

INSPECTING & PREPARING YOUR CEMENT TILE FOR INSTALLATION

(1) FIRST THINGS FIRST

you just received your shipment. besides taking a moment to admire your beautiful tiles. please take the following steps:

- please take care to inspect them prior to accepting them.
- you only have 72 hours to report any issues with your order.



YOU CAN EXPECT THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS AS PART OF THE CEMENT TILE APPEAL:

- variations in thickness
- variations in shade
- variations in pattern
- irregular edges
- occasional chipped edges
- and cracked or crazed surfaces

each of these qualities are a part of the natural appeal of your hand-hewn cement tiles and should not be considered defects. encaustic cement tiles from clé are tiles cast from cement and natural materials, therefore they are subject to color and shade variations, also, please expect that your tiles have traveled a distance to your location. though clé provides your tiles pre-polished and pre-sealed, this finish is primarily to assist in the best traveling conditions and to help your tiles through the first stages of installation and formation of their patina. however, you should also expect the following results as a result of standard shipping conditions.

- 2-3% breakage is normal.
- there may be dust and residue that should be cleaned from the tiles prior to installation.
- stubborn residue is easily removed with water and rubbing with 400 grit sandpaper.

we would like to take this time to remind you to make sure all of your tiles are on your jobsite BEFORE you schedule the installation date. the single largest issue clients face when trying to schedule their install date is not waiting until all their tiles arrive and setting materials are in place.

(2) STORING YOUR TILES

after inspecting your tiles and accepting them, be sure to store them properly while you await your installation date. you do not want to let your cases of cement tiles get wet. be sure to store all of them in a dry area. moisture or dampness can cause tiles to stain, cause color fading or damage the tile surface leaving cracks and pitting.



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(3)

KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT

clé cannot be responsible for material that has been either cut or installed. ensure that your tile issues are addressed PRIOR to cutting or installing because we do not accept returns for tiles that have been altered or used. this also ensures that you do not pay for installation of the wrong materials. clé does not pay for any installation, even if tiles are incorrect, damaged, or otherwise unacceptable.

throughout the installation process and handling of the tile, be careful not to damage the finished surface, edges and corners of the tiles.



(4)

BLEND, BLEND, BLEND

and because each tile is handmade, one tile at a time, it is recommended that your installer mix the tiles from all of the different cases once they have arrived and several days prior to installation. blending is the key to insuring that your cement tiles share the array of variation in the magical manner for which they are famous.

once blended, it is also good to allow the tiles to sit in their natural environment for a few days prior to installation, very much like hardwood. this allows the tiles to absorb the humidity of the space around them prior to installation.



PREPPING YOUR FLOORS OR WALLS

floor

IF YOU'RE INSTALLING FLOORS



1. your installer will need to allow for 3/4" below your finished floor height (5/8" for the tiles and 1/8" for mortar). If your substrate is plywood, be sure the plywood complies with the architect's specifications for your site and use an installation mat to insure the perfect installation. (schluter and noble are two of the best for installation mats)

2. once you confirm that your concrete surface is the right height and completely level - you'll need to make sure it is also completely dry before installing your cement tiles. if it isn't, the moisture in the concrete will want to escape through your tiles. if that happens you can expect powdery white limestone deposits (efflorescence) to surface. not a good look! also, do not lay your cement tiles directly onto fresh (uncured) concrete.*

3. a level and dry concrete slab isn't all you'll need on your way to a quality substrate! you will also need to add expansion joints to any larger floor or wall application in order to prevent cracking or fracturing from the possible movement of the substrate. you've heard that construction always settles? with expansion joints placed according to the proper guidelines (check that TCNA site again!) expansion, construction, isolation, contraction, generic and perimeter joints will ensure what's under your tiles has plenty of the right kind of "give".

* IMPORTANT: just because your concrete surface has cured does not mean it is moisture-free. this can be a problem if not checked. a quick way to find out is to tape a piece of clear plastic onto your slab (about the size of a piece of paper). be sure all edges are thoroughly taped down. If you see condensation of moisture, you will need to apply a waterproof membrane before proceeding with your installation.

GOT WOOD?

assuming that your floor joists are sufficient and not flexing, you can install tile on a wood floor if you first put down a cement backer board like you would do in a shower behind the tile. Your installer can use ANY QUALITY-BRAND DIMENSIONALLY STABLE FIBER/CEMENT WALL BOARDS AND ESPECIALLY THE LATEST MAGNESIUM OXIDE BOARDS.

wall

OR ANY VERTICAL SURFACES

1. walls require just as much care under your tiles as the floor prep we've just outlined. however, unlike the concrete substrate required for floors, your encaustic cement tiles can be installed over drywall, plaster, cement block, and cement backer board (for moist areas). you'll want a flat, smooth and dry surface, completely free of any loose coatings (paint). any cracked surfaces must be scraped smooth and patched. if using backer board be sure to follow the installation guidelines of the backer board manufacturer.

