

Encore Ceramics

Installation and Care Instructions

PLEASE READ these **Installation and Care Instructions** carefully **PRIOR TO INSTALLATION**. This information will help insure a quality installation and long-lasting performance of your handmade tiles.

***Inspection**

Inspect all material for damage and acceptability. **INSTALLATION SIGNIFIES ACCEPTANCE.** Issues of acceptability must be resolved prior to installation. Under no circumstance will Encore accept responsibility for the installation of unacceptable product. If the product is damaged, please contact your place of purchase immediately for replacement tiles.

***Blending/Variation of Tiles**

Encore Ceramics hand makes all of their products, so there is an inherent variation in color, shape and size. Before installing, we suggest that all the tiles be laid out in order to balance the range over the entire installation area. If it is impossible to lay out the entire order, take several pieces from each carton to check variation. **We cannot be responsible for issues regarding color/range variation after installation.**

***Marking Tiles**

Take care during the measuring and marking process to protect against hard-to-remove marks and stains. Pencil marks and permanent marker can sometimes be impossible to remove prior to sealing your tile. When marking for cuts, make the mark so that the blade will remove it when cutting.

***Sealing Your Tile**

Although Encore's glazes and body are impervious to moisture, **Sealing is critical for Crackle, Precocious Jewel, Quartz, Sheer & Dip Collection Glazes** – otherwise crazing lines will potentially show stains. Also, sealing matte and alloy finishes can be helpful in removing later marks or stains, as the sealant fills tiny pores that may otherwise trap discoloring material.

***Grout Testing**

With all glazes we advise testing grout on tile before the installation is begun. Dark colored grouts may stain light colored tiles or matte finishes. Light colored grouts may leave a "haze" on dark colored tiles, especially matte finishes. Grout only a small section at a time. Remove excess grout and clean surface thoroughly. Do not allow grout to cure on tile surface before removal.

***Care & Maintenance**

Please consult your tile installer or tile dealer regarding care and maintenance of your tile installation.

For Every Day Cleaning we recommend a neutral pH cleaner that removes dirt and soil buildup from tile, such as mild non-acidic and non-abrasive soap.

For Heavy-duty Cleaning we recommend an alkaline-based cleaner appropriate for degreasing and removing wax. Always consult the cleaning instructions listed on whatever sealer you decide to use. Each manufacturer has a recommended cleaner.

***For Additional Information**

Please consult your tile installer or place of purchase.

FAQ's on Installation, Sealing and Maintenance

Q: What type of saw should be used for cutting?

A: We recommend using a wet saw with a new diamond blade and cutting the tile slowly.

Q: Do I need to seal my tile?

A: You should seal all tile to protect from materials that may stain and to protect the finish by filling in microscopic pores that may otherwise trap discoloring materials.

Q: When should I seal my tile? What kind of sealant should I use & do I need to reseal my tile?

A: We recommend sealing your tile before grouting to prevent the grout from seeping into any cracks or pores in the surface of the glaze and creating haze. We also recommend sealing after grouting to protect your grout from stains as well. Many sealant's are suitable for sealing both ceramic products and grout. We've found that oil-based penetrating sealants offer the best protection against stains. If your installer has another preference, don't worry; any kind of ceramic sealant is safe to use with our product. No matter what kind of sealant you use, just make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance and resealing.

Q: How do I clean my tile?

A: We recommend wiping your tile clean as needed with a non-abrasive pH-neutral soap, such as diluted dish soap. Stronger chemical cleaners won't damage our tile, but they may eat away at the sealant or grout. Due to sensitivity to acidity, Alloy glazes are not recommended to be cleaned with acidic based cleaners.

Q: What type of setting material should I use?

A: There are a number of products that will work. If using a tile installer, defer to his/her preferred materials as they have a lot of experience with these kinds of projects. If you're planning on doing the installation yourself, your local hardware store will have some excellent tips as well.

Q: What size grout joint should I use?

A: Grout joint sizes is really a matter of personal preference. Our mosaic grout joints average 1/16th of an inch but can vary to due shrinkage in our hand made tile.

Q: What kind of grout should I use?

A: Grout is really a matter of personal preference because any grout will work with our product. We make our grouted sample boards with sanded grout in neutral colors because we like the aesthetic, but feel free to mix it up! There are all kinds of elements that can affect your grout selection, including cabinet and paint color, flooring, and plumbing fixtures, so you will be able to make the best decision because you have the best understanding of how the room fits together. Your installer, your designer, or your local hardware store will also have some great recommendations for grout.

Q: Are your products safe for pools?

A: Our tiles are vitreous, which means that they are waterproof and can withstand freeze/thaw conditions, so they are perfectly protected against any kind of weather. We do not recommend the use of stone in submerged water applications and due to sensitivity to acidity, Alloy glazes are not recommended for pools or spas.

Q: Are acidic pool cleaners safe for your tile?

A: Occasional contact with acidic products should be okay*. Prolonged contact with acidic materials can eat away at the tile sealant or the grout between the tiles. Our product testing hasn't shown for certain that strong acid will damage our tiles, but many strong chemicals can have an effect on ceramic and stone over time. Because of that, we recommend diluting some cleaning materials like muriatic acid, which is typically in line with the acid manufacturers' usage instructions. If you can find pH-neutral cleaning products that will do the job for you, we always recommend using those as often as possible.

*Due to sensitivity to acidity, Alloy glazes are not recommended to be cleaned with acidic based cleaners.