



TILE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abrasion resistance

Ability of a surface to resist being worn away by rubbing and friction.

Absorption

The relationship of the weight of the water absorbed by a ceramic specimen subjected to prescribed immersion procedure, to the weight of the dry specimen, and expressed in percent.

Accelerator

A substance which, when added to concrete, mortar, or grout, increases the rate of hydration of the hydraulic cement, shortens the time of setting, or increases the rate of hardening of strength development.

Acrylic

A general class of resinous polymers derived from esters, amides or other acrylic acid derivatives.

Additive

A term frequently (but improperly) used as a synonym for addition or admixture.

Adhesion

The state in which two surfaces are held together by interfacial forces which may consist of valence forces, interlocking action, or both.

Admixture

A material other than water, aggregates, or hydraulic cement, used as an ingredient of concrete or mortar, and added to the concrete immediately before or during its mixing.

Aggregate

Granular material, such as sand, gravel, crushed stone, or iron blast-furnace slag, used with a cementing medium to form a hydraulic-cement, concrete or mortar.

Bisque cracks

Any fractures in the body of a tile visible both on the face and back.

Bond

The adherence of one material to another. Effective bonds must be achieved between the mortar and scratch coat, between the tile and mortar, and between the adhesive and backing.

Bonding agent

A substance applied to a suitable substrate to create a bond between it and a succeeding layer, as between a subsurface and a terrazzo topping, or a succeeding plaster application.

Bond strength

The force per-unit area or length necessary to rupture a bond.

Bright gloss

Colorless or colored ceramic glazes have a high gloss.

Broken joint

Ceramic tile installation featuring each row offset.

Bullnose

A trim tile with a convex radius on one edge. This tile is used for finishing the top of a wainscot or for turning an outside corner.

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Bullnose corner

A type of bullnose trim with a convex radius on two adjacent edges.

Butt joint

A plain square joint between two members

Caulking compound

A soft, plastic material consisting of pigment and vehicle, used for sealing joints in buildings and other structures where normal structural movement may occur. Caulking compound retains its plasticity for an extended period after application. It is available in forms suitable for application by gun and knife and in extruded preformed shapes

Cement

Usually refers to portland cement which when mixed with sand, gravel, and water forms concrete. Generally, cement is an adhesive; specifically, it is that type of adhesive which sets by virtue of a chemical reaction.

Ceramic tile

A ceramic surfacing unit, usually relatively thin in relation to facial area, made from clay or a mixture of clay; and other ceramic material, called the body of the tile, having either a "glazed" or "unglazed" face, and fired about red heat in the course of manufacture to a temperature sufficiently high to produce specific physical properties and characteristics.

Colored grout

Commercially-prepared grout consisting of carefully graded aggregate, portland cement, water dispersing agents, plasticizers and color fast pigments.

Composition tile

A hard tile surfacing unit made from a mixture of chemicals. The finished surface can be the mixture of chemicals or can be marble chips to create a terrazzo finish. The unit is made hard by the set of the chemicals and the products are not fired as in the manufacture of ceramic tile.

Concrete

A composite material which consists essentially of a binding medium within which are embedded particles or fragments of aggregate; in portland cement concrete, the binder is a mixture of portland cement and water.

Covebase

A trim tile having a concave radius on one edge and a convex radius with a flat landing on the opposite edge. This base often is used as the only course of tile above the floor tile.

Crazing

The cracking which occurs in fired glazes or other ceramic coatings due to critical tensile stresses.

Cure time

The time required to produce vulcanization of hydration at a given temperature. The cure time varies widely, being dependent on the type of compounding used, the thickness of the product, etc.

Curing

Maintenance of humidity and temperature of freshly placed concrete during some definite period following placing, casting, or finishing to assure satisfactory hydration of the cementitious materials and proper hardening of the concrete.

Cushion-edged tile

Tile on which the facial edges have a distinct curvature that results in a slightly recessed joint.

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Decorative tile

Tile with a ceramic decoration on the surface.

