

Cleaning and Maintenance of Glazed Ceramic, Porcelain Wall & Floor Tile

Day to Day care

The routine cleaning of glazed ceramic tiles should be carried out after the removal of any loose dirt or grit by wiping off with a dry cloth, followed by washing with warm water to which a neutral, low sulfate detergent has been added. After a further rinse with water to ensure thorough removal of the detergent solution the installation should be given a final wipe down and polish with a clean, dry, soft cloth.

Longer Term Maintenance

At times grouting can become discolored over time, if this happens it is possible to regrout the tile joints or use grout rejuvenator.

Re-grouting Tiles

Where grouting has become discolored, scrape it out a few millimeters below the surface and apply fresh grout. A special tool should be used to carefully remove grout without scratching the face of the tile. After removing grout, brush out dust and debris from the joints, wash down the surface and allow to dry. Once surfaces and joints are dry, apply the new grout carefully to the joints. Allow the newly applied grout to dry according to the manufacturers instructions.

Rejuvenating Grout

Grout rejuvenator often comes in the form of a ready-mixed paint which forms a waterproof bond over the old grouting. The grout paints come in many different colors to choose from. Before applying grout rejuvenator the surfaces must be clean and dry. Grout rejuvenator should be applied carefully using an applicator brush with a back-and-forth motion. Thin, even coats should be applied, limiting the amount of Grout Colorant that gets on the tile. Allow the grouts to dry according to manufacturers instructions.

Refurbishment

A very common decision to make when re-tiling is whether to tile over existing tile or remove the old tiles first. It can be time consuming to remove old tiles and also the wall surface may be damaged by removing the tiles and need subsequent making good before re-tiling. Also, the possibility of damaging nearby surfaces, or sinks, baths etc should be considered.

It is quite common to tile over existing tile, and generally this is not a problem provided the appropriate factors are taken into account. The following as minimum should be considered, although each project requires individual assessment before commencing works.

- * The existing tiles must be soundly bonded to the walls.
- * Some backgrounds such as plaster and plasterboard may have a recommended weight limit for a square unit of measurement, this should not be exceeded
- * Only certain tile adhesives are suitable for tile on tile. Check manufacturers' instructions.
- * Tile over tile can be noticeable around the perimeters of a room such as coving, door jambs

Cleaning and Maintenance of Unglazed Vitrified & Porcelain Floor Tiles

Day to Day Care

On newly laid floors there may be residual cement on the tile surface. All traces of this must be removed by application of a mildly acid decementing solution (e.g. Hagesan Extra), followed by thorough rinsing, then proceed as follows. Regular cleaning with (warm or hot, particularly if oil or grease is present), and a neutral or mildly alkaline (pH to 8) detergent, mixed in the proportions recommended by the manufacturer, will remove all but the most stubborn dirt. The water/detergent mixture must be allowed to remain on the floor for sufficient time (5 to 15 minutes) to allow it to penetrate and emulsify the dirt, after which it should be rinsed thoroughly with clean water to remove all traces of the mixture.

Large areas of plain or textured surface tiles are most readily cleaned with rotary, cylindrical or reversing mechanical scrubbing machines. These should rotate at slow to medium speed. Such machines are frequently provided with a suction drying facility. If so equipped the machine should first be used with the suction facility switched off to permit the water detergent mix used in the scrubbing process to remain on the floor to penetrate the dirt layer. Allow at least 5 to 15 minutes to elapse, then repeat the scrubbing operation, but with clean water only, and with the suction drying facility switched on. It is the rinsing process which removes the dirt.

Spillages of oil, fat or material likely to stain or cause a slipping hazard, should be removed immediately by using detergents and hot water, followed by rinsing with clean water.

Longer Term Maintenance

Periodically, clean the floor using rotary, cylindrical or reversing scrubbing machine but with the addition of an abrasive powder (e.g. Vim, Ajax, fine Silica Sand). This will scour the tiles, remove impacted or built up dirt, and generally 'refresh' the floor. It will not damage unglazed tiles. Remove the residue with clean water rinsing before it has been allowed to dry out. High velocity water jets are sometimes available for general use and/or for removal of stubborn dirt. These will not damage the tiles, but may erode the joints if used regularly. If oil or grease is present, use the jet with warm or hot water and with a neutral detergent

Refurbishment

A very common decision to make when re-tiling is whether to tile over existing tile or remove the old tiles first. It can be time consuming to remove old tiles and also the wall surface may be damaged by removing the tiles and need subsequent making good before re-tiling. Also, the possibility of damaging nearby surfaces, doors, coves and fittings should be considered.

It is quite common to tile over existing tile, and generally this is not a problem provided the appropriate factors are taken into account. The following as minimum should be considered, although each project requires individual assessment before commencing works.

* The existing tiles must be soundly bonded

* Only certain tile adhesives are suitable for tile on tile. Check manufacturers' instructions.

* Tile over tile can be noticeable around the perimeters of a room such as coving, door jambs