

## Consider Pre-Moistening Highly Absorptive Soft- Bodied Tile Prior to Grouting

It seems that the beginning of each summer, particularly, we see an increase in grout shading. This is a potential issue for all manufacturers of Portland cement grout. It is especially evident on white-bodied wall tile, 4" x 4" (10 cm x 10 cm) and 6" x 6" (15 cm x 15 cm). Of course, the colored grouts manifest this undesired result.

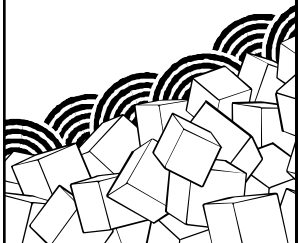
### Why does it happen?

As a rule, the faster colored grout dries, the darker it dries. The slower it dries, the lighter it dries. Try an experiment yourself sometime. Grout some porcelain mosaic tile next to some 4" x 4" (10 cm x 10 cm) white-bodied wall tile next to each other with the same mix of grout. You will find that the slower drying grout in the dense bodied porcelain will dry much lighter than the fast drying grout in the relatively porous bodied wall tile. But more relevant to grouting a typical 4" x 4" (10 cm x 10 cm) or 6" x 6" (15 cm x 15 cm) wall tile is the fact that some of the tile edges have over-glaze and some have exposed bisque. Furthermore, where the tile lug is, there is less grout. Consequently, it dries faster because there is less mass to dry out (unless the lug has overglaze). Finally, if there is thinset or mastic part way up into the joint in one area more than in another, it also alters the rate at which various areas of the grout joint will dry. All of these things contribute to the potential shading of colored grouts. As a side note, it also contributes to how hard and dense the grout will cure.

### How does one help the curing or drying process become more even and color consistent?

One simple approach is to pre-moisten the joints so that the pores in the bisque are filled with water before applying grout so that it does not draw the water from the grout and discolor it in that particular spot. Additionally, it will slow the cure and result in a harder and denser grout. That is why in the "old days" we used to damp cure or cover cure everything. We seem to be too fast track or in too big of hurry to do that anymore and the current formulas of grout could exhibit shading from damp curing.

Do you need more information?  
Contact Technical Services at 1-800-992-6273  
1-800-361-9309



# Technical Bulletin

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## Important Information

### Tile and Stone Installation Systems

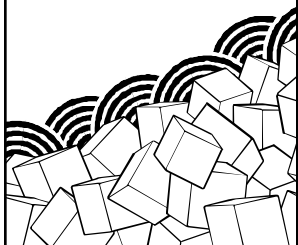
We begin seeing more cases of this in the summer because warm temperatures exaggerate this phenomenon. When the components of the tile installation system we use (such as the tile, the water, the substrate, mortars, etc.) are hot, they take the life out of mortars and grouts (Portland cement-based products). So in the areas of high porosity where the grout is prone to dry quickly anyway, it now dries at an even faster and more uneven rate than in an area of less porosity.

As reported by the NTCA (National Tile Contractor Association) and CTI (Ceramic Tile Institute), there are numerous causes for colored Portland cement-based grouts to dry various shades. The ones reported here are obvious and simple to safeguard against.

A simple approach to pre-wet the tile is to spray the joints with a spray bottle. If there is a large area to grout, perhaps a small garden-variety pump sprayer would be easier.

**Caution:** Do not begin grouting the face or the joint of the tile when either is dripping wet. No standing water should be present to dilute the good stiff consistency of the grout that is being applied. Mixing the grout looser *will not* compensate for a porous tile – it will exaggerate its effect.

There are other basic rules or tips for improved grouting results. These will be a great start for summer.



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