

(Courtesy of The Concrete Network)

Sealer Type	How They Work	Primary Applications*	Type of Finish	Performance
Penetrating sealers (includes silanes, siloxanes, and silicates)	Penetrate and react chemically within the capillaries of the concrete to shield against moisture penetration and deicing chemicals.	Exterior concrete surfaces subject to corrosion and freeze-thaw damage Where a natural, matte finish is desired	Provide invisible protection without changing the surface appearance or leaving a sheen.	Provide excellent protection against outdoor exposure conditions. Most products are also breathable, allowing moisture vapor to escape.
Acrylics	Form a thin protective film on the concrete surface. Available in both solvent- and water-based formulations.	Both exterior and interior concrete On projects where easy application and economy is important To enhance the beauty of colored, stamped or exposed-aggregate concrete On fast-track projects, since acrylics often dry to the touch within an hour	Available in a range of sheen levels. Solvent-based acrylics generally enhance color better than water-based products.	Provide good protection against water and chloride intrusion, but usually wear faster than polyurethanes and epoxies. Solvent-based acrylics generally perform better than water-based products for outdoor use. On indoor surfaces, softer acrylic sealers usually require regular maintenance with several coats of a sacrificial floor finish, or wax, to prevent wear and black heel marks.
Polyurethanes	Form a high-build protective film on the concrete surface. Available in both solvent- and water-based formulations.	Both exterior and interior concrete On floors in high-traffic areas, to provide good resistance to scuffs and staining To enhance the beauty of colored, stamped or exposed-aggregate concrete Concrete countertops	Available in a range of sheen levels. Finish is transparent and non-yellowing.	Nearly twice as thick as acrylic sealers, and produce a very durable chemical- and abrasion-resistant finish. Most urethanes are moisture intolerant until they cure, so no water should be present on the surface when the sealer is applied.
Epoxies	Form a high-build protective film on the concrete surface. Most are two-component products mixed prior to application.	On floors in high-traffic areas Cement-based overlays Concrete countertops May yellow with UV exposure, so generally limited to interior use	Available clear or pigmented, if you wish to add color. Most products impart a glossy finish.	Produce a hard, long-wearing, abrasion-resistant finish. Also offer excellent water repellence, but some products are impermeable and could trap moisture in the concrete.