

## Tile Finish Glossary and FAQ's



### Tile Finish Glossary

**Exterior Finish:**

An undulating, textured finish that provides low-slip qualities, and can resemble natural rock. They are normally used for external areas and places that need extra traction (wet areas, for example).

**Matt Finish:**

Matt tiles are smooth and flat and create a more informal and softer look. This is created by stopping short of the last stage of polishing. A matt finish shows fewer scratches and requires very little maintenance.

**Glazed:**

Glazed tiles are coated with glass-forming minerals and offer high stain and water resistance. Glazed tiles have a hard non-porous, impermeable surface after firing. They can have a matt, semi-gloss or high-gloss finish. These tiles do not require sealing.

**Polished Finish:**

These porcelain tiles are shiny, flat and reflective, obtained by polishing the surface with an abrasive wheel until it shines. They are easy to keep clean and are popular for living, dining and bedroom applications.

**Lappato (Semi-Polished) Finish:**

Semi-polished, also known as "Lappato" finish, is achieved by polishing the tile's surface with an abrasive wheel but not long enough to attain the lustre of a typical polished tile.

**Rectified Tile:**

Unlike a typical factory-edged tile, a rectified tile has been cut to exact size after the firing process. This process creates a precise edge and, as a result, can be laid with a narrower grout joint than unrectified tiles. This gives a smoother, more sophisticated and continuous look to the room overall.

### **Inkjet Printing Technology:**

Latest method of manufacturing tiles that allow for diversified designs on tiles so that no two tiles look the same. In this way, natural stone tiles can be replicated realistically.



## **Tile FAQ'S**

### **Interior Walls and Floors**

#### **Why is one tile more expensive than another?**

Tiles can range in price for a couple of different reasons, the main one being where they are sourced from. If for instance, we import a tile from Italy the price of shipping is far more than say importing a tile from Australia.

Another factor is how much we import, we may import 500m<sup>2</sup> of one tile and only 50m<sup>2</sup> of another, giving us greater buying power.

We are constantly bringing in new ranges of tile and as older lines stop being produced we lower the price on these to free up more space in our warehouse.

#### **How are tiles priced compared to other floor coverings?**

Tiles have been used for centuries as floor and wall coverings because of their durability and aesthetic appeal.

Tile prices compared to other floor and wall coverings are the most economical material on the market, and after taking installation and maintenance costs into account, the life expediency of tile will far outlast any other floor or wall covering.

### **What are the benefits of a tiled finish?**

The wide variety of types, finishes, sizes, shapes, colours and patterns of tiles offer a broad range of design possibilities.

The low water-absorption qualities, hardness and durability of many tiles provide a durable, low-maintenance surface finish for a range of internal and external applications. As with all building materials, tiles perform best when correctly selected and installed. They will then offer a surface finish that is:

- Hard and durable
- Fire and heat resistant.
- Chemical resistant.
- Hygienic.
- Stain resistant.
- Slip resistant (depending on the tile).

### **What is the difference between ceramic and porcelain tile?**

Porcelain tiles are formed with pressure and heat, this makes them more durable than ceramic tiles. Porcelain tiles have a water absorption rate of less than 0.5 percent.

Ceramic tiles, on the other hand, are manufactured using a kiln-fired method, which makes them more porous. This increases their water-absorption rate, making them impractical for exterior or wet area floors.

### **What are rectified tiles?**

Many porcelain products are produced with rectified edges. Typically, these tiles have very square edges as a result of cutting or grinding processes which produce tiles with very precise dimensions and permit installation using narrow grout joints.

**How much wastage should be added when ordering tiles?**

If the area is fairly regular in terms of overall dimensions, 10 per cent extra should be enough. However, if the tile in question is an unusual shape, or the area to be tiled is a complex shape then 15 per cent is probably a better figure. Having a few spares is a good idea, because if you need more of the same shade (batch number) in the future it may not be available.

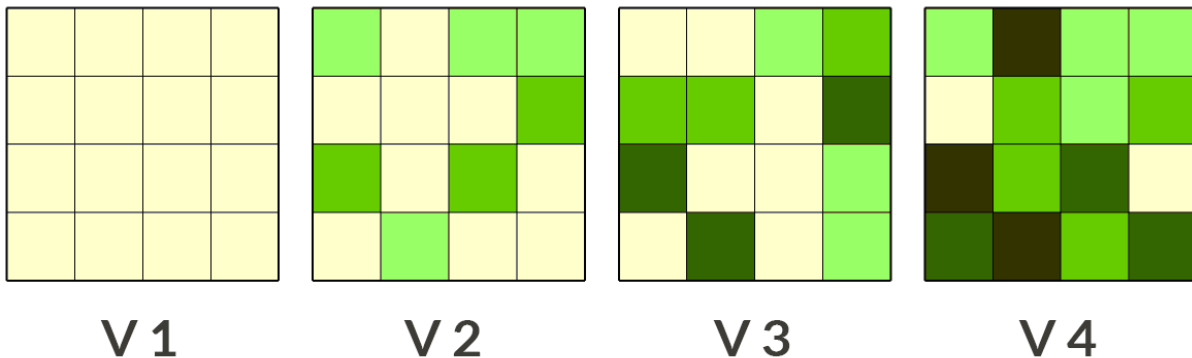
**What is shade variation?**

Ceramic tiles may vary from batch to batch, as shade variation is regarded as an inherent feature of tile production.

