

# TILE CARE & MAINTENANCE



Fairmont Beach FM07 tile shown

## CERAMIC TILE

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### Routine Care

Tile, whether glazed ceramic or porcelain, should be maintained on a regular and frequent basis to prevent build-up of soil, grease, residue, soap detergents, sealers, dampness, liquids, etc., to keep the surface clean and lessen slippery conditions.

Glazed ceramic and porcelain tiles require minimal maintenance. Either can be cleaned with clear water and/or a pH neutral liquid cleaner (soapless). Follow with a clear water rinse and wipe dry to prevent film formation. As with most porcelains, spilled liquids may stain light-colored products if not promptly removed. Neither sealing nor acid cleaning is recommended for any of American Olean glazed ceramic or porcelain tile.

### Removal of Sealers/Waxes/Floor Finishes

If you need to remove a topical sealer or floor wax from a ceramic tile you should use a Tile Sealer & Adhesive Remover. Always test a small area first. Apply a liberal amount of undiluted sealer & adhesive remover to a manageable area.

Allow setting without drying until coating or residue softens. Reapply if necessary until sealer softens and can be removed. If necessary, agitate with white nylon scrub pad. Wipe up the residue with a cotton towel or sponge. Rinse thoroughly with clean water.

NOTE: Do not use on Natural Stone products.

## CERAMIC TILE GROUT CARE

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### Penetrating/Impregnating Sealer

Most tile installations use cementitious grouts. This type of grout should be sealed after installation to prevent the color from staining. The grout should be sealed with a penetrating/impregnating sealer (often called grout sealers) which does not contain silicone, as silicone can shorten the useful life of the sealer.

Epoxy grouts, conversely, are chemically cured and acid resistant and, as a result, do not require a sealer. The application of a good quality penetrating/impregnating sealer into the grout joints of a cementitious grout will not change the natural color of the grout, but will prevent the penetration of moisture, simplify maintenance, and help prevent staining or discoloration.

Only the grout needs to be sealed, not glazed floor or wall tiles. Grout can be sealed 72 hours after installation. There are different grades of penetrating/impregnating sealers, therefore the useful life and price will differ between a low quality and high quality sealer. You may need to reapply the sealer on an annual basis depending on the sealer quality, traffic patterns, and maintenance routine.

Some sealers have multiple year warranties for useful life. Refer to the manufacturer's warranty, technical & product information for specific details on product installation, useful life, and product applications (including any warnings) before use.

### Grout Maintenance

Neither sealing the grout nor using a 100% Epoxy Grout will guarantee against surface buildup or discoloration of the grout. Grout needs to be cleaned on a periodic basis to remove any surface buildup. Routine grout cleaning can be done with a daily concentrated household or commercial cleaner depending on the application.

When heavy duty grout cleaning is required, you will need to use a professional strength Tile & Grout Cleaner that is capable of removing grease, soap scum, body oil, mildew stains, algae, and synthetic or acrylic waxes from the grout joints. However, such a product should contain non-polluting chemicals and low volatile organic compound (VOC) levels.



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## CERAMIC TILE GROUT CARE (continued)

### Grout Color Restoration

When grout has been stained to the point that it cannot be maintained or returned to its natural color, you can return the grout back to its original color or any other color through the use of a “grout stain”. Grout Stains are epoxy-based products that are specifically designed to penetrate into the grout and seal the surface with a permanent color. Once the grout has been stained there is no need to seal it any further with a penetrating/impregnating sealer. Prior to staining, the grout joint should be cleaned thoroughly to remove any dirt, oils, grease or sealers with a professional strength Tile & Grout Cleaner.

### Post-Grout Clean Up

Grout haze is a film that has been left behind on the surface of the tile as part of the final grouting process. Usually this is buffed

off the surface after the grout has achieved its initial 12 to 24 hour cure. The removal of the haze is often difficult when buffing with a clean rag or floor machine. Cementitious grout haze can be successfully removed with Sulfamic Acid, which is a mild acid that attacks and breaks down cement smears. There are several products on the market called grout haze removers, which usually contain Sulfamic Acid.

