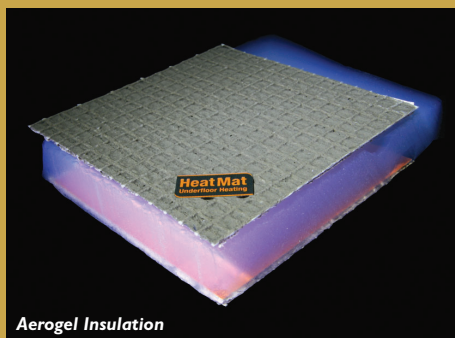
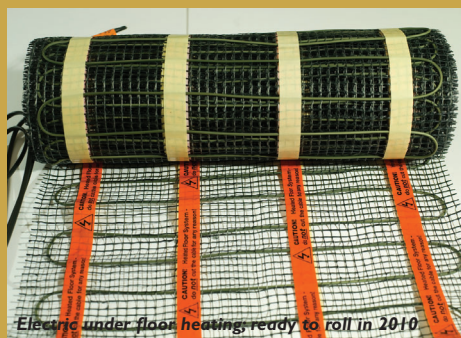


Underfloor heating



move down under

Underfloor heating is predicted to be one area set to recover from the recent downturn faster than many others. *PE* finds out why this is, by chatting to UFH specialists Heat Mat.

The last 18 months have been very tough for the building and renovation industry, and electric underfloor heating (UFH) is one of the many categories which has suffered reduced sales as the number of installations fell.

The last quarter of 2009, however, gave ample cause for optimism as the number of electricians being asked to specify underfloor heating rose significantly with quotation requests almost reaching their pre-recession levels.

Heat Mat's analysts believe this is likely to continue thanks to the increased volume of new build and renovation work, with mothballed projects also coming back on stream in 2010.

Mats your lot

However, the company believes that the main opportunities for growth in the market within 2010 are likely to be centred around thermostatic controls and insulation materials, as there are not currently any major innovations to heating mats around the corner.

In the UK thermostat timers, as opposed to on/off thermostats, account for more than 90% of the thermostats supplied. During 2009 there were a bewildering array of thermostat options on the market that were, on the whole, completely unfathomable to most end users without referring to the instruction manual. This resulted in many wasted and unchargeable hours for installers having to talk homeowners through programming their thermostats.

2010 is likely to see an increase in the amount of truly easy to program thermostats on the market. Heat Mat believes it is leading the way with its NGT10, which it claims is the simplest to program thermostat on the market – although possibly not the simplest named-one.

NGT10 uses on-screen text to guide the homeowner through any adjustments they need to make.

The colour of money

Another major change in the market for 2010, led by consumer pressure, is the increase in colour thermostat options available. Home makeover programs and interior design magazines have led consumers to expect a variety of options for items such as thermostats and often the RRP is virtually irrelevant if they can get the desired finish.

To ensure your customers can obtain the finish they desire, Heat Mat will be offering more than twenty different models of NGT10 thermostat including brushed aluminium, gloss black glass, chrome, silk titanium, matt red, matt blue and even a tantalisingly named lustrous purple!

Electricity board

An additional area where electricians are seeing an increase in the value of their installations is the use of thermal insulation boards beneath UFH, ensuring it is both more energy efficient and faster reacting. In conservatories and garden rooms more than

60% now have some form of insulation purchased with the UFH system, a great value added sale for the electrician.

Heat Mat is leading the quest for thinner insulation boards and lower build heights and its Technical Design Team recently completed work on the first samples of a thermal insulation board based on a core of Aerogel which it believes is, "one of the most insulative materials in the world."



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