

GROUTING TIPS

COLOUR UNIFORMITY

For best results, always mix Portland cement grouts with a minimum amount of water and keep the proportion of water to powder constant from batch to batch. Final grout strength is reduced by using higher levels of mixing water. Dampening tile surfaces lightly with clean water just prior to grouting makes spreading of the grout and cleaning the face of tiles easier. The use of cheesecloth or towels instead of sponges on matt or unglazed tile surfaces facilitates easier cleaning without the use of excess water. Too much water used in clean-up is a primary cause of light, uneven colour of grout joints. To minimize inconsistent colour due to site or environmental conditions, or from contamination from other trades, cover the surface after final cleaning with 40 lb Kraft paper for 24 - 48 hours.

Following table shows some common problems encountered when using Portland cement grouts, together with causes and solutions:

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSES	SOLUTIONS	PREVENTION
Efflorescence (whitening of grout joints)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Soluble salts from Portland cement-based materials are carried to the surface of the grout by evaporating water. 2) High soluble salt content in mixing water. 3) Setting bed not completely cured. 4) Too much water used in mixing or cleaning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Clean with diluted muriatic or sulfamic acid (10 parts water/1 part acid) after 10 - 21 days cure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mix grout with minimum amount of water. 2) Damp (cover) cure grout for 24 - 28 hours with 40 lb Kraft paper. 3) Allow substrate/setting bed to cure prior to grouting
Grout discoloured (grey or washed out colour)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Too much water used in clean-up. 2) Too much water used in mixing. 3) Dirty water or sponges used in clean-up. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Darken cured grout joints with clear, penetrating sealer or double-boiled linseed oil. 2) Apply Flextile Grout Finish to cured grout joints. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Remove excess grout from face of tiles with rubber grout float, thereby minimizing the amount of water required for clean-up. 2) Reduce amount of water used for mixing. 3) Rinse sponge or towel and change cleaning water frequently during clean-up.
Grout colour not uniform	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Uneven cure due to job condition. Faster cure gives lighter colour - slower cure gives darker colour. 2) Setting material in upper 2/3 of grout joint. 3) High absorption tile - faster cure near tile edges. 4) Uneven glaze on edge of tile. 5) Too much water used in mixing or clean-up. 6) Spacers left in grout joints. 7) Different mechanics using different techniques. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Darken cured grout joints with clear, penetrating sealer or double-boiled linseed oil. 2) Apply Flextile Grout Finish to cured grout joints. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Damp (cover) cure grout for 24 - 28 hours with 40 lb Kraft paper. 2) Rake joints prior to grouting. 3) Reduce water used in mixing or clean-up. 4) Use same water ratio, grouting and clean-up procedures on entire area.