Directors In Their Own Words

Brent Johnsen, Mapei Inc.

It would be an understatement to say that we have all had to adjust in the last few months. All processes of the floor covering business have had to change, from manufacturing procedures, installation and safety practices, to sales and distribution protocols.

The NFCA has been quick to accept the new technologies needed to continue our mandate of education and support for the flooring industry. Our online education has become a priority as well as a necessity and will become an essential training platform both now and in the future.

The growing acceptance of the QAP program across Canada and the influence of the Floor Covering Reference Manual on installation standards and practices means positive change for all aspects of the flooring industry. Thanks to all our partners and members for supporting the NFCA.



## NFCA Board of Directors In Their Own Words

Fred Rabiner, VIFLOOR

It has been a privilege to work with our Board and feel that I am contributing something back to our industry.

Like all of us, COVID-19 has definitely affected my consulting business. My clients were closed, for the most part, from March until August and continue to operate on a limited basis.

This has minimized opportunities for new business and slowed completion of existing business.

To deal with the new realities, we have adapted to Zoom meetings and courier delivered samples. This has been at the request of our client base.

We will continue to strengthen communications in the new forms required by clients as well as seek new technologies to strengthen our position in the market.

This massive shift in the business cycle has been a learning experience, and we all should be better prepared to deal with the next wave should it recur.

Broad thinking must be part of the adaptive mode that most businesses and trades create. The shock value from the inception of COVID-19 has now toughened all of us for the near future.



## NFCA Board of Directors In Their Own Words

### Jordan Vogt, Steinbach's Flooring Canada

In reflecting on the year-so-far, it's hard not to think of the upheaval and uncertainty that our industry, along with the rest of the country, has faced and lived in speculative fear of.

Despite that, my main reflections are ones of gratitude to the strength and stability of the flooring industry, at least in relation to other industries. Though many sectors have suffered immensely, our staff and installers have had steady work due to the widely diversified markets and clients that we serve.

Where we've seen the demand coming from is a bit atypical. Where some markets have dropped off, others have surged. It feels a bit awkward to admit, but our year so far, while not without tension, has been a good one. From the position of relative stability that the flooring market has provided to us, we've enjoyed being able to support those industries that are having a tougher go of it.

I'm well-aware that many in the flooring world have experienced their share of hard times, but I am hopeful for good outcomes for our membership, our industry, our families, and our country.



# AWARENESS

Awareness is the first step in promoting any idea, regardless of subject-matter.

Bringing to the forefront issues that floor coverers have had to face daily for decades is something NFCA prioritizes.

Properly planning the floor covering portion of a project is critical to avoid delays, conflict on site, holdbacks, unnecessary claims, brand damage and ongoing repairs. And yet we continue into the same old situations knowing the problems are coming and preparing ourselves only by bracing for impact.

Making the right people aware of this fact is not near as much of a challenge as it is to get the right people to act on that awareness.

While there's palpable frustration on all sides, there is also a desire for improving things. The simple act of working together effectively is a starting point to achieving what everyone involved wants - a quality product, delivered on time and on budget.

# UNDERSTANDING

**NFCA'S MISSION** is to engage professionals in the construction industry through education and compliance to national floor covering installation standards which provide a quality assurance platform to ensure successful installations on commercial projects.

Through a unified understanding of the floor covering process – standards and scope of work that guide the floor covering trade - we can set the stage for trained installers to arrive on a site that's ready, so that they can start and finish work on time.

For now, with few exceptions, the virtual world is where we connect and where we can continue to gain understanding through our conversations and education.





# THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Led by Don Styka, the education committee is made up of Brent Johnsen, Candace Hahn, Bob Hunter and Jordan Vogt.

The purpose of this committee is to enhance the education component of our mission and create a platform to develop education and resources (based on membership survey results) in a variety of formats for the benefit of our members and the larger construction community.

COVID-19 has changed the game and will likely continue to do so for some time to come. Zoom and other platforms have become synonymous with education, and every other type of human connection. Webinar burnout is inevitable. But our committee will make every effort to make that experience worth the time investment for those interested in expanding their understanding and skillset.

