

Saving Money: Trowel Down Cove vs. Easycove

By Heather O'Brien

The installation of hand-troweled, radius epoxy cove-base, requires a great deal of experience, technique and time. Successful installations include adequate substrate preparation, proper priming and mixing of materials, observance of recoat windows and a skilled technician with years of experience.

End-users are not the sole influencers for quality flooring. Government entities, health departments and other governing regulators have raised the bar for long-term performance demands and increased safety standards, such as cleanability and sanitary requirements. As such, seamless resinous flooring materials with integral coving are becoming the standard.

Integrity of the cove, expense of installation and ability to achieve a seamless floor-to-wall cove base that looks and performs consistently, continues to be among the top considerations when choosing hand-troweled vs pre-formed cove base.

Past experience demonstrates that traditional cove installation methods can be difficult for a variety of reasons; uneven floor-to-cove transitions, lack of uniform materials, temperature constraints, increasing lack of trowel experts, and most importantly high labor costs. Because of the growth in the resinous flooring market and the coinciding decrease in skilled technicians, the demand for easier and faster pre-formed cove base like Easycove has seen a surge in demand.

There are numerous variables that play a role in determining cost comparisons between hand-troweled coving and Easycove. Generally, when comparing the installation of a solid colored finished, 4" rolled radius cove, the cost is about even when the technicians are paid a loaded rate of \$48 per hour (see Graph 1). When the technician rate increases over \$48 per hour the Easycove costs are less than the hand troweled cove (see Graph 2). When a less skilled technician can be used to install the Easycove at a lower hourly rate than the hand troweled technician, huge savings are available to the flooring contractor (see Graph 3).

There are many other benefits to using Easycove over hand-troweled coving. These include:

- Less set up and layout time
- More finished coving in less time equals faster job completion (see graph 3)
- Far less mess than hand troweled cove and no recoat windows to plan around
- Better impact and tensile strength than hand troweled coving
- Can be pre-finished for even faster site installation
- Far better fire resistance when compared to epoxy or other preformed coving brands

In the end, price is only one of the factors that play a roll in a successful flooring application. Other factors include:

- When does the floor need to be complete and what is the fastest way to meet this deadline?
- What coving system will look better when the flooring system is completed?
- Can the coving system be installed in the environment where the floor is located?
- How will the job site environment affect installation efficiency and quality?
- Do I have enough skilled technicians to make sure the finished cove looks consistent across the entire job?

Cost Analysis for installation of 4" rolled radius cove coated with a solid color															
Cove Installation	Loaded Hourly rate (hourly pay, benefits, payroll taxes, insurance)	LF that can be prepared per man hour	Labor \$	LF Primed per man hour	Labor \$	Cost for primer @ 400 square feet per gallon including tape, brushes rollers, mixing pots, solvent for clean up.	LF Cove installed per man hour including layout	Labor \$	Material cost including resin, aggregate, cove strips, easycove and Easycove adhesive	LF of cove detailed and coated per man hour	Labor \$	Cost for top coat resin including tape, brushes rollers, mixing pots, solvent for clean up.	Labor Cost per LF	Material per LF	Total Cost per LF
Hand troweled by Skilled tech	48	200	0.24	200	0.24	0.23	24	2.00	2.25	50	0.96	0.20	\$3.44	\$ 2.68	\$ 6.12
Easycove by Skilled tech	48	400	0.12	not needed	0	0	180	0.27	5.5	400	0.12	0.10	\$0.51	\$ 5.60	\$ 6.11

Graph 1

Cost Analysis for installation of 4" rolled radius cove coated with a solid color															
Cove Installation	Loaded Hourly rate (hourly pay, benefits, payroll taxes, insurance)	LF that can be prepared per man hour	Labor \$	LF Primed per man hour	Labor \$	Cost for primer @ 400 square feet per gallon including tape, brushes rollers, mixing pots, solvent for clean up.	LF Cove installed per man hour including layout	Labor \$	Material cost including resin, aggregate, cove strips, easycove and Easycove adhesive	LF of cove detailed and coated per man hour	Labor \$	Cost for top coat resin including tape, brushes rollers, mixing pots, solvent for clean up.	Labor Cost per LF	Material per LF	Total Cost per LF
Hand troweled by Skilled tech	65	200	0.33	200	0.325	0.23	24	2.71	2.25	50	1.3	0.20	\$4.66	\$ 2.68	\$ 7.34
Easycove by Skilled tech	65	400	0.16	not needed	0	0	180	0.36	5.5	400	0.16	0.10	\$0.69	\$ 5.60	\$ 6.29

Graph 2

Cost Analysis for installation of 4" rolled radius cove coated with a solid color															
Cove Installation	Loaded Hourly rate (hourly pay, benefits, payroll taxes, insurance)	LF that can be prepared per man hour	Labor \$	LF Primed per man hour	Labor \$	Cost for primer @ 400 square feet per gallon including tape, brushes rollers, mixing pots, solvent for clean up.	LF Cove installed per man hour including layout	Labor \$	Material cost including resin, aggregate, cove strips, easycove and Easycove adhesive	LF of cove detailed and coated per man hour	Labor \$	Cost for top coat resin including tape, brushes rollers, mixing pots, solvent for clean up.	Labor Cost per LF	Material per LF	Total Cost per LF
Hand troweled by Skilled tech	65	200	0.33	200	0.325	0.23	24	2.71	2.25	50	1.3	0.20	\$4.66	\$ 2.68	\$ 7.34
Easycove by lower Skilled tech	25	400	0.06	not needed	0	0	180	0.14	5.5	400	0.06	0.10	\$0.26	\$ 5.60	\$ 5.86

Graph 3

***Note, all costs analyses are subject to change due to industry standards.**

About EASYCOVE®: Easycove® is a manufacturer of uniquely pre-formed coving products engineered to create a vastly superior bond to the walls and floor and to meet the coving demands of the resinous flooring industry. For more information or to purchase online, visit <https://ultradt.com/shop/>