



Technical Bulletin # 109

RE: Follow up, sealing and maintenance procedures for your tile installation after the cementitious grout has been installed.

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Common to all good tile and grout installations are correct and careful workmanship by the applicator and follow through with proper curing conditions, cleaning and sealing procedures. Many times after the tiles have been set and grouted, the jobsite is left overnight to dry with no follow up procedures. Attention to follow up procedures will carry on the good work and produce a superb tile installation.

Curing Conditions - This is one of the most important factors in grout color, yet is the most overlooked. Inconsistent, uneven and splotchy colored cementitious grout is often due to poor curing conditions. Changes in temperature of the grout installation during the installation and into the first 72 hours will cause some degree of discoloration. Variation in the rate of evaporation or absorption of the water in the grout due to wind, sun, fog, rain, fans, heaters, drafts, vents, water puddles and moisture from a mud bed or substrate cause color problems.

- Maintain a constant temperature (ideal temperature 70 degrees Fahrenheit) for the installation. The temperature may be lower or higher but a consistent temperature is required to achieve a consistent and even color.
- Prevent, block or remove all sources that would cause uneven drying conditions for the first 72 hours. Use of natural kraft paper is recommended to cover the installation after the grout has been cleaned from the face of the tile. All excess water should be removed from the tile and grout surfaces before covering. Plastic sheets or newspaper should never be used.
- Damp cure or water mist the grout at 20 - 24 hour intervals for the first 3 days. This will insure even drying and full hydration of the grout. Latex modified grouts do not require damp curing.
- Cleaning the Grout and Tile - Normal to all cementitious grout installations is a fine, powdery residue or haze on the tile and grout after drying overnight (24 hours). This residue is removed from the tile installation during the "final cleaning" by wet mopping/scrubbing the surface. Dampen the grout with clean water before attempting to remove the residue. This keeps the wash slurry (tile and grout residue/water) from being absorbed into the pores of the grout.
- TSP (Tri Sodium Phosphate) and water solution will help clean the cementitious grout residue from the tile and grout without harm. Some scrubbing on difficult areas with a stiff

plastic bristle brush or a white nylon cleaning pad may be required. Follow the TSP container directions. As the TSP solution becomes dirty, replace it with fresh solution.

- Rinse and remove all wash slurry completely from tile and grout surfaces. Use of a wet/dry vacuum will help aid in the clean up and removal.
- After 10 days of curing, the tile and grout may require a sulfamic acid cleaning. Use C-Cure's C-Clean and carefully follow the directions on the container. Always saturate the grout with clean water before applying the C-Clean solution. Never use acids on natural marble or thin glazed tile installation because etching of the polish or glazing will occur.

Tile Staining: Unglazed tile or unpolished tile may stain when grouted. Porcelain and ceramic tile surfaces can have tiny, cementitious grout particles trapped in microscopic holes and pits on the tile. Often severe cases of tile surface staining cannot be removed to the satisfaction of the customers and the entire tile installation has to be removed, making repairs a costly mistake. Use of a grout release on the tiles prior to applying the grout is always advisable on unglazed, unpolished or porous surface tile. Moderate and light cases of tile surface staining can sometimes be avoided just by dampening the face of the tile with a wet sponge. Wiping the tile with a sponge and clean water immediately before the grout is placed on the tile surface will reduce the effort required to remove the grout from the tile. Always test the chosen cement grout on extra unglazed or porous tiles from the installation to determine if a grout release is necessary. Call the technical department for specific recommendations for stain removal.

Sealing the Grout - Sealing the grout is an extremely helpful addition to a tile and cement grout installation. Sealing greatly improves the resistance of the grout to staining and discoloration plus reduces the overall maintenance. Call the technical department for recommendations

Maintenance - Regular mopping of the grout and tile surface on a daily, weekly, semi-monthly or monthly schedule should be done with plain water or a neutral cleaner with a string mop. Steam cleaning is not recommended. Spot cleaning of the grout and tile should be done as spills or soiled areas occur. TB 109 0105

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