CHOOSING, INSTALLING & CARING FOR CERAMIC



Choosing the right tiles

There are tiles for all environments however there is no one particular tile that is suitable for all situations.

Wall and floor tiles perform two functions: an aesthetic, decorative function and a technical function in as much as they should be made from materials that can resist different types of environmental stress without breaking or deteriorating.

These two functions are fundamental and essential; there cannot be one without the other. It is therefore essential that you choose a tile that is both aesthetically and technically suitable for your application.

Are Tiles Slippery

There is no such thing as a non slip tile. There are many factors that contribute to a slip and fall, for example, the overall building design, contaminants on the tiles (including water), whether the person was running, walking, limping, etc., whether they were children or elderly, etc.

Ceramic tiles are rated according to their contribution to the risk of a slip or fall.

It is therefore recommended that you seek advice from the retailer as to the suitability of a particular tile for its intended use.

The application and use of ceramic tiles is beyond the control of the supplier and it is therefore the end-user's responsibility to manage the risk of slip and falls.

Some simple actions you can take to manage slips and falls are the replacements of floor mats in entry ways and wet floor areas, strategic placement of handrails for the elderly and regular cleaning of pedestrian areas to prevent a build up of everyday contaminants and the immediate clean up of water or spillage that may occur on your tiles.

Regulations

All tiles must be laid in accordance with the Australian Building Code and the appropriate Australian Standards.

A tile is only one component of a medical system that requires careful planning before the tiles are fixed. It is strongly recommended that you employ the skills of a licensed/qualified tiler to install your tiles. Ensure that you and the tiler have a written contract detailing the scope of work. Failure to do so has legal implications and may void any warranties.

Prior to Installation

- Ensure you discuss the design of your project and your expectations with the tiler and that you include any special arrangements in the contract, for example, the extent of clean up required.
- b. Ensure that there are sufficient tiles to complete your job, as there are no guarantees that extra tiles of the same batch (colour and shade) can be supplied at a later date.
- It is suggested that a small quantity of extra tiles be kept on site after the job is finished. It can be very difficult to match tiles if repairs are necessary at a later date.
- d. Shade variations are inherent in all kiln fired clay products. It is possible that the tiles you receive will be slightly different from the sample or display shown to you in the showroom - this is normal.
- e. Arrange for your tiles to be delivered well ahead of time. Check the tone or shade markings of all the tile cartons to ensure that you have been supplied with tiles from the same batch. Open two or three cartons and inspect the tiles for correct colour and acceptable shade. Failure to do so may result in disappointment as fixing of the product constitutes acceptance of the product.

During Laying

As tiling commences, make sure that the light in the room being tiled is as close as possible to the permanent lighting. Ensure the tiler mixes tiles from three or four different boxes so as to ensure proper blending of any colour variation that may exist.

As the work progresses, take time to have periodic checks:

- Ensure that the blend and effect is maintained and no defective tiles are laid.
- b. It is highly recommended that hidden areas (under the stove, fridges, in pantries and cupboards) or detached areas (toilets and laundry floors) are tiled last so that if extra tiles are needed, batching will not be crucial.

It is essential that, if you have any doubts or concerns about the job as it progresses, you stop the tiling and immediately contact your tile supplier before tiling any further.

After Laying

Cleaning is the next step of the installation process.

Ensure that the tiler removes all waxes, grout and grout residues. In the production of ceramic tiles, certain technical limitations will occur, which may manifest themselves in the form of minor marks and blemishes.

The latter are generally considered a characteristic of the tile and not a defect. Under normal lighting conditions these characteristic marks may not be noticeable. However, they may become obvious when highlighted by some forms of oblique lighting, for example, halogen and high illuminate white lights. All tiled surfaces should be viewed from a distance of 1.5m under non-critical light. Further, make sure your expectations have been met by inspecting the finished job whilst the tiler is still on site.

Mosaic Tiles

Due to the technical limitations in the manufacturing process, mosaic tiles are subject to greater shade variations than other ceramic tiles. Ensure that you are happy with the colour and shade variation before installing the tiles. Suppliers will generally credit the tiles at this point in time however no claims can be made once the tiles have been installed.

Polished Porcelain Tiles

OPTICAL HAZING: Whilst polished porcelain has a glossy surface, this does not mean it has the characteristics of a mirror. In fact, it is subject to a natural phenomenon known as optical hazing, presenting a smoky haze when the surface of the tile is struck by oblique light sources, for example early morning sun, halogen and white lights.

The effects of optical hazing can be minimised by careful design planning, such as, the use of curtains and blinds, and the careful placement of furniture.

Optical hazing is not considered a fault in the tile and does not affect the technical characteristics of the tile.

Please see our article 'Optical Hazing & Polished Porcelain Tiles' for more information.

Care & Maintenance

It is recommended that ceramic tiles should be laid after all heavy construction has been completed and that the tiles be covered during construction as debris will collect or dropped on the floor, creating damage. Cementitious residues present on the tile surface should be cleaned with a grout cleaner.

Do not use abrasive cleaners or chemicals, which could permanently scratch the surface of the tile. Daily cleaning with a mild detergent is best. If more rigorous cleaning is necessary use a proprietary tile and grout cleaner from a tile supplier.

Daily Cleaning Guide

- a. Sweep or vacuum loose dirt off the floor.
- b. Use a proprietary cleaner, following the manufacturers instructions
- c. Remove the cleaning solution with a clean mop or vacuum.
- d. Rinse with clean water.
- e. Remove water from the floor by drying and buffing with a dry towel or mop.

Disclaimer: This information is to be used as a guide only and should not be taken to constitute professional advice or a formal recommendation and we exclude all representations and warranties in relation to the content. All consumers should seek professional advice through their local store for their specific and individual application.