Density

The ratio of the mass of a body to its volume, or the mass per-unit volume of the substance. When G.G.S. units are used, the density of a substance is numerically equal to the specific gravity of the substance referred to water as 4 degrees C, the maximum density (1,000) of water. For ordinary practical purposes, density and specific gravity may be regarded as equivalent.

Double Bullnose

A type of trim with the same convex radius on two opposite sides.

Eagle Beak

A 6 inch X 3/4 inch outside corner trim shape. (AC106)

Efflorescence

The residue deposited on the surface of a material by the crystallization of soluble salts.

Encaustic tile

Decorated with colored clays inlaid and fired. Also colored tile laid in a wall or floor to form a pattern.

Epoxy grout

A two-part grout system consisting of epoxy resin and epoxy hardener, especially formulated to have impervious qualities, stain, and chemical resistance, also used to fill joints between tile units.

Epoxy mortar

A two-part mortar system consisting of epoxy resin and epoxy hardener, used to bond tile to back-up material where chemical resistance of high-bond strength is a consideration.

Estimate

Projected cost of materials and labor for a construction project or portion of a project.

Expansion joint

A joint through tile, mortar, and reinforcing wire down to the substrate.

Extruded tile

A tile or trim unit that is formed when plastic clay mixtures are forced through a pug mill opening (die) of suitable configuration, resulting in a continuous ribbon of formed clay. A wire cutter or similar cut-off device is then used to cut the ribbon into appropriate lengths and widths of tile.

Field tile

An area of tile covering a wall or floor. The field is bordered by tile trim.

Fire, bisque

The process of kiln-firing ceramic ware, prior to glazing.

Fire, single

The process of maturing an unfired ceramic body and its glaze in one firing operation.

Flat trowel

The flat trowel is used in conjunction with the hawk for the transferring of mortar from the mortarboard to the wall or to other vertical surfaces. It is frequently used for spreading pure cement on the finished float coat. The flat trowel also is used for spreading mortar on floor surfaces before tiles are set.

Floor tile

A ceramic, glazed or unglazed paver, quarry or mosaic tile resistant to abrasion and impact.

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Frost proof tile

Tile produced for use where freezing and thawing conditions occur.

Glass mosaic tiles

Tiles made of glass, usually in sizes not over two inches square and 1/4 inch thick, mounted on sheets of paper. Usually sheets are twelve inches square.

Glaze

A ceramic coating matured to the glassy state on a formed ceramic article. The term glaze also refers to the material or mixture from which the coating is made.

Glazed tile

Tile with a fused impervious facial finish composed of ceramic materials, fused into the body of the tile which may be a non-vitreous, semi-vitreous, vitreous, or impervious body. The glazed surface may be clear, white, or colored.

Grout

A rich or strong cementitious or chemical setting mix used for filling tile joints.

Grout saw

The grout saw is a saw-toothed carbide steel blade mounted on a sometimes wooden handle. It is used to remove old grout.

Impervious

The degree of vitrification evidenced visually by complete resistance to dye penetration.

Impervious tile

Has water absorption of 0.5 percent or less.

In/Out corner

Trim tile for turning a right-angle inside or outside a wall corner.

Lap joint

A joint made by overlapping adjacent edge areas of two adherents to provide facing surfaces which can be joined with an adhesive.

Latex

A water emulsion of a synthetic rubber or plastic obtained by polymerization and used especially in coatings and adhesives.

Latex Grout

A portland cement grout with a special latex additive which results in a less rigid, less permeable grout than regular portland cement grout.

Latex mortar

A mixture of portland cement, sand, and special latex additives which is used for bonding tile to back-up material. It is less rigid than portland cement mortar.

Lath

A wood strip or metal mesh, which acts as a background or reinforcing agent for the scratch coat or mortar coat.

Leaching

Leaching is a condition where liquids ooze out of the joint between ceramic tile veneer, regardless if the veneer is grouted or not, and runs down over the tile.