We will only supply one batch of tiles for a project unless prior agreement has been made, so if you need to re-order quote the shade or batch number which appears on the box.

A lot of contemporary tiles replicate the appearance of natural stone or timber, and they vary in appearance in an attempt to mimic the natural product.

A scale has been introduced to communicate the degree of variation intended.



V1: Uniform Appearance - Minimal differences among tiles from the same production run.

V2: Slight Variation - Clearly distinguishable differences in texture/pattern with similar colours.

V3: Moderate Variation - While colours present on a single tile is indicative of the colours expected on the other tiles, the amount of colours will vary significantly.

V4: Substantial Variation - Random colour differences between tiles so one tile may have totally different colours from that on other tiles.

### **What kinds of tile need sealing (Factory Nano seal)?**

Glazed products are already stain proof and generally do not require sealing meaning they consequently are a popular choice for residential situations (especially bathrooms) as they are easy to clean and maintain. You may apply a penetrating sealer on your unglazed tiles or your grout joints.

The penetrating sealer is an invisible, stain resistant shield that is absorbed into the surface. Some unglazed products have a surface treatment (Nano seal) applied during the final stages of manufacturing which penetrates the surface pores and assists in resisting staining. However, some products – especially polished porcelains where small “micropores” have been created during the polishing process – may require sealing to protect against staining. Ask one of our team in store for more information regarding this.

### **Are tiles warm and how do you heat them?**

Tiles are a great conductor of heat, this is why touching a tile when it's been in the sun feels warm, this also has the opposite effect and will feel cold to the touch in the winter months.

Due to the weather climate in New Zealand we recommend using under tile heating as an energy efficient solution to heating as it radiates the heat evenly across the room. The added benefit of using a programmable thermostat gives you the option of setting the heating to turn on and off at selected times, making it an energy efficient means of heating.

### **Can I use a polished tile in my entry or bathroom floor?**

A polished floor no matter what material used will be more slippery than a textured or matt finish floor, this is not to say that you can't use polished tiles in your entry or bathroom though. Polished tiled floors have been installed in residential and high-end hotel foyers and bathrooms for years.

Care needs to be taken when deciding on what floor finish to use and we suggest coming into one of our showrooms to feel the different finishes available.

### **How easy are tiles to clean?**

The majority of our tiles are porcelain or ceramic, both of which have a very low surface porosity. This means that they are in general very easy to clean. Of course, we always recommend choosing the right tile surface for your project, something with a grippy anti slip in a bathroom will be harder to clean than a matt finish or polished tile. We carry the Aquamix range of tile cleaning and maintenance products, ask one of our friendly team for their recommendations.

### **What grout joint size should I use between my subway or wall tiles?**

The most common spacers used for tiles are 1.5mm, 2mm or 3mm and can be chosen depending on the desired look of your project. 1.5mm grout lines help minimise the look of grout and lets the tile or pattern stand out, a 2 or 3mm grout line is more traditional and shows off a tile laying pattern. For some tiles, like ones with a more hand cut or wavy edge, we recommend a larger 2 or 3mm grout line as the tiles won't line up as perfectly as a straight cut edge.

### **What colour grout should I use with my tiles?**

This is very dependent on what look you are going for; most people use a standard range of grey depending on the colour of the tile. Contrasting if you want to make the look stand out, or a similar colour if you would like to blend the grout in with the colour of the tile.

## **Mosaic Tiles**

### **Can I use mosaics on my shower wall?**

You absolutely can! Something to bear in mind is the grout used with your selected tile. In wet areas like a shower, grout can change colour and be harder to clean over time. We recommend using a grout sealer once installed, this can go a long way to help keep your shower mosaic tiles looking clean and help with the longevity of the tile.

### **Can I use Mosaics on the floor?**

Certain ones you can, but these are specific materials like glazed porcelain, or natural stone. Please see our mosaic floor tile range for the most suitable products. Glass, metal or ceramic mosaics are not advisable to use on the floor as they are only rated for wall use.