Sulfamic Acid can also be purchased in powder form and mixed with water to different strengths by qualified professionals. Similarly, 100% Solids Epoxy Grout haze can be removed with an Epoxy Haze Remover. These removers are formulated to safely and quickly remove cured epoxy haze from new tile installations. Their unique formulation will soften most epoxy hazes for easy removal without damaging the grout or tile, usually in one application. Sulfamic Acid or grout removers should never be used on Natural Stone products.

## NATURAL STONE

### Routine Care

To ensure your Natural Stone products will provide you with a lifetime of aesthetics and utility, a proper maintenance program is crucial. Natural Stone products are porous by nature and require a different maintenance program than traditional ceramic tile.

Natural stone requires a different maintenance routine than traditional, man-made ceramic tile. Many of the cleaners acceptable for use on ceramic tile can stain, damage or dull stone. Dirt and dust will scratch the surface of stone. Therefore, stone floors should be vacuumed or dust mopped frequently to remove abrasive agents from the stone surface. Natural Stone should be cleaned with neutral cleaners. Stone cleaners should never contain acid or bleach. Acids, even a light solution of vinegar and water, will etch and eventually damage Natural Stone.

### Stone Cleaners

Only use cleaners specifically designed for cleaning stone. These cleaners contain no acids and are concentrated neutral pH cleaners that will not affect existing sealers or wax-type coatings. The surface of the stone should be dampened with clear water. This will keep the cleaning solution on the surface so it can be effective. A solution of the cleaner and water mixed to manufacturer’s instructions should be applied to the stone surface with a sponge or mop.

On walls, kitchen counters or vanity tops, a spray bottle can be used to apply the cleaning solution. Allow sitting for manufacturer’s specified amount of time (usually 3 to 5 minutes). Agitate with a sponge, synthetic mop, soft bristle brush or through the use of a floor scrubbing machine. Mop up dirty solution and buff dry.



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## NATURAL STONE (continued)

Once the stone has been cleaned, you can periodically apply a spray-buff wax-type floor finish to enhance the beauty and luster of polished stone (including countertops). Apply the finish with a spray applicator and buff immediately with a white nylon pad. Reapply as often as needed, depending on volume of surface traffic and consistency of routine maintenance program. This product is not designed to restore the original shine, but is intended to maintain and protect the original shine.

### Heavy-Duty Stone Cleaning

When some areas have been neglected, you will need to use a heavy-duty non-hazardous and non-polluting stone cleaner and degreaser to effectively remove dirt, grease, grime, waxes and floor finishes. An optimal heavy-duty cleaner should contain low percentages of VOCs. These cleaning products are concentrated and designed to deep clean the stone without damaging it.

Apply the solution of the cleaner and water mixed to manufacturer's instructions to the stone surface with a sponge or mop. Allow setting for the manufacturer's specified amount of time. Agitate with a sponge, synthetic mop, and soft bristle brush or through the use of a floor scrubbing machine.

## NATURAL STONE NEW INSTALLATIONS

Sealing is strongly recommended for newly installed marble and other Natural Stone to provide maximum below surface stain protection. Immediately after Natural Stone has been installed and grouted, the new installation should be covered with brown paper to protect it from debris during the remaining construction process. The protective brown paper should remain in place until construction is completed and the area is opened to intended (post-construction) use.

### Pre-Grout Sealing

A non-sanded grout is strongly recommended for Natural Stone

Mop up dirty solution and buff dry. Be sure to change out the cleaning solution every 100 square feet to avoid reintroducing dirty water during the cleaning process. Rinse thoroughly with clean water when finished. After cleaning you may apply the spray-buff wax-type floor finish to enhance the natural shine.

### Stain Removal

Stone poultice will remove stains and grout haze from stone. Poultice is a fine, nonacidic, absorptive clay cleaning powder that removes deep-set oil stains, grease and light cementitious grout haze from polished and unpolished Natural Stone.

**CAUTION:** Poultice may dull the shine of the polished stone. If this occurs you will need to use a marble polish to restore the natural shine.

