

GROW HOUSE GROW

Tile Installation Guidelines

Care and Inspection

- 1) Please inspect your order carefully. Grow House Grow will not be responsible for any material that has already been installed.
- 2) Once tiles arrive, store in a dry area. Do not let boxes or exposed tiles get wet prior to installing. Moisture or dampness before sealing may cause stains, color fading, cracking, pitting, or efflorescence.
- 3) When working with our tiles, take care not to damage the finished surface, edges, or corners. Carry tiles face-to-face to avoid scratches.
- 4) Because Grow House Grow's tiles are cement-based, some may have a light dusting or residue on their surface. Before installation, we recommended wiping the pattern side with a clean cloth.

Installation

- 5) Cement tiles may show variation in color and design, and will not be identical piece to piece. This is a result of both the natural pigments we use, as well as how they are handmade. We suggest mixing tiles from different boxes during installation.
- 6) Subfloors: An isolation membrane can be used to prevent cracking or fracturing caused by movement of the subfloor. Never install tiles over uncured subfloors.
 - 6.1) A waterproof membrane is recommended for installation in all wet areas to prevent water from leaking into the subfloor or space below.
 - 6.2) Radiant heating systems can be used with cement tiles. We recommend using a membrane as well as ensuring the subfloor, mortar bed, and tiles are completely dry during installation to avoid efflorescence.
- 7) Pattern placement: begin with placing the room's center tiles first, then move to border tiles (if any). Next, install the remaining space with tile from the center area outward.
- 8) Use a high quality thin-set adhesive, such as Laticrete or Mapei. When in doubt, contact your adhesive manufacturer for the appropriate product for your space. 3/8" mortar bed is recommended.
- 9) Make sure that adhesive is applied to the full back of each tile (100% coverage). We recommend using the back buttering method in order to get better adherence.

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10) When setting the tile, level each piece using hand pressure only. Using a mallet or rubber hammer can cause thin cracks to form which will show up when applying grout or sealer. Cement tiles should not be ground down after installation. Remove excess adhesive from the surface with a damp cloth or sponge while it's still fresh to avoid any stains.

11) Cement tiles can be cut using a wet saw with a sharp diamond blade.

12) When using tile outdoors, installing them under a roof will help avoid color fading caused by direct sunlight over time. In areas where a roof isn't present, tiles can be polished with wax for extra protection.

Cleaning

13) After installation, wash the surface with a pH-neutral detergent. For floor installations, a single disc floor machine with a white pad can be used to remove any excess residue, and to polish out excess dirt or water. Do not use acidic or alkaline products to clean tiles.

14) Use a pH-neutral cleaner and fine sandpaper to remove any remaining stains or residue. Do not allow water or other liquids to pool on the tile surface.

Sealing, Grouting, + Waxing

15) Allow tiles and mortar bed to dry out completely before beginning the sealing and/or polishing process. We highly recommend testing your preferred sealant on an individual tile to ensure it creates the desired finish.

16) Cement tiles are porous and will arrive unsealed. Therefore, sealing with a penetrating sealant is necessary before grouting; we recommend Miracle, Stonetech, Fila, and Drytreat brands.

16.1) Apply two thin coats of penetrating sealant, such as Miracle 511 Impregnator. Areas that will be in contact with moisture, spills, or oils will require a stronger sealant, such as Miracle 511 Porous Plus or Miracle 511 H2O Plus. Next, apply a final coat of topical sealant to create a protective film over the tile surface. Allow it to dry completely, according to the manufacturer's instructions. Remove excess sealant from the tile surface using a dry white cloth, clean mop, or a solvent resistant sprayer.

16.2) For extra protection we recommend polishing the tiles with wax to avoid penetrating stains. Allow two to three days for sealer to cure before grouting of joints.

17) Do not use dark or dyed grouts unless they match the color of your tile, as they can stain lighter pigments.

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18) Cement tiles are installed edge-to-edge with minimal grout line using un-sanded grout to allow for expansion. For larger grout lines, sanded grout can be used. The recommended grout joint width is 1/16"-1/8". Joints should be full and free of all voids and pits. Grout should be applied in small areas and immediately cleaned. Do not spread the entire floor with grout like with porcelain or ceramic tile. Do not affix duct, gaffers, or acidic tapes directly onto cement tiles as they can cause discoloration or staining.

19) Never grind or buff tiles with an abrasive pad or disc—this can damage the tile's surface.

20) Once cleaned, we recommend re-sealing the tile and grout lines for extra protection, especially in spaces that are particularly moist or damp.

Maintenance

21) For ongoing maintenance, mop regularly with clean water and a pH-neutral detergent. Adding a cap-full of liquid wax to the water can offer extra protection. Tiles may also be buffed with a soft white pad.

22) It is recommended to address spills and stains soon after they occur, as allowing them to sit for long periods of time will make them more difficult to remove. Miracle Sealants has an in-depth stain removal FAQ that can be referred to after installation.

23) Very heavy foot traffic or outdoor installations may require additional maintenance. A natural patina will occur as the floor is maintained and wears.

24) The use of properly sized walk-off mats at entrances with heavy traffic, as well as regular sweeping or dust mopping, is important to remove abrasive grit that may cause unnecessary wear.

25) Resealing floors every 3-5 years is recommended. For wet and/or high-traffic areas, floors can be resealed more frequently. Speak with your installer regarding the best maintenance schedule.

26) Prior to resealing, cement tiles can be refinished with a fine grit (e.g. 600) wet-dry sandpaper to remove a micro top layer. This will reveal a fresh layer of pigment below the surface.