

*Please note: This is a guide. Installers who are part of the National Tile Contractors Association with specific handling of Cement Tiles should be used. It takes practice and skill to install. You do not want to be someones practice installation. (Check references).*

## **Color & Sizes**

The Builder Depot Encaustic cement tile are produced from natural materials. The production process is hand-made. Therefore, the tiles can have colors, patterns and sizes variations in a certain level. These characteristics have brought natural beauty for encaustic cement tiles. When installing the tiles, you should install randomly from different tile boxes to get the natural beauty of the color.

## **Storage Before Installation**

Make sure all tiles are protected whilst waiting for installation. Leave all Encaustic Cement Tile packed until they are ready to be laid. Do not stack or place Encaustic Cement Tile in a manner in which they are not intended (such as exposure to sun, rain, humidity,...), this may lead to marking.

## **Tile Surface Protection**

The Builder Depot Encaustic cement tiles are coated with a sealer in our factory. This coating is to protect the tile surface during transport and storage. However, this coating is NOT strong enough to protect the tile surface from the entry of stain. Therefore, the tiles should be carefully protected during construction to keep the surface without stain. When installing, please keep your hands clean. Do not write symbol on the

tiles even with a pencil because it can leave marks which may be difficult to remove on the surface.

## **Check Before Installation**

We recommend that you check carefully before installing the tiles. We will not be responsible when the tiles have been cut or installed.

## **Caution When Using Sealers**

Always follow the instructions from the sealer suppliers. We suggest that you should use penetrating sealers with high quality and reputation in the market to protect the tile surface. You can coat many layers to protect the tiling floor to be the best. Please try to coat on one tile before coating the entire floor to ensure utilization of appropriate sealers following the requirements.

## **Equipment & Tools**

**These are basic equipment and tools. You may need more tools for doing the installation.**

### **Equipment**

1. Mixer: Bottom layer material mixer (mixer or hand drill).
2. Equipment for dividing gap and checking flatness: With the largest floor area should take the base surface with high flatness and uniformity.
3. Tile Cutter: Cutting tile without damages of the edge.

### **Tools**

- Level
- Hand trowel
- Grout oat rubber
- Rubber hammer
- Carpenter's square
- Containers to wet the tiles
- Buckets for mortar
- Sponge
- Sand paper
- Clean rags
- 6-10 FT aluminum straight edge • Tape measure
- Pencil

## **Installation Process**

Installing encaustic tiles is a simple process but requires GREAT CARE so as not to damage the surface of tiles and floor tiles to get the best.

### **Step 1**

#### **Preparing the substrate and tiles for flooring.**

- Prepare the tiling substrate which is at and clean.
- Soak tiles in water for about 20 seconds. (As they are so absorbent they can soak all the moisture from the thinset-mortar you do not want that to occur).
- The tiles can be installed on the substrate with mortar or glue.
- For the best adhesion, apply mortar or adhesive to both the substrate and the back of the tiles.

### **Step 2**

#### **Installing the tiles on the substrate.**

- Install the first tiles in three different corners of the floor. Stretch cords to determine the tiled surface.
- The tiles are installed by hand and should be done carefully so as not to damage the tiles. Install one row of the tile based on the selected design to review if there is any adjustment before fixed installation.
- The gap between the tiles up to 2-3 mm.

- After placing the tile on the substrate, use hands or a rubber hammer to balance the tile surface, but hands are the best method. Do not use a normal hammer or similar tools to balance the surface. Check among the tiles that have equal surface height as if mortar or glue has dried, it cannot be adjusted anymore.
- If there is any dirt or mortar or adhesive on the tile surface, please clean the surface immediately. If dropping mortar on the tile is not cleaned immediately, it will cause stain on the tile surface and after that, the cleansing is very difficult.

### **Step 3**

#### **Cleaning the floor surface and applying penetrating sealer at the first time.**

- Let the tiles to get firmly fixed on the floor after the mortar dries, then check the tile surface and clean it. If it still has dried mortar on the tile surface, use a knife blade lightly and carefully to not scratch the tile surface. You can also use sand paper grit #320 or #400 to scrub with water. Absolutely NOT use acid or bleach to clean the floor. Wait for the surface is completely dry before proceeding to coat with protective penetrating sealer in the first time.
- **Coat a penetrating sealer on the tile before applying grout.** The purpose of the first coating is to provide a 1st protective layer to prevent grout stick on the tiles. Wait for the coating to be completely dry (approximately 12-24 hours).

## **Step 4**

### **Grouting the tiles.**

- Applying grout on very thin joint among the tiles. Grout can be white or light colors. Most common grout is white powder. If using color grout, choose the color similar to the tile color. **DO NOT** use black or dark-color grout because they can cause stain on the tile surface and unable to be removed. Clean the excess grout on the tile surface. After installing and applying grout for the tiles, they must be cleaned immediately with water.
- Do **NOT** use any cleaning liquids containing acids. For necessary hygiene, you can use a neutral soap.

## **Step 5**

### **Applying penetrating sealer the second time.**

- Leave the tiled floor to be completely dry, then apply protective penetrating sealer for the 2nd time.

## **Step 6**

### **Protecting the floor after installation and during using process.**

- For new construction projects, please cover to protect the surface so that the interior contractors do not damage the floor in the process of finishing the construction.
- In using process, the floor should be covered with protective penetrating sealer periodically, usually every 6-12 months depending on the type of sealer used and the traffic on the floor.

*Thank you for choosing The Builder Depot encaustic cement tiles.*

### **Maintenance Guide**

Please read it carefully before and while using Encaustic cement tiles. Encaustic cement tile is the highly artistic handmade product and need to be maintained properly to keep an enduring beauty.

#### **First Cleaning After Installation**

The rest cleaning will be performed no sooner than 3 days and no later than 7 days after the finishing the construction and applying protective sealer.

#### **Cleaning The Floor Daily**

Floor tiles should be wiped and cleaned daily to protect the surface. Do not use chemical cleaners to clean the tile floor. You can use the normal type of floor cleaning liquid not containing acid.

## **Routine Maintenance**

Depending on usage, the floor tiles are applied with protective sealers every 6 months to 12 months. Before applying, please comply with guidelines of cleaning process – let the floor dry – apply sealer at 1st time–let it dry–apply in the second time–let it dry.

## **Removing Stains**

*IMPORTANT NOTE:* DO NOT use detergents with strong acids because they will damage the surface of the floor tiles.

If there is dirt on the floor (such as tea, coffee, lemon, oil ...), you should clean it as soon as possible. If leaving for a long time, stains can penetrate into the floor and will be difficult to remove later. Even if floor tiles are applied penetrating sealer, most of the sealers on the market cannot prevent 100% stain penetration. Therefore, we recommend that customers should clean the stain within 1-3 hours.

A method can be applied to clean stubborn stains and dirt using sandpaper grit size of #320 or #400 to rub stain. When rubbing with sandpaper, you need rub with water. Gently rub then more strongly until you see the stains fade. Immediately wipe off the dirt for not affecting other parts of the tile surface. After scrubbing the stains, let the floor dry and then apply penetrating protective sealer on the surface.

## **Cleaning with Special Chemicals**

In the market, there may be special available stain removing chemicals. However, we recommend that customers should communicate with chemical providers and try on one tile before applying to the floor. (*this is where hanging onto a few tiles after installation really helps*).