### Restoration

If a marble finish has become dull, scratched or etched, you can restore the natural shine through the use of a marble polish. Some marble polishes are available in kits. The process can be enhanced with the use of floor buffing machines. The process is generally a re-crystallization process to remove fine scratches and restore the original shine and polish to the stone. This is not an application of a topical sealer or wax to cover-up damaged or worn surfaces.

installations due to the narrow grout joints customarily preferred. This type of grout has very fine particles of cement, polymers and color pigments that can penetrate the microscopic pores of the stone surface where they become trapped and appear as a stain in the stone. Therefore, all travertine, slate, tumbled stone and honed/flamed/unpolished granite should be sealed prior to the grouting process to protect them from staining. The application of a good quality sealer should be used as a grout sealer and applied again as the final sealing process once the installation is finished.



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## NATURAL STONE NEW INSTALLATIONS (continued)

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### Sealing

A premium natural look penetrating/impregnating sealer is the normal choice on polished or honed marble, limestone, granite, or where the natural color of a slate is desired. A stone enhancer sealer is often used on tumbled, antique stones or on slate where a darker, enriched or highlighted character is desired. When choosing either one of these types of sealers, make sure the brand you have chosen is formulated to provide maximum stain protection for stone products. Stone products should be tested periodically per manufacturer's instructions to insure that the sealer is working effectively.

Penetrating/impregnating stone sealers are a no-sheen, natural look sealer that can be water-based or solvent-based, good for interior and exterior applications. Most quality sealers of this type are rated to protect the stone for several years. Stone enhancer sealers are also a no-sheen, penetrating/impregnating sealer that is formulated to darken, enrich and highlight the natural color and beauty of stone products. They will rejuvenate and improve the appearance of worn and weathered stone.

Always test loose pieces of stone to ensure desired effect with enhancing sealers. However, they will also darken the color of grout joints. They are, generally, suitable for interior and exterior use, and rated to protect the stone for several years. Always reference manufacturer's literature for specific information on the duration of the sealer's protection and make sure that the sealer is applied in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### Finishing

A stone floor finish should be applied to a polished Natural Stone floor only. This type of product will help enhance the shine and provide a protective coating for "soft" or polished marbles. Verify the finish is a wax-type finish designed to add luster and enhance the beauty of sealed and polished Natural Stone only. A topical finish may change the appearance and performance of your stone, so always test a small area first. Application of topical sealer or wax should never be done as an attempt to add a shine to a honed, scratched or non-polished stone product. This will only create maintenance and/or a slip resistance problem.

## MANUFACTURED STONE

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### Routine Care

Care should be taken to avoid smearing mortar on the surface of the veneers. Accidental smears should be removed using a dry whiskbroom only after mortar has dried completely. Never use a wet brush or wire brush. Do not power-wash, sandblast, use acid or acid-based products. Dirt or other materials may be removed with a strong solution of granulated soap or detergent and water with a bristle brush. Do not use a wire brush, as it will cause damage to the surface. Rinse immediately with fresh water. Regular maintenance only requires rinsing the surface with water occasionally to remove dirt.

### Sealing

Seal with a breathable, non-film forming masonry sealer, to prevent staining from rusty downspouts, splattered mud, etc. Sealing is strongly recommended for dry-stacked applications and/or for harsh environments.



# TILE CARE & MAINTENANCE



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## POLISHED PORCELAIN

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### General Cleaning

Tile, whether glazed ceramic or porcelain, should be maintained on a regular and frequent basis to prevent build-up of soil, grease, residue, soap detergents, sealers, dampness, liquids, etc., to keep the surface clean and lessen slippery conditions.

Glazed ceramic and porcelain tiles require minimal maintenance. Either can be cleaned with clear water and/or a pH neutral liquid cleaner (soapless). Follow with a clear water rinse and wipe dry to prevent film formation. As with most porcelains, spilled liquids may stain light-colored products if not promptly removed. Neither sealing nor acid cleaning is recommended for any of American Olean glazed ceramic or porcelain tile.

Fully polished impervious porcelain tile is achieved by mechanically changing the surface from matte/natural to a honed or high polished finish. Polished Colorbody™ porcelain is achieved by mechanically changing the glaze surface from matte to light, honed or high polish finish. This process creates a microporosity on the face of the tile. The tile itself is still technically sound porcelain with the same characteristics expected of high quality impervious tile.