### **Do you need to seal mosaic tiles?**

Sometimes. If a mosaic tile has natural stone components, then yes we recommend sealing these prior to grouting and then maintain with a cleaner/resealer like the Aquamix Cleaner and Resealer.

#### **Can you use mosaics behind a stove or hob top?**

Yes, they are heat resistant so safe to use. We recommend sealing the grout to ensure easier care and maintenance from oil/food splashes.

#### **How many mosaic tiles do I need per m2?**

Most mosaic tiles work out to be 30x30cm, based on this you will need 11 Mosaic sheets per m2. Our in-store teams are well trained in quoting off plans for your project, get in contact if you would us to help.

### [Laminate Flooring](#)

#### **Can I use Max Floor in my bathroom, laundry or kitchen?**

Yes absolutely! Our Max Floor range is different to a traditional laminate as it has a stone core rather than a timber core. This ensures that there is no swelling, warping or cupping when water comes into contact with the product.

#### **Does Max Floor fade under the sun?**

The Max Floor range has a Special Grade UV Treated Layer that helps to prevent the flooring from becoming discoloured and faded from direct sunlight.

#### **Does Max Floor scratch easily?**

Each of the Max Floor planks have a High-Density Resistant Wear Layer that sits above the design layer (colour) that helps prevents the floor from superficial scratches that can be caused by everyday use.

#### **Do I need to purchase a separate underlay for this product?**

No, this product comes with a built in 1mm IXPE underlay.

### [Stone Cladding](#)

**How heavy is the stone cladding?**

Depending on the tile, weight can range from 37kg – 72kg a M<sup>2</sup>.

**What products do I need to install this product?**

This can differ depending on the substrate, weight of the product and whether it is installed being inside or outside. We recommend talking to your closest branch prior to installing to ensure you have the correct products. We also recommend that you use a trades professional as they generally have the correct certification for installing waterproofing membranes.

**Is this natural stone or composite?**

Our Maxstone Cladding is all natural stone.

**Natural Stone****Does natural stone need to be sealed?**

Yes, as it is a porous product it will need to be sealed prior to grouting.

**Can I use natural stone on walls/floors?**

Yes you can, it is a natural product which has been used for many thousands of years.

**Is marble durable?**

Yes, very! Like all natural stone, It will wear and age like all natural stone over time. We recommend having a set care and maintenance plan to keep your natural stone looking fantastic for years to come.

**Which adhesives do I need to use for natural stone?**

This depends on the natural stone. Different marbles (like green marble) are moisture sensitive and require special products. We recommend talking to your local branch prior to installation.

**How does natural stone vary in colour/pattern?**

It is important to understand that Marble and natural stones are processed from the earth / mountains and therefore movement in colour, imperfect surfaces and edges is a natural feature and character of this product. This is what makes the look so authentic and real.



## [Swimming Pool Tiles](#)

### **Will my tiles fade or damaged or chlorine?**

No, pool tiles are designed with this in mind so they will not discolour or fade over time.

### **Can pool tiles also be used inside as a splashback?**

Yes, they can, the same installation process as interior tiles apply.

### **Do your ranges come in anti-slip for pool floors and smooth for walls?**

Depending on the range some pool tiles come in both options.

### **How many mosaic tiles do I need per m2?**

Most mosaic tiles work out to be 30x30cm, based on this you will need 11 Mosaic sheets per m2. Our instore teams are well trained in quoting off plans for your project, get in contact if you would us to help.

### **Do you have all the products I need to install tiles into a pool?**

Yes, we have the full range of products and tools to help complete the job. We do recommend that you use a trades professional for a pool related job as they generally have the correct certification for installing waterproofing membranes.

### **Do you have pool edge tiles?**

Yes, we have a range of pool coping and bullnose tiles. These are under the Endura 20xm Porcelain Paver range. Please contact one of our branches for more information.

### **Can I use porcelain interior tiles for pools?**

Yes, these can be used for pool floors, walls, and steps. We do recommend using a tile with anti-slip qualities for pool floors and steps.

### **Do you offer a solution for using grout as an all-in-one adhesive and grout?**

With our Davco Glass Mosaic Additive mixed with our Davco Elite grout, you will be able to glue and grout in one simple step. Please contact our instore team for more information on these products prior to installation.

## **Porcelain Pavers**

### **Will darker colour pavers get hotter in Summer?**

Darker tiles tend to not reflect sunlight as well as lighter-coloured tiles thus resulting in warmer tiles during summer months.

### **Are Porcelain Pavers easy to clean?**

Being exterior tiles, the surfaces are textured to meet anti-slip ratings. To clean simply use a hose with a hard bristle brush, this will be best way to maintain your product. We also have a range of Aquamix cleaners and maintenance products.

