



CERAMIC TILE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, INC.

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CTIOA REPORT 82-3-1

SUBJECT: CLEANING AND REGROUTING OLD TILE INSTALLATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Given the durability of most ceramic tile installations, the need for a method of minor rejuvenation of existing installations and regrouting has been an echoing question for many years.

Rejuvenating existing tile installations takes many forms. In some cases, the tile is simply very dirty. In others, the grout, for any one of many reasons, has failed or is visually unacceptable in some way; or there is minor cracking in some of the tile.

It must be understood that the process of repairing abused or old tile installations may never achieve the beauty of a new installation. Therefore, it is recommended that a sample area be reworked and then, if the sample area is acceptable, the entire area should be done.

If the sample area is not acceptable, and the tile is tightly bonded, a new ceramic tile may be bonded to the existing tile.

LIMITATIONS

In some cases, the existing grout will not be in an acceptable condition to receive the new grout. A lack of bond between old and new grout will result in failure of the new grout, which in a very short time will look as

unsatisfactory as it was prior to regrouting.

If the grout to be replaced is a colored grout, it is almost a certainty that the new grout will be a different shade. It should be clearly understood by the owner or whoever is authorizing the work that a variation in shade will probably result.

If removal of grout or tile is necessary, there will probably be some chipping of adjacent tile, as grout is very hard to remove without some damage to tile.

REGROUTING OLD OR ABUSED GROUT JOINTS

Before joints are regROUTED, they should be thoroughly cleaned.

For the best adhesion of new grout, the joints should be scraped or cut down as deep in the joints as possible.

1. Cutting of grout joint can be done carefully with a grout saw, carborundum blade or diamond saw blade.

All loose grout must be removed.

New grout should be mixed with manufacturers recommended admixture to obtain maximum adhesion to the old grout.

All new grout shall be damp cover cured for a minimum of 72 hours.

Whenever tile abuts a hard surface or dissimilar planes meet, that joint should be filled with an elastomeric sealant, allowing for expansion or structural movement.

REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF TILE

The most effective way to remove tile is to cut the grout joint to the top surface of the setting bed.

The tile can then be chiseled out at a reduced risk of damage to adjacent tile. The reason for this is the tile becomes locked into place and there is a tremendous bond force created connecting the tile. The grout is the key. If the grout joint is not cut, damage to adjacent tile is more likely.

ANTI-HYDRO REHYDRATION OF SOFT GROUT

This procedure has been used effectively to stimulate the hydration process in grout which was improperly cured or mixed, and as a result, has a soft or

chalky consistency.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Prepare a solution of three parts water and one part Anti-Hydro
2. Then thoroughly soak the entire installation with the Anti-Hydro wash
3. Cover the installation with 4 mil polyethylene sheeting and allow it to cure for 72 hours
4. After 72 hours remove sheeting, clean installation with fresh water and polish dry

CONCLUSION

Given the longevity and enduring beauty of a quality tile installation, in many cases a good cleaning will bring the installation back to its original luster.

Regrouting, however, has some inherent problems which have to be overcome with care and patience. The joints must be properly prepared to receive the grout, or else the grout will quickly wear or fall out.

Repair of badly abused or poorly installed tile may be time consuming and costly. One would be well advised to weigh the cost of repair against that of removal and replacement or tiling over the existing tile.