# ACTION

## THE GAP BETWEEN DIVISION 3 AND DIVISION 9 - A GAME-CHANGING SOLUTION

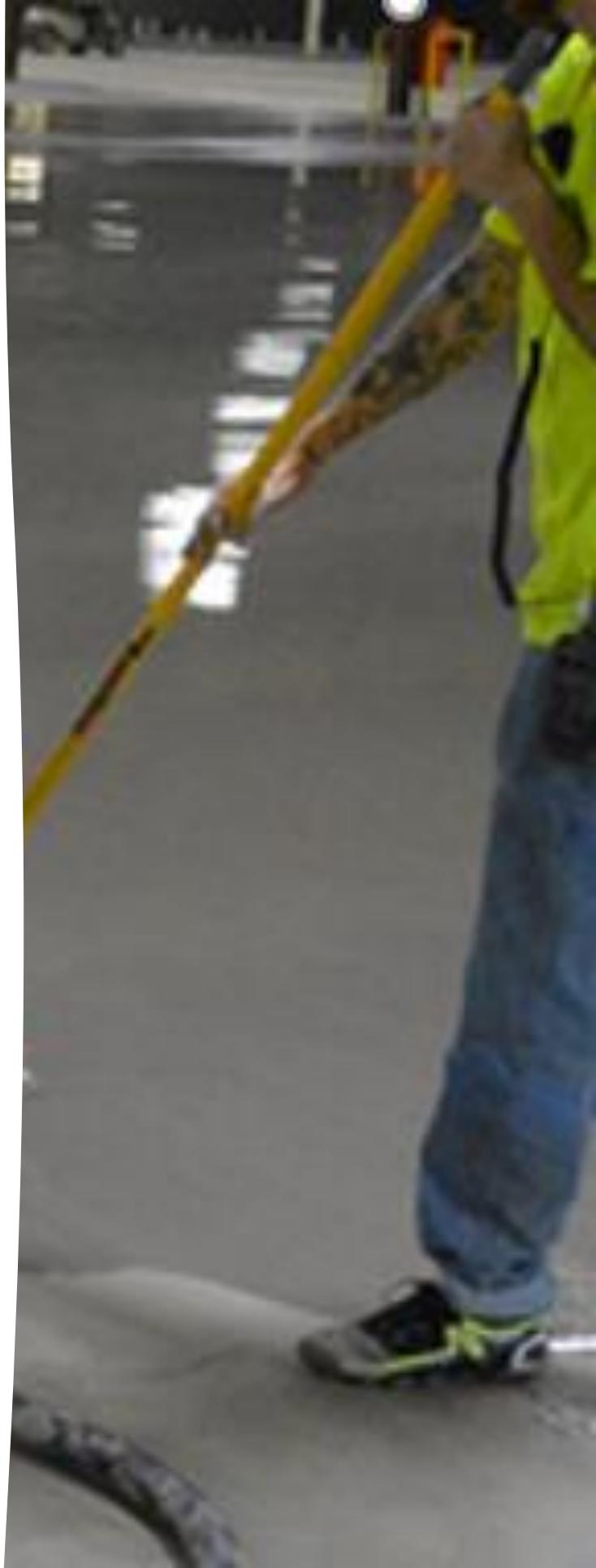
For years, floor installers have had to reject concrete slabs due to flatness issues during late stage construction - slabs that have been poured to specification by the concrete trade in Division 3, but due to natural processes, have become misshapen, non-flat and hence, rejected. Like with many construction issues, the answer and the problem lie in the written specifications.

In 2019, at an NFCA social event, the topic of concrete management - specifically between placement and finishing of Division 3's concrete product and acceptance of that product months later by the floor covering installer (Division 9 Finishes), ignited a robust and passionate discussion. It was evident that this aspect of construction needed a clear, common directive that drives bidding and scheduling behaviour across the board from very early on in the game.

This subsequently led to NFCA assembling the Hydraulic Cement Underlayment (HCU) Committee in January 2020 - a cross-section of construction industry experts, tasked with addressing this issue by getting everyone's individual perspectives on where they see the problems and how they might develop an effective solution.

Seven months later, the committee concluded that generating a new, generic specification for both existing and new slabs could be a win-win for everyone within the construction industry. If the spec could provide accurate information and clearly outline an agreed-to process, it could become a valuable tool in the arsenal.

Three months after that, Keith Robinson, with input from his group at DIALOG and the HCU committee, completed the new specs which will now be shared industrywide.





