for design inspiration

TILE+STONE QUESTIONS+ANSWERS

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tile warehouse

Q: What is the difference between a ceramic tile and a porcelain tile?

A: Porcelain tiles are typically pressed at higher kg per metre (up to 4500kg per m2) and fired to a much hotter temperature (up to 1300 degrees celsius) than ceramics meaning they are more dense which makes them more durable and less likely to damage under impact or accept staining if they are homogeneous (unglazed) porcelain.

Q: Which is better for flooring, ceramic or porcelain?

A: Because of porcelain's lower porosity and higher density, they are considered technically superior to ceramics. However glazed ceramic tiles can often have aesthetic beauty that cannot be obtained on homogeneous porcelain due to lower firing temperatures and glazed ceramic's ability to take more complex glazes.

Q: Is there a difference in the laying of ceramics vs porcelain tiles?

A: Porcelain tiles must be laid with a polymer modified adhesive to guarantee bonding. We recommend the use of Monoflex from Construction Chemicals that is a C2S2 adhesive.
http://www.constructionchemicals.com.au/workspace/file/product/cc_monoflex_ps_july12.pdf

Q: Who quantifies how many tiles are needed for the job; myself, the tile supplier or the tiler?

A: The tiler, as he will know the cutting requirements. Our store staff can estimate quantities for you but we recommend you have a qualified tiler do a site measure to obtain a more precise measurement.

Q: Whose responsibility is it to check the tiles before they are laid?

A: It is ultimately the customer's responsibility. It is important you check that the correct tiles are delivered and that the tonality (batch) is acceptable as tiles are like fabrics in that there are variations between productions.

Q: Can I return unwanted tiles?

A: There are two reasons we do not take returns. Firstly, we cannot accept over-ordered product back into stock because of batch variations we have between shipments. Secondly, spare tiles are an insurance policy against future tiling needs – if you have a disaster at home, or you want to extend or repair an area – as the batch you have will never be exactly produced again!

Q: What does frost resistance mean?

A: Frost resistance is a measure on the number of times a tile or stone can be immersed in water and then frozen and thawed before the tile shows signs of damage. Resistant does not mean frost-proof, as conditions can exceed testing parameters.

Frost damage affects the materials exposed to water in areas where the temperature is liable to fall below zero. Water can penetrate tiles – and therefore a tiled surface – through the body of the tile. If the temperature falls below zero, the water freezes and becomes ice. As ice occupies a greater volume than liquid water, so tensions are created inside the tile body pores. These tensions may become so high that portions of the tile may break off.

When selecting frost-resistant tiles; in an area subject to heavy frost, it is important to ensure that the waterproof membrane is as close as possible under the tile. This will ensure that water cannot pond below a tile, thereby saturating the tile, which exposes the installation to extreme risk of frost damage due to being permanently damp and thereby susceptible to regular freeze thaw cycles.

Q: What does the slip rating refer to?

A: To be classed as 'slip resistant', the pedestrian surface shall be of a level access and have a mean coefficient of friction of no less than 0.40. It is important to note that tiles only need to be slip resistant where it is a public place or a place the public have access to (like your front steps).

All tiles when dry, pass the slip resistant tests. It's when wet you need to select a tile with a non-slip finish if the public have access. So in the privacy of your own home you can use any tile you choose.

Q: What is tile calibration and why is it important to understand?

A: A tile's calibration relates to the exactness of tile size. Many customers are unaware that not every tile is 100% square. Inferior-quality tiles can have differing widths, between tile bottom and top, of up to 5mm. It is important that the tiler is aware of this when doing their setting out. At Tile Warehouse, we check the calibre of all product as part of our quality control procedures.

Q: Is it true that small tiles should be used in a small room?

A: No. Actually the opposite is true. Large tiles make a room such as an ensuite appear bigger. Small tiles may be easier for a tiler to lay but ultimately the tile size choice should always come down to the consumer. To ensure you purchase tiles that match your requirements, speak to our friendly store staff to obtain the correct information.

Q: Can grout be cleaned?

A: Yes. Modern cleaners are able to lift most dirt. We recommend grouted areas are sealed to prevent further staining and facilitate cleaning.

Q: Can glazed porcelain or glazed ceramics stain?

A: Glazed porcelain will not stain because the glaze protects the tile.

Q: Can unglazed porcelain stain?

A: Quality unglazed porcelain will not accept staining into the surface of the tile. However what can happen is after installation grout haze and/or other contamination can be left on the tile and this contaminant can appear as staining!

Quality unglazed polished porcelain is very stain resistant due to the body being incredibly dense and hard, and the porcelain being fired at very high temperatures. Due to the density of the tile when it is polished, the tops of the pores (which are micro teardrop shaped) are polished off but because the pores are so small due to the pressing and firing temperatures the small openings are too small to accept dirt or staining.

With mass manufacturing and different standards in different countries, not all tile conforms in this way, so some factories nano seal their tile as a precaution. At Tile Warehouse, we only source first-rate quality porcelain tile.

Q: What is the hardness are tiles?

A: MOHS scale 6-8.

Q: Are tiles absorbent?

A: Yes. Floor tiles have lower porosity and can range from 0.1% upwards. But wall tiles being more decorative can have absorptions up to 20%.

Q: Do tiles fade over time?

A: No. They are colourfast.

Q: Is there anything to stop grout getting mould?

A: Most grouts come with a fungicide incorporated in the mix. However these break down over time. We recommend grout is sealed after laying to prolong the protection. We recommend Construction Chemical's grouts.

Q: What size joins are used for sizes of tiles?

A: Typically 1-5mm. Many tiles today are rectified meaning they are cut to exactly the same size allowing a smaller grout joint.

Q: What size trowel is used for size of tiles?

A: Typically 6-8mm for walls and 10-12mm for floors.

Q: What glue is used for wall and floor?

A: Many glues are able to be used on the floor and wall, dependant on the substrate.

Q: There is a haze on my tiles. How do I get it off?

A: The haze is usually grout residue left on the tile after grouting. It can be removed with a nylon pad but may require further work. For further advice, please check with one of our store staff.

STONE TILING Q+A

Q: Does stone need to be sealed?

A: Yes. All stone is porous to some degree. All stone sealers provide a temporary stain barrier and the better the sealer, the longer it takes to penetrate into the stone. To take appropriate care, please ask our store staff about the right sealer for your stone. We recommend the Lithofin range of sealers.

Q: How do I care for stone bench tops or vanities ?

A: Avoid cutting on it and do not place hot pots directly onto the stone. Any spills should be wiped up promptly.

Q: Is there any difference in treatments for different types of stone?

A: Yes. Different sealers are used on different stones because of their porosity and resistance to staining. We recommend the Lithofin sealers and stone care products.