The surface, however, may possibly require added protection to assure cleanability and ease of ongoing maintenance under a range of conditions including but not limited to:

- grout haze removal
- construction chemicals and dirt
- maintenance/solvent based cleaning materials
- exposure to rubber containing solvent based materials
- acid based materials

All of the above can result in hazing, spotting, etching or general staining of the polished tile surface. We recommend the use of a sealer on fully polished, impervious porcelain and polished glaze porcelain tile prior to grouting. We strongly caution against the use of acid based or solvent based chemicals for cleaning or construction maintenance on fully polished impervious or polished glaze porcelain tile. The use of such products may damage the tile surface.

With proper installation techniques, preventative care and effective maintenance procedures, fully polished impervious porcelain and polished glazed porcelain tile is a durable, high value, long lasting tile floor and wall option for most commercial and residential spaces.

## UNGLAZED/MATTE/TEXTURED PORCELAIN

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Porcelain tiles with a matte or textured surface may contain structure or micro texture for slip resistance and visual enhancement. We recommend the use of a grout release prior to grouting for these products to enhance the efficacy of removal of the various types of grout, latex modified grout, epoxy grout used in the market today.



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## MOSAIC (GLASS AND MIXED MATERIALS)

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### General Cleaning

Tile, whether glazed ceramic or porcelain, should be maintained on a regular and frequent basis to prevent build-up of soil, grease, residue, soap detergents, sealers, dampness, liquids, etc., to keep the surface clean and lessen slippery conditions.

Glazed ceramic and porcelain tiles require minimal maintenance. Either can be cleaned with clear water and/or a pH neutral liquid cleaner (soapless). Follow with a clear water rinse and wipe dry to prevent film formation.

As with most porcelains, spilled liquids may stain light-colored products if not promptly removed. Neither sealing nor acid cleaning is recommended for any of American Olean glazed ceramic or porcelain tile.

### Glass Tile

Use a glass cleaner and a soft lint-free cloth for cleaning glass tile. To remove soap scum or water deposits a minimally abrasive cleanser and soft bristle brush can be used.

## STONE MOSAIC

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### Routine Care

Natural Stone products are porous by nature and many of the cleaners acceptable for use on ceramic tile can stain, damage or dull stone.

Dirt and dust will scratch the surface of stone. Natural Stone should be cleaned with neutral cleaners and should never contain acid or bleach. Acids, even a light solution of vinegar and water, will etch and eventually damage Natural Stone.

### Stone Cleaners

Only use cleaners specifically designed for cleaning stone. These cleaners contain no acids and are concentrated neutral pH cleaners that will not affect existing sealers or wax-type coatings. The surface of the stone should be dampened with clear water. This will keep the cleaning solution on the surface so it can be effective. A solution of the cleaner and water mixed to manufacturer's instructions should be applied to the stone surface with a sponge or mop.

On walls, kitchen counters or vanity tops, a spray bottle can be used to apply the cleaning solution. Allow sitting for manufacturer's specified amount of time (usually 3 to 5 minutes). Agitate with a sponge, synthetic mop, soft bristle brush or through the use of a floor scrubbing machine. Mop up dirty solution and buff dry.

Once the stone has been cleaned, you can periodically apply a spray-buff wax-type floor finish to enhance the beauty and luster of polished stone. Apply the finish with a spray applicator and buff immediately with a white nylon pad.

### Pre-Grout Sealing

A non-sanded grout is strongly recommended for Natural Stone installations due to the narrow grout joints customarily preferred. All travertine, slate, tumbled stone and honed/flamed/unpolished granite should be sealed prior to the grouting process to protect them from staining. The application of a good quality sealer should be used as a grout sealer and applied again as the final sealing process once the installation is finished.

### Metal Tile

To clean, use a liquid non-abrasive household cleaner.

DO NOT use scouring pads, steel wool, sandpaper or other abrasive products. Avoid cleaners containing ammonia, bleach, abrasives, or other hazardous/polluting compounds. Always test in a small inconspicuous area while using a new cleaner to ensure compatibility.