# THE HCU COMMITTEE

- Aaron G. Abbott, Laticrete
- John Alley, Custom Building Products
- Monica Baillie, Landmark Architecture
- Lawrence Chan, Weiler.Smith.Bowers
- Matt Dalkie, Lafarge
- Kelvin Klapak, Yellowridge Construction
- Diana Klingner, Concrete Canada, Forming, Placing, Finishing, Repair Assoc.
- Kathie Kompauer, KDR Engineering
- Michael Pereira, Ellisdon
- Dave Randall, Mapei Inc.
- Keith Robinson, DIALOG Design
- David Sherley, Custom Building Products
- Don Styka, Tarkett
- Rob Visscher, Atmosphere Floors
- Sherri Wildman, Ardex

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**THE MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE IS TO HELP CREATE AWARENESS AND PROVIDE A SOLUTION TO THE GAP BETWEEN DIVISION 3 AND 9**



# THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Bob Hunter leads our membership committee along with Fred Rabiner, Don Styka, and Rick Wagner.

They are tasked with helping to ensure that the criteria we use for becoming an NFCA member not only meets our standards, but also means something to those that apply to join.

The criteria reflects the kind of practices that we believe make our members stand out and that we are proud to promote to the larger construction industry as organizations and professionals with integrity, skill and solid experience.

# THE NFCA FLOOR COVERING REFERENCE MANUAL and QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

Together, the Floor Covering Reference Manual and the Quality Assurance Program provide guidance and support for all involved in a floor covering installation.

Specs are contractually binding, describe process and drive actions on site. They must be correct! Spec writers can't be expected to know what processes are needed on site because installation work is not what they do. They need support with up-to-date, independent, accurate and relevant specs that guide the right activities. Manufacturers' installation guidelines are often left to guide actions on site. While these are helpful, they don't address who should execute certain key aspects of the work such as concrete slab correction, testing requirements, and preparation. The result is conflict, strained relations, delays and lawsuits.

We see a lot of old specs, cut and pasted into new documents. This devalues the spec in the eyes of the trades. NFCA is working hard to bring awareness to available specs to support Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) and the spec writing community. This is what our industry's Reference Manual is for. Correct process and assignment of duties on site.

The Quality Assurance Program brings a voice to the specifications and draws attention to critical preparatory needs early enough in the construction process that budgets, schedules and actions can combine to equal the success we all target when we set out.



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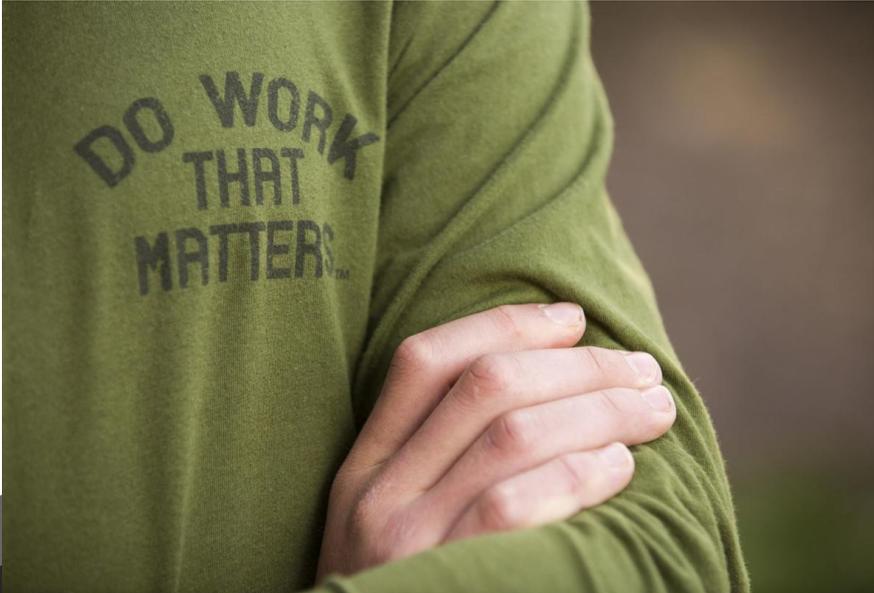


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WE ARE ENDLESSLY GRATEFUL TO OUR NATIONAL EDUCATION LEADERS, WHO THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, HELP LIFT US UP AND SUPPORT OUR WORK TO BRING AWARENESS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO OUR MEMBERS AND THE CONSTRUCTION COMMUNITY ACROSS CANADA.



**THANKS AND SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT THROUGH MEMBERSHIP, SPONSORSHIP, AND PARTNERSHIP.**

**YOU HELP TO SHINE A BRIGHT LIGHT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING GOOD WORK THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO ALL INVOLVED IN THE LIFECYCLE OF A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT. AND WE ARE ALL BETTER FOR IT.**

**AWARENESS • UNDERSTANDING • ACTION**