

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.

W

WALL TILING WEIGHTS

All wall substrates have a maximum weight that they can support. This figure includes the tile, adhesive & grout. As an example, plasterboard can support 32kg, plaster skim can only support 20kg/m² and tile backer boards can support up to 100kg/m²+

BAL INSIGHT

Old paint, dust and other contaminants can reduce the weight capacity of any substrate so the correct preparation to remove any barriers to adhesion is important. The approximate weight contribution per m² of a cementitious tile adhesive is 4.5 to 5.5 kg/m² e.g. for gypsum plaster an 8mm ceramic tile plus cement-based tile adhesive would weigh approximately 14kg/m² + 5.5kg/m² = 19.5kg/m². An 8mm thick porcelain tile plus tile adhesive may be too heavy for the plaster to support.

W

WARPAGE

Any curvature of a tile, whether concave or convex, which results in the tile surface not being perfectly flat. The maximum permissible deviation from flatness for centre curvature, edge curvature and warpage are measured as part of the BS EN 14411 requirements for ceramic tiles. This relates to manufacturing tolerances.

BAL INSIGHT

A simple way to check for curvature of a tile is to place two tiles face to face, they will rock or sometimes even spin against each other.

Modern adhesives can help to ensure full contact coverage is still obtained.

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WATER ABSORPTION

The ability of a material to take up and retain water.

BAL INSIGHT

Water absorption can cause problems to arise when background substrates are exposed in wet duty areas such as in shower enclosures and external tile installations (See also water resistance and waterproof below). Best practice is to use a waterproof tanking systems. Ceramic tiles are also categorised by their water absorption i.e. by definition porcelain tile will have a low water absorption of $\leq 0.5\%$.

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WATER RATIO

The water–cement ratio is the ratio of the weight of water to the weight of cement used in a concrete mix. A lower ratio leads to higher strength and durability but may make the mix difficult to work with and form.

BAL INSIGHT

All our adhesives & grouts have the ratios printed on the packaging. It is important to follow these guidelines as using too much or too little water can have a detrimental effect on the final strength and durability of the product.

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WATER RESISTANT

The ability of a material to resist penetration by water or remain structurally sound once wet.

BAL INSIGHT

It's a pretty common misconception that waterproof and water-resistant mean basically the same thing. For instance, most tile backer boards are water resistant. This means that while they themselves will not breakdown once wet, they will allow water to pass through to the background structures to some extent causing damage to timber studwork and potentially ceilings and other parts of the building.

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WATERPROOF

Totally impervious to water i.e. does not let water pass through it.

BAL INSIGHT

Tanking systems and DPM's help to provide a waterproof layer within tile installations. This is particularly important in modern shower systems and wetrooms. The tanking systems must be used correctly and are designed to direct water to a drain.

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WET AREAS

Areas subject to constant or periodic wetting, such as showers, pools, roof terraces exterior walls and exterior paving.

BAL INSIGHT

British Standards recommends using a minimum 8mm trowel for applying adhesive in wet areas. Some tanking systems can be used in water features.

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WIDE JOINTS

Generally, any joint between tiles of more than 3 mm width.

BAL INSIGHT

As tiles become larger, the minimum grout joint sizes need to increase to allow for thermal expansion / contraction and for thin tile panels, taking into account also factors such as thickness, size and dimensional tolerances. For a 3 m tile panel the minimum recommended joint width is 5mm.