### **Can I use Porcelain pavers on an existing balcony or to build a deck?**

Yes, this can be achieved by using in conjunction with our Maximus Pedestal system.

### **Can Porcelain Pavers be installed like normal porcelain tiles and grouted?**

Provided they are installed on a concrete substrate these can be bedded down in tile adhesive and grouted.

### **When laying down on grass, can they be touching, or do they need to have a space in-between?**

They need to be spaced apart; cracking can occur when there is movement if the pavers are touching. We also recommend compacting the substrate prior to laying the pavers.

### **Can I use sand between pavers when placed on grass?**

Using sand is a great way to fill the gaps between the pavers and will help to lock the individual pavers in place.

### **Can they be used around a pool area?**

Yes, pavers are a great option for around pool floors.

**Do they require sealing or maintenance?**

Being porcelain, these have very low porosity, so they do not require sealing as natural stone does.

**Can these be used in conjunction with raised pedestals?**

Yes, all of our 20mm thick pavers are designed to be used with a Pedestal system such as our Maximus Range.

**[Anti-Slip Exterior Tiles](#)****Can they be installed on grass like pavers?**

We do not recommend doing this, being these are only 10mm thick, there is a higher chance of them fracturing during point loading.

**Do you have matching interior tiles?**

In certain ranges we do have matching for indoor and outdoor flow. Please contact our branch for more information.

**Can they be used around a pool?**

Yes, this is a great option as it will ensure the maximum amount of grip.

**Can they be used as pool floor tiles?**

Yes, these are a great substitute for the common Pool floor Mosaics.

**Can they be used as interior floor tiles?**

They can, but only in certain circumstances. Due to the grip nature of the anti-slip surface, cleaning becomes harder as the surface grips to microfiber cloths and dirt can be difficult to remove. We recommend talking to one of our sales team before ordering.

**What makes a tile slip resistant? And what is an R rating?**

The texture of the surface, which can either have a sandpaper like grip or an undulating surface. The common adopted measure for exterior tiles is the "Oil Wet Ramp Test" which reports as "R" followed by a number. Ranges from R9 – R13. As a rule of thumb R11 and higher is acceptable for exterior wet areas. A higher number means more anti-slip.

## [Installation Products](#)

### **Do you offer project specific adhesive specifications?**

Yes, please contact our Technical Sales Manager, Isaac Gordon at [isaac@tilemax.co.nz](mailto:isaac@tilemax.co.nz)

### **Can I use silicone instead of adhesive to glue tiles down?**

Tile Adhesive is always recommended as this has a higher bond strength.

### **Why do I need to use silicone and not grout on corners?**

Silicone is more flexible and allows for movement along any of the internal and external corners.

### **What do I use to cut tiles?**

A scribe and snap tile cutter is the most common option. Alternatively using an angle grinder with a diamond blade for checkouts and non-straight cuts. Our local stores generally have scribe and snap tile cutters for hire, get in contact for more information.

### **What size trowel do I need?**

Depending on what the size of the tile is, for mosaics you can use smaller trowels 4mm-6mm as you don't want the glue to pop through the openings. For larger tiles you would want a larger trowel for more adhesive coverage, 12mm being the recommended size for 300x600mm tilers or larger.

### **What size spacers do I need?**

Depending on if you want a larger grout line to show or a smaller grout line, spacers start from 1.5mm and standard sizes are usually 1.5mm, 2mm and 3mm. A smaller grout line means less emphasis on grout colour and look. We recommend using a larger spacer for tiles with a hand cut or non-straight edge.

### **What is a tile primer, do I need to use one?**

Priming the substrate (Surface) prior to waterproofing, adhesive or levelling compound is a critical part of the installation process. Priming encapsulates any dust particles left on the substrate, and ensures the bond to the adhesive, waterproofing or levelling is strong.

**Do I need to seal my tiles?**

In most cases, porcelain and ceramic tiles do not require sealing as they have a low surface porosity. We recommend that all encaustic and natural tiles/mosaics are sealed. This allows for no penetration into the tile and for ease of cleaning. If using a white wall tile with dark grout, we also recommend sealing the tiles, this helps seal any microscopic pores where colour may get in during the grouting process.

**Do I need to seal the grout?**

This is highly recommended to make sure that the porosity of the grout is reduced, thus making it harder to stain and easier to clean.

**How do you clean tiles?**

There are a few different methods to clean tiles, and it all depends on the type of tile. Most tiles are ceramic or porcelain, to clean these, vacuum the surface and clear of any dirt, use warm water and combine with a tile cleaner solution then mop. We carry the Aquamix range of tile cleaning and maintenance products.

**Should I use standard cross spacers or a levelling spacer system?**

Either can be used, however using a levelling spacer system will guarantee a level tile surface and can save you plenty of time. Ask the team for more information on these systems.