



6. Cleaning & Maintenance Standards

Should you have any further or more specific questions, the Australian Standards are available to all members of the public for reference.

The relevant document being Standards AS3958.1-2007. Appendix C Cleaning & Maintenance.

Disclaimer:

This pamphlet is to be used as a guide only. It does not purport to be the solution to cleaning and maintenance requirements. It is the responsibility of the consumer to seek professional advice through your tile merchant for individual applications.

Did you know?

About Cleaning & Maintenance of Ceramic & Porcelain Tiles

Your Australian Tile Council Member

1. Post Installation Cleaning

- a. *Wax on porcelain:* In some instances, the manufacturer will coat their tiles with a protective wax layer. You should consult your tile merchant about the timing and removal technique for the protective layer.
- b. *Physical protection layers:* As the name suggests, this is the presence of a film on the tiles typically to protect it in transit. We would recommend this layer be removed from the tile prior to grouting in most cases, depending on the type of layer present.
- c. *Slip Resistant Tiles:* Generally, the fact the tile is considered to be slip resistant means it has a more textured surface, which may prove more difficult to clean. Dependant of the surface type, the use of scrubbing equipment and cleaning products may be necessary. If required, clean with mild detergent and rinse thoroughly with clean water.
- d. *Initial Cleaning:* This operation may require a concerted effort as there may be some grout haze present. The tiling contractor should not leave any adhesive or grout residue on the tile surface. Normally, there is a requirement for some post installation cleaning. Damage can occur to tiles if incorrect chemicals or cleaning methods are used.

2. General Maintenance

All surfaces require a regular clean so that contaminants do not build up.

- a. *Glazed Ceramic and Porcelain Tiles:* Maintaining these surfaces can be achieved by sweeping or vacuuming and then washing the area using a specialised tile cleaning agent available from your tile merchant. Rinse surface thoroughly afterwards, using clean water. Residual streaks, detergent marks and films can result from excessive use of cleaning agents.

In some instances, on advice from your tile merchant only, acidic cleaners may be needed for optimal results. These products must be recommended by your merchant as suitable for your particular tile application.

Do not use acid, unless recommended by your merchant, to clean fully glazed tiles as this may affect or damage the surface.

- b. *Polished Porcelain:* Generally, the cleaning and maintenance of polished porcelain is not too dissimilar to that of ceramic tiles. Different brands of polished porcelains may, however, recommend varying methods of cleaning and maintenance. It is suggested that you ask your tile merchant what is the most suitable product and method for your particular tile.

Do not use acid, unless recommended by your merchant, to clean polished porcelain as this may affect or damage the surface.

- c. *Glass & Metallic Tiles:* When cleaning these tiles be careful not to use abrasive applicators such as scouring sponges.
- d. *Unglazed Tiles:* All unglazed products do have a level of surface porosity which usually means more attention is required to retain cleanliness. Spills or accidents that result in contaminants on the surface may stain. Often, unglazed tiles are sealed for ease of maintenance or future cleaning.

3. Grout

Many grouts on the market have mould inhibitors which can help reduce mould growth. Mould can still occur if the conditions are severe or if a grout without mould inhibitor has been used. Mould can be removed using specialised grout cleaners. Gels are particularly effective, as they can be left on the grout on badly affected areas, before washing off. Heavy duty cleaners can help remove soap scum and other dirt build-up in extreme circumstances.

Mould or discoloration is basically the result of build up of soap, shampoos and other residues left to dry. If this occurs, a heavy duty cleaner may be necessary.

Freshly installed tiles may be covered overall or in patches with grout haze. There are a number of commercial products available for this problem from your merchant.

4. Efflorescence

Efflorescence is a white discolouration caused by minerals in the cement that are soluble in water, being dissolved and transported to the surface as the water evaporates. It is most noticeable on dark materials but can occur on any cement based system.

This is not normally a problem as only insignificant amounts of white discolouration make it to the surface of the grout during normal curing. However, because it is water soluble, under certain conditions the migration of the discoloration to the surface can be increased. Therefore if the system takes longer to cure or if there is more water present during curing, there is more time available for it to be carried to the surface.

Sometimes minor efflorescence can be removed by using normal cleaning methods, whilst more difficult stains can be treated with specific products from your merchant. Ensure the grout has had sufficient time to cure or you may make it worse by increasing the water on the surface.

5. Specific Stain Removal

Generally, the longer a stain has been left on a tile, the more difficult it will be to remove. Where possible, consult your merchant about the type of stain you are trying to remove, as there are specialist products for cleaning the