

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.

L LAITANCE

A weak, nondurable layer or crust commonly present on the top of new concrete, containing cement and fine particles from aggregates. It is caused by bleeding water to the top of over-wet concrete through overworking or overmanipulating concrete at the surface by improper finishing or by job traffic. Its thickness, from the barely measurable to 5 mm or more, can be gauged by scoring the surface until the aggregate is reached. Its relatively poor adhesion to the mass of the aggregate renders it liable to delaminating under impact or traffic. Laitance is best removed by suitable mechanical methods i.e, dust-free shot or grit blasting, mechanical planing, grinding or abrading.

BAL INSIGHT

All laitance should be removed from the surface of concrete, cement/sand screeds and calcium sulfate/ anhydrite screeds using the methods as described above. Any loose debris and dirt should then be removed ideally using suitable vacuuming equipment. This should be carried out before any priming or tile adhesive application can begin.

LARGE FORMAT TILE

Traditionally, loosely defined as a floor or wall tile over 300mmx300mm or even 400mm x 400mm . Recently Over the last couple of years however, the ever increasing use of larger size ceramic tiles (and ceramic panels) within the UK market , BS 5385: Part 1: 2018 defines a large format tile as a tile with no edge length greater than 1200mm or an area over 3600cm².

BAL INSIGHT

When fixing any large format tile, remember to install them using the float and buttering method ensuring that the tiles are solidly bedded in the tile adhesive. When fixing large format tiles (i.e. greater than 0.1m² in facial area) to internal or external walls at heights greater than 3 m above floor level, they should be mechanically fixed.

LATEX

As used in adhesives and sealants, a water emulsion of a synthetic rubber or plastic derived by polymerisation.

BAL INSIGHT

Common generic term sometimes used to describe a polymer additive. If you are adding this to a product, always check the amount and don't under use or put more in. this can affect the strength, setting and in grouts the colour. Styrene Butadiene Rubber or SBR is a type of general purpose synthetic rubber latex.

LAYOUT STICK

A long wooden strip, marked at appropriate joint intervals, used to check the width, length or height of the tiling.

BAL INSIGHT

Provides accurate setting out, also termed has a gauging rod or staff.

LENGTH

Tile sizes are described in terms of length x breadth. Edge length is used in the definitions of large format tiles and ceramic panels (See Large format tiles above).

BAL INSIGHT

This is important to help with calculating the area required for pricing the job, ordering materials etc.

LIGHTWEIGHT TILE BACKING BOARDS

Backing boards are required when it is not practical to tile directly onto a wall, floor or other surface. They are available in a variety of materials, including glass fibre reinforced cement, foam cored, fibre cement, and magnesium oxide boards.

BAL INSIGHT

Due to their resistance to changing moisture and thermal movement, tile backer boards help to provide a dimensionally stable board to tile on to, both in wet and dry area. They are also capable of supporting an increased weight of tiling per m² and often are suitable as a substrate to lay electric undertile floor heating cables onto. Always follow the manufacture's guidance on when and where their boards may be used.

LISTELLO

A highly decorative border tile, primarily for walls. If listellos are irregularly shaped, the field or trim tile layout may need to be adjusted to accommodate the fit.

BAL INSIGHT

Sometimes the back of the listello is hollow, and need to be filled. The required adhesive bed for dispersion based tile adhesives would be too thick and this can also be the case with some cement based adhesives. Excessive bed thicknesses can result in increased drying shrinkage and cracking (particularly soft body listello's) over time. A rapid-setting thick bed lower shrinkage tile adhesive would be better. Pourable adhesive are designed for use on floors only so I would back fill then all beforehand, providing a flat surface and once dry using the adhesive recommended for the project.

LIGHTWEIGHT TILE BACKING BOARDS

Limestone is a sedimentary carbonate rock, composed chiefly of calcite, a crystalline form of calcium carbonate (CaCO₃), and composed from the remains of marine organisms such as coral and shells. Calcite is a soft material, therefore careful consideration is required when selecting limestone for flooring, especially for slip and abrasion resistance. Limestone tiles are usually offered with a matt finish.

BAL INSIGHT

Always consider the environment when laying stone, wet area, a use of an uncoupling mat when underfloor heating is within the background. Use of a rapid-setting white cement-based adhesive with a relatively low water demand should be considered when fixing limestone, to avoid any potential risk of water staining.

The grout specified for use with limestone should, ideally be of a colour that is similar to the stone's because limestone's porous nature means that there is a potential risk of potential 'picture framing' i.e. potential migration of water and fine materials into the edges of the stone. It's important to check if the stone may need to be sealed on the surface before fixing or grouting.

A neutral curing silicone or similar is advised for use in perimeter movement joints, as acid curing sealants i.e. acetoxy silicones react chemically with calcium carbonate. In high traffic areas, intermediate sealant movement joints should be avoided altogether.

Always check with the manufacture or supplier of the stone for further advice.