2. again, be sure that a concrete substrate for your walls has gone through the same drying steps as outlined in the floor preparation. any excessive moisture will want to escape through your cement tiles.

3. for areas like showers, pool surrounds, and other areas subject to moisture, the underlayment should be sealed with a waterproof membrane or other moisture-resistant product. cement-fiber backer board is an ideal underlayment for tile in wet locations. again please review the manufacturer's recommendations for your wet application.

and as with your floors, check with your architect or engineer for expansion joint requirements.



clé

LOOK OUT FOR GROUT - BE WARNED!!



WARNING!!
LOOK OUT FOR GROUT

GROUTING YOUR HANDMADE ENCAUSTIC CEMENT TILES (GENERAL)

this page is of particular importance to your cement tile installation. this is because the highest degree of incidence with cement tile installations are based on failures that occur using the wrong grout or the wrong grouting methods. remember, your tiles are cement and they can be stained with the grout pigment as this pigment is the exact colorant that is used to pigment cement tiles.

GROUTING FAQ'S

1) what size grout joint is preferred for cement tiles?

always use 1/16" grout joint or butt joint. because there is little irregularity in cement size, you don't have to provide large grout spacing to allow for variation. ALSO, most cement patterns will not repeat properly if you use larger than a 1/16" grout joint.

2) what colors are suitable for grouting cement tiles?

clé always recommends a neutral natural grey (un-pigmented) grout color for all cement tiles. besides being the traditional shade for these historic tiles, the lack of pigment allows for a stain-free installation. another color recommendation is to select the shade that matches closest to the lightest shade in your pattern.

CAUTION: many grout manufacturers have begun to pigment their "natural gray" grouts. so be sure your contractor checks with the manufacturer. if there is pigment, your contractor must take care against staining.

3) but what if I want to use a contrasting or dark grout?

using a contrasting or dark grout isn't impossible, however, it requires GREAT CARE. your installer needs to do a test patch to insure the grout release and contractor's application is working. if not, he will need to finger grout, using his finger to fill the joints, or use a grout bag to fill the joints. either procedure will insure the dark grout stays off the tile surface.

4) is there a particular grout brand clé recommends?

no. we only recommend that your contractor use an unsanded grout he has experience using and NO permacolor grouts.

5) why do you caution against using permacolor grouts?

permacolor grouts are a new grout formulation with very strong grout pigments, which will be a disaster for 1) staining your cement tiles. or any unglazed tile, and 2) it dries fast which can lead to grout film. should grout film develop on your installation, it is generally irreparable.

6) if clé cement tiles are pre-polished and pre-sealed, why do I have to use a grout release?

clé offers cement tiles that are pre-polished and pre-sealed. if your cement tiles don't have the benefit of this hand-rubbed finish then they will have a surface that is more rough and absorbent. and they will also contract a lot of blemishes from transportation and installation. HOWEVER, because grouts are very problematic to cement tiles, please be sure to ALWAYS use grout release to avoid staining.



LOOK OUT FOR GROUT - BE WARNED!!

GENERAL GROUTING TIPS

below are our general grouting tips to insure a great outcome for your beautiful installation

- once your mortar bed is sufficiently dried/cured, sweep your floor thoroughly, removing all loose and gritty particles. (this step should be done no sooner than 3 days and no later than 7 days)
- wash or mop the floor with a neutral detergent (NEVER vinegar or acid-based cleansers), rinsing the floor thoroughly using liberal amounts of clear water, remove water and allow the floor to dry thoroughly before sealing or buffing.
- once dry again, you can now apply a grout release following the manufacturer's instructions. this helps to protect the tiles from being stained by the grout. it is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully or the grout release application may fail resulting in grout staining.
- grout your installation using a rubber float (finger grout or a grout bag is required with contrasting color grouts).
- immediately remove any excess grout with a clean damp cloth or sponge. this will also remove the grout release.
- do not let any excess grout dry on the surface as it may be difficult to remove and may stain the tiles.
- clé recommends using only natural gray grout - NOT "PERMACOLOR" grouts, or matching the lightest shade of your patterns.

should you (or your client) prefer to use a contrasting grout on your cement tiles - please be sure to do so with great CAUTION and either finger grout or use a grout bag.



