

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERAMIC TILES AND SLABS

These instructions are designed to help you when cleaning surface coverings (ceramic tiles and slabs) that you have laid yourself. They do not describe the scope of the (cleaning) obligations arising from any agreement you have entered into. These obligations are to be governed in this agreement if they are not specified. The wide range of materials (in this case, ceramic tiles and slabs) requires a cleaning method tailored to the product.

GENERAL REMARKS

Market research, investigations and, above all, practical experience, all show that ceramics perform excellently compared to other surfacing materials. The decisive criteria are, primarily, long-lasting attractiveness and ease of cleaning, combined with a high level of functionality in both private and public settings.

All our glazed and unglazed materials have surfaces that offer the best prerequisites for problem-free cleaning.

With all cleaning agents, please comply with the instructions for use and hazard warnings provided by the respective manufacturer. We accept no liability for damage that results from non-compliance with these instructions and warnings.

Never use cleaning agents that contain hydrofluoric acid or its compounds (fluorides). These corrode ceramic materials even if heavily diluted.

FUNDAMENTALS

It is a truism, but one that is still valid: dirt that is not brought in doesn't need to be removed. Shoe scraper gratings, door-mats and dirt-trapping zones in front of entrance areas catch a lot of dirt.

The following basic principles apply to cleaning them:

1. Select a suitable cleaning agent.
2. Give the cleaning agent time to penetrate and loosen the dirt.
3. Use mechanical methods to support the process: brush or wipe in an appropriate manner; do not use pads or brushes with added abrasive particles.
4. Thoroughly pick up, wash away or vacuum up the loosened dirt.

CLEANING AFTER END OF CONSTRUCTION OR INITIAL CLEANING

This refers to the cleaning after completion of construction immediately after the covering has been applied. After coarse dirt has been swept up, a thorough cleaning is carried out using an appropriate cleaning agent.

To remove cement residue, that is to say residues of hydraulic-setting laying and grouting materials, only acid-based cleaning agents, so-called cement residue removers, are suitable.

Acid-based cleaners attack joints based on cement. For this reason, protect the joints by pre-wetting and thoroughly rinse the covering after use and if necessary use a neutralising agent.

The best way to remove general dirt is with alkali-based or neutral cleaners.

MAINTENANCE CLEANING

"General cleaning" is easy to perform and – depending on the accumulation of dirt and use – will be necessary at different intervals: weekly, daily or, in the case of especially intensive use, several times a day. In general, it is sufficient

to use water with commercially available cleaners for maintenance cleaning. Cleaning agents that contain products to care for the surface are not necessary and may even cause problems in the long term. Sticky layers of grease, wax and synthetic material may accumulate that have a negative effect on the appearance, hygiene, walking safety and cleaning.

BASIC CLEANING AND STAIN REMOVAL

Basic cleaning involves an intensive interim clean. The covering is thoroughly cleaned with the use of special cleaners, increased contact times, more intensive mechanical methods using brushes and if necessary, abrasive powder.

The following methods are suitable for removing the most common kinds of stains:

Limescale, urine scale, rust stains and abrasion by metal: Acid-based cleaners, pre-moisten cement-based joints, completely remove acid-based cleaners by rinsing thoroughly or using a neutralising agent after the contact time.

Tar, bitumen, paint stains, residue from expansion joints and synthetic -resin-coated media: For the above, organic solvents such as petrol, acetone or paint removal pastes are the most suitable.

Epoxy resin: These can be removed with paint removal paste or special cleaning agents.

Oils, grease, wax: Strong alkali-based cleaners are able to dissolve and remove these substances. In the case of extreme contamination, the effect can be supported with the use of solvents. Unglazed ceramic may develop staining caused by oils, fat or coloured liquids that cannot be completely removed.

Rubber abrasion, pencil lines: It is not possible to dissolve these by chemical means using cleaning agents. Only mechanical removal by means of scrubbing with brushes, possibly augmented with scouring powder, is effective.

UNGLAZED CERAMIC COVERINGS

Unglazed non-surface-treated ceramic should be impregnated as a preventive measure if it is likely that the covering will be exposed to coloured liquids, grease or oils.

CERAMIC SURFACES THAT ARE SAFE TO WALK ON

Ceramic tiles and slabs come in a wide range of glazed and unglazed styles that are safe to walk on. These products are "customised" for use in commerce/industry/public areas/wet areas that are walked on by people in bare feet such as swimming baths, showers, saunas etc. They have smooth surfaces or, depending on their use, microtextured and profiled surfaces. The best way to clean surfaces that must be safe to walk on is by means of machines such as brush machines or high-pressure or steam cleaners. The grouting must be designed for the type of cleaning required. On no account should brushes or pads containing abrasive agents be used, as they make the surfaces less safe to walk on. The cleaning agent, cleaning device and cleaning process must be suitable for the type of contamination and the area of use. Residues from cleaning and disinfection agents make floor surfaces slippery and therefore should be rinsed off thoroughly. Cleaning agents that form films also make the surfaces less safe to walk on. For wet areas that are walked on by people in bare feet, there is a list of approved cleaning agents for ceramic floor coverings in swimming baths (CC list).

CERAMIC FACADES

Every facade must be given a final clean after being laid or mechanically attached. For traditionally cemented facades, use an acid-based cleaner to remove cement residue. Even after years, a ceramic facade can be restored to its original clean state by using alkali-based cleaning agents, steam jets or high-pressure cleaners. Unglazed facade slabs located low down can be impregnated to protect against staining and spray paint (see Unglazed ceramic coverings). Graffiti can best be removed using organic solvents or paint removal pastes.

MANUFACTURER'S NOTES

These instructions cannot cover all the questions and problems you may have. Cleaning is a complex subject. If in doubt therefore, contact the manufacturer of the products used. Most manufacturers can provide cleaning instructions for their products (see their websites, for example) and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

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