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Lime

Specifically, calcium oxide, also loosely a general term for the various chemical and physical forms of quicklime, hydrated lime and hydraulic hydrated lime.

Limestone

A sedimentary carbonate rock, composed chiefly of calcite, but sometimes containing appreciable dolomite.

Marble tiles

Marble cut into tile sizes twelve (12) inches square or less, usually 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch thick. Several types of finishes are made, polished, honed, split faced, etc.

Mexican Paver Tile

Terra cotta-like tile, used mainly for floors, and handmade. These tiles vary in color, texture and appearance, from tile to tile and within each tile. They are available in squares up to 12 inches, and in various shapes. These tiles are coated with various types of sealers because of their soft adsorptive characteristics. The coatings provide a wearing surface on the pavers which would otherwise powder away under wear.

Mixing time

The period during which the constituents of a batch of concrete are mixed by a mixer; for a stationary mixer. Time is given in minutes from the completion of mixer charging until beginning of discharge; for a truck mixer, time is given in good mixing in a specific speed or expressed in terms of total revolutions at a specific mixing speed.

Monocottura (Single-fired)

A term used for tile manufactured by a process which allows the simultaneous firing of the clay with the glaze producing a finished tile with a single firing.

Mortar

A mixture of cement paste and fine aggregate; in fresh concrete, the material occupying the interstices among particles of coarse aggregate; in masonry construction, mortar may contain masonry cement, or may contain hydraulic cement with lime (and possibly other admixtures) to afford greater plasticity and workability than are attainable with standard hydraulic cement mortar.

Mosaics

Small tiles or bits of tile, stone, or glass. These are used to form a surface design or an intricate pattern.

Mounted tile

Tile assembled into units or sheets by suitable material to facilitate handling and installation. Tile may be face-mounted, back-mounted or edge-mounted. Face-mounted tile assemblies may have paper or other suitable material applied to the face of each tile, usually by water soluble adhesives so that it can be easily removed after installation but prior to grouting of the joints. Back-mounted tile assemblies may have perforated paper, fiber mesh, resin or other suitable material bonded to the back and/or edges of each tile which becomes an integral part of the tile installation. Tile manufacturers must specify whether back-mounted and edge-mounted tile assemblies are suitable for installation in swimming pools, on exteriors and/or in wet areas.

Mud

A slang term for mortar.

Non-vitreous

The degree of vitrification evidenced by relatively high water absorption.

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Notched trowels

Notched trowels are available in the serrated and square-tooth design. The teeth are made in various sizes. The correct tooth size and depth must be used to apply the thickness of bonding mortar specified. These trowels are used to apply all of the various kinds of bonding materials for ceramic tile. When the teeth become worn, the trowel has to be re-sharpened or replaced.

Organic adhesive

A prepared organic material, ready to use with no further addition of liquid or powder, used for bonding tile to back-up material by the thin set method. Cures or sets by evaporation.

Paper mounted ceramic mosaics

Ceramic mosaic tiles mounted on paper. Paper is applied to face of tile in sheets approximately twelve (12) inches wide, twenty-four (24) inches long.

Pavers

Unglazed porcelain or natural clay tile formed by the dust-pressed method and similar to ceramic mosaics in composition and physical properties, but relatively thicker with 6 inch square or more facial area.

Permeability

The quality or condition of allowing passage of liquids or gasses through a rubber layer.

Pointing trowel

The pointing trowel or pointer is probably the most essential tool in the trade. It comes in sizes ranging from 4 to 6 inches in length, but the 6 inch trowel is the most popular. The tile setter uses this trowel in every phase of the work, especially for straightening tiles on walls and floors, marking floated surfaces, filling small depressions on float coats, buttering tiles and trim

work, and placing mortar in areas that are too small for the flat trowel. The butt of the handle is used for tapping in tiles that are not on a true plane with the rest of the tile work.

Porcelain

A glazed or unglazed vitreous ceramic whiteware used for technical purposes. This term designates such products as electrical, chemical, mechanical, structural, and thermal wares when they are vitreous.

