

A-Z OF TILING

Every week as part of our “Stay Positive, Back Stronger” campaign we will be providing you with our A-Z of Tiling Terms. Get in-depth description of many of the common tiling terms, plus some expert insight or top tips from our team.

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GLAZE

Either a ceramic coating, in a glassy state, on a ceramic tile or the material from which such a coating is made. Types of glaze include bright glaze (high-gloss), clear glaze (transparent), crystalline (containing microscopic crystals), matt (low-gloss), opaque (non-transparent) and speckled (containing granules of contrasting colours).

BAL INSIGHT

It is important not to bed porous bodied glazed wall tiles in tile adhesive or cement/sand mortar at excessive bed thicknesses. Subsequent drying shrinkage movement could put the tile under stress resulting in cracking or crazing of the glaze surface.

Care also must be taken when grouting glazed surfaces, in particular soft decorative test a sample area/material before proceeding. The use of a hard plastic scraper for grouting purposes should also be avoided.

GEOMETRIC TILING

An arrangement of tile shapes in two or more colours, and possibly of more than one size and shape, in such a way that the tiling forms a pattern. Such a pattern typically repeats several times in covering a wall or floor. Sometimes known as a tessellation.

BAL INSIGHT

Many traditional geometric tile installations can be seen in churches and Victorian houses, but geometric can also refer to printed patterns on the surface of tiles or even the shape of a tile.

GLASS REINFORCED BOARDS

A manufactured construction board composed of either gypsum or cement reinforced with glass fibres, offering enhanced strength and greater dimensional stability.

BAL INSIGHT

Backer boards are becoming more common in tile installations. They provide a thermal and moisture stable substrate for tiling, they can improve weight carrying capabilities, provide protection from moisture and some are light weight and easy to cut.

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GLAZED PORCELAIN

A translucent ceramic made of clay, fired at a high temperature and glazed to give the outer surface a shiny effect.

BAL INSIGHT

Glazed porcelain tiles are available in a wider range of designs styles and colours, Wood effect plank tiles are an example of this . They are hard wearing but can chip if mishandled during fixing. All glazed floor tiles are classed using a PEI rating (porcelain Enamel Institute) system which is a measure of abrasion resistance. This ranges from PEI Class I (Mainly for residential and light duty wall application) to PEI Class V (Residential and medium duty commercial applications for both walls and floors).

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GRANITE

A natural stone that is made from molten lava that never rose above the surface of the earth. Granite is denser than marble and is extremely durable. It is available in polished, honed or flamed (rough) surfaces.

BAL INSIGHT

Granite is one of the hardest substances known to man, tiles quarried from granite are harder to cut but can provide a long lasting finish when installed correctly. Many granite tiles will still need sealing to prevent staining over time.

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GROUT

Originally a thin mortar, now defined as a strong mix used to fill gaps between tiles to provide a durable, hard wearing, low shrinkage decorative joint finish as well as to help protect the underlying layers beneath the tile from the outside environment. Available as either cementitious or chemically setting, grout is available in a range of colours to complement the tiles. A variety of tools are available both for applying new grout and for removing old grout.

BAL INSIGHT

Grouts are available in many colours and are usually complimented by colour matched silicone sealants. Different products are suitable for different situations, although cement-based grouts are commonly used sometimes an epoxy grout will be more suited particularly food hygiene areas or soft water supplied swimming pools.