



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Copyright © TEXAS CEMENT PRODUCTS, INC.

RE: Sealing procedures for your tile installation after the cementitious grout has been installed.

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.

Cure Time Before Sealing - Many times questions occur about the cure time of the grout required before sealing the grout and what type of sealer should be used on the grout. Different answers are given by the grout manufacturers, sealer manufacturers, the tile distributors and the tile contractors which cause confusion and problems for the jobsite owners.

Tex-Rite, as the manufacturer of grout, recommends allowing the grout to cure a minimum of 28 days prior to the application of any sealer. This allows the proper amount of time required for the grout to achieve the correct color, full hardness and strength without the interference of sealers and coatings. Sealing the grout earlier (before 30 days) may cause the grout to become soft or discolor due to conditions at the jobsite or the composition of the sealer. All grout sealers, regardless of composition, can be safely used after the 28 days of curing.

Never seal a grout that is not satisfactory in color and hardness. Normal sealers are designed to protect a "good" grout job. They are not designed to correct a "problem" grout job. Application of normal sealers over a "problem" grout will only tend to enhance the grout problem and prevent usage of simple correction measures. Many times this may result in the removal of the grout or even the entire installation for correction of the problem due to the presence of a sealer.

Sealer Types

There are two basic categories of sealers.

Membrane Forming Sealers: The membrane forming sealer remains mostly on the surface of the tile and/or the grout and forms a nonporous membrane which produces a glossy or matte finish. Membrane sealers are only recommended on unglazed tiles since they do not adhere well to glazed tiles. They are usually used on very porous tile to protect the tile from stains and to enhance the beauty of the tile. There are two types of sealer finishes available: a gloss finish, "wet look" and non-gloss, matte ("natural") finish for the tile and grout. A majority of all gloss, "wet look" grout sealers will darken the tile and the grout color will look as if the joint is wet with water

Penetrating Sealers: Penetrating sealers are usually composed of silicone or latex solids suspended in a mineral spirits or water carrier. The carrier allows the solution to penetrate into the pores and capillaries of the grout or tile surface (if the tile is unglazed). After application, the carrier evaporates and leaves the solid material within the pores and closes the capillaries to the surface of the tile and grout thereby reducing absorption of potentially staining materials. During application of a penetrating sealer for the grout, the excess sealer may simply be wiped off the surface of the tile. Nonpigmented penetrating sealers may slightly darken unglazed tile and grout but does not produce a luster on the surface.

Primary consideration should be given to the type of sealer required to protect the tile and grout plus provide the appearance desired. Sealers are available from numerous manufactures in many types and composi-

TB209-112607

The information in this bulletin is presented in good faith, but no warranty, express or implied, is given nor is freedom from any patent in as much as any assistance furnished by Texas Cement Products, Inc. with reference to the safe use and disposal of its products provided without charge. Texas Cement Products, Inc. assumes no obligation or liability therefore, except to the extent that any such assistance shall be given in good faith.

TEXAS CEMENT PRODUCTS, INC.

4000 Pinemont
Houston, Texas 77018 USA

Phone: 713-682-8411
Toll Free: 800-669-0115
Fax: 713-688-2448
texrite.com & texascement.com

tions (i.e. water-based, solvent-based, oil based, silicones, latex, etc.). Reference the sealer's service and application requirements when determining which product is best for the tile and/or grout. Carefully follow the grout sealers directions. Apply the sealer in the appropriate manner. Excessive amounts of sealer (puddles or ponding) on the grout should be avoided. Apply the sealer in an inconspicuous test area several days before proceeding with the entire job. This will insure that all unforeseen problems are addressed and allow an opportunity to view and approve the desired finish or effect before the entire job is completely sealed.

If a tile is glazed or it is pre-sealed with a membrane sealer from the supplier, no further sealing is required for the tile. However, a penetrating sealer can be applied to the grout for protection.

If the tile is unglazed and unsealed, the sealer recommended by the manufacturer for the protection and beauty of the tile should be applied after grouting but prior to application of any other sealers or any maintenance procedures. This is simply because penetrating sealers and ingredients in some maintenance materials will inhibit the bonding of membrane sealers. Remember that the sealers can be easily applied to the surface later but if the sealer is applied incorrectly or on an improper surface the consequences can be a costly error.