WARNING

AFTER GROUTING TIPS

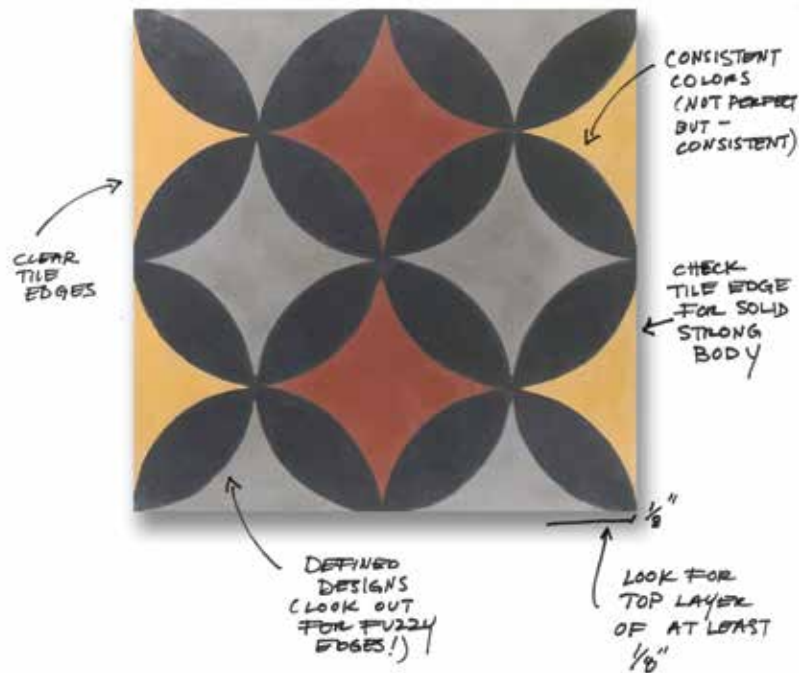
- any excess grout should be removed with a damp cloth or sponge before it dries.
- if your contractor has many years experience with cement tiles you may want to ask him for the following as a final finish - after grout is dry (usually 48 hours) use a 17" floor polisher with a sand screen pad over a green pad to clean and finish the cement tiles. wet the floor so that the floor polisher is always working on a wet surface. some cement color will come up during this buffing process. be sure to rinse any cement color which will come up during the sanding. this process leaves your floors and patterns clear and clean.
- for a slight gloss finish - buff the tiles with the floor polisher and white pad.
- you will want to seal prior to using your newly finished project. please read our sealing and maintenance guide for ongoing care of your beautiful walls and floors.

your cement floor should be the last step of your project. If you cannot do this then you must do whatever possible to protect your cement tile installation against breakage and staining,



WORLD-CLASS QUALITY

clé is always proud of the craftsmanship and quality that goes into the production of our world-class cement tiles. below is our primer for insuring that your tiles are clé quality –



FIRST-RATE INSTALLATION

when world-class tiles are paired with the best possible installation - you can count on a FIRST-RATE, WORLD-CLASS project!

however, sometimes installation inexperience or undetected site challenges will develop installation issues. often, your installer may say that it is a defect of your tiles, but most often, installation is the root cause.

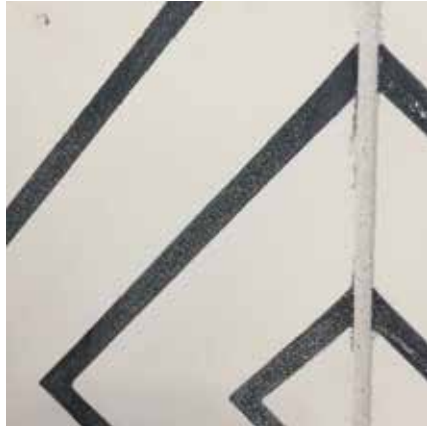
remember, tiles that look great out of the box - will most likely look great once installed properly.

on the following page are examples of the top issues that arise when not following clé owner's manual guidelines or checking for issues on the jobsite.



TROUBLESHOOTING: INSTALLATION PROBLEMS

your tiles from clé are world class. the following issues are common issues when your contractor has not followed standard guidelines of installation. please be sure to **contact your contractor** with any of the below problems.



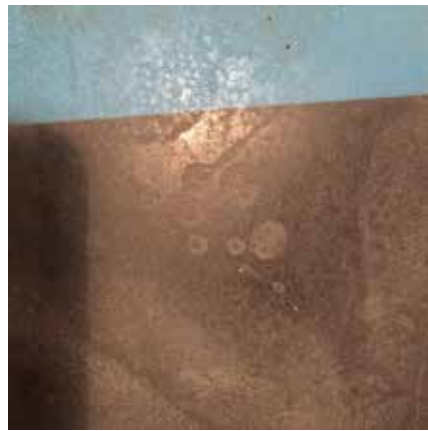
grout film



staining



substrate failure



improper sealing



efflorescence



using epoxy grout remover



grout film