Porcelain process

The method of producing glazed ware by which a ceramic body and glaze are matured together in the same firing operation.

Porosity, apparent

The relationship of the open pore space to the bulk volume, expressed in percent.

Prefloat

The term used to describe mortar that has been placed and allowed to harden prior to bonding tile to it with thin-set materials.

Rubber trowel

The rubber trowel used for grouting is a non-porous synthetic-rubber-faced float that is mounted on an aluminum back with a wood handle. This trowel is used to force material deep into tile joints and to remove excess material for a perfect finish.

Rubbing stone

A Carborundum stone that is used to smooth the rough edges of tile.

Sag

A term used when a wall surface has developed a slide.

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Scratch

A mixture of portland cement, sand, and water.

Sealer

(1) A continuous film or penetrant to prevent the passage of liquids or gaseous media; a high-bodied adhesive generally of low cohesive strength to fill voids of various sizes to prevent passage of liquid or gaseous media. (2) A coating used to seal the sand-scratched surface of a primer in order to obtain a smooth uniform paint base over rough metal. Sealers are products of low pigmentation.

Self-spacing tile

Tile with lugs, spacers, or protuberances on the sides. These devices automatically space the tile for the grout joints.

Semi-vitreous

3 percent to 7 percent water absorption.

Set

The condition reached by a cement paste, mortar, or concrete when it has lost plasticity to an arbitrary degree, usually measured in terms of resistance to penetration or deformation; initial set refers to first penetration or deformation; initial set refers to first stiffening; final set refers to attainment of significant rigidity; also, strain remaining after removal of stress.

Shower pan

Terminology used in some areas for waterproof membrane.

Skid resistance

A measure of the frictional characteristics of a surface.

Slab

A flat (although sometimes ribbed on the underside) reinforced concrete element of a building which provides the base for the floor or roofing materials.

Spacers

T, Y and X shaped, they are used in installation to separate tile on walls and floors. They are manufactured in various thickness from 1/16 to 1/2.

Splash walls

The walls of a tile drain board or bathtub.

Substrate

The underlying support for the ceramic tile installation.

Terra cotta

Hard baked clayware, including tile, of variable color, averaging reddish red-yellow in hue and of high saturation.

Thin-set

A term used to describe the bonding of tile with suitable materials applied approximately 1/8 inch thick.

Tile cutter

The tile cutter is one of the most efficient and economic tools in the tile setting trade. A popular model is the hand-drawn tile cutting board that is adjustable.

Tile nipper

Special pliers that nibble away little bites of ceramic tile to create small, irregular or curved cuts.

Underlayment

An application of a relatively thin layer of mortar primarily used to level out-of-plane surfaces such as concrete slabs.

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Unglazed tile

A hard, dense tile of homogeneous composition throughout, deriving color and texture from the materials of which the body is made. The colors and characteristics of the tile are determined by the materials used in the body, the method of manufacture, and the thermal treatment.

Vapor Barrier

Waterproof membrane placed under concrete floor slabs that are placed on a grade.

Vitreous

0.5 percent to 3 percent water absorption.

Wall tile

A glazed tile with a body that is suitable for interior use and which is usually non-vitreous, and is not required nor expected to withstand excessive impact.

Waterproof membrane

A membrane, usually made of built-up roofing, to provide a positive waterproof floor over the substrate, which is to receive a tile installation using a wire reinforced mortar bed.

Weephole

Opening at the base of a shower drain to collect moisture collected above membrane and dispense it into drain.

Wet area

Interior or exterior tiled areas subject to periodic or constant wetting. Examples: showers, sunken tubs, pools, exterior walls, roofs, exterior paving and interior floors.

Wood float

The wood float is sometimes used in place of the flat trowel for floating mortar. It is good for smoothing small irregularities left on the mortar bed, working the surface of the mortar before troweling on the pure coat, or compacting floor and deck mortar.

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