TORRA

MOSAICS TORRA · BARCELONA · SINCE 1974

# INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE FOR OUR ENCAUSTIC CEMENT TILES

*Installation, sealing and maintenance*

## PREPARING THE SUBFLOOR

1. Where there is no ventilated crawl space, the concrete subfloor must be insulated with plastic sheeting or conventional insulation to prevent damp from rising later on.
2. Prepare a perfectly level concrete subfloor and wait until it is completely dry before laying the tiles.
3. Reinforcing mesh is recommended when preparing the concrete subfloor.
4. A 1 cm perimeter joint is recommended.
5. Once the subfloor is finished, check that there are no cracks: they would later carry through to the cement tiles laid on top.

## LAYING

1. Lay the cement tile on a clean, dry and perfectly level surface. A damp subfloor will cause lime stains to appear on the face of the tile.
2. Apply flexible tile adhesive (white for preference) to the floor. Keep the mix fairly stiff so the tiles cannot move, and spread it with a short-notched trowel. Apply adhesive to the back of the tile in the same way (back-buttering). Lay the tiles and level them carefully, avoiding any lippage.
3. When bedding the tiles, it is essential to leave no voids between the tile and the concrete base: over time they can cause the tiles to crack or break.

4 A white rubber mallet may be used to lay the encaustic cement tiles — never a black or dark-colored one, as it can mark the tiles irreversibly.

5 After laying, wait 3 to 4 days before walking on the floor. The laid tiles should then be protected with a geotextile sheet; do not stick adhesive tape directly onto the floor.

6 For dark colors we recommend a rapid-setting tile adhesive, which minimizes the classic lime staining caused by the soluble salts in the bedding mix evaporating. Rapid-setting adhesive is also recommended for winter installations.

7 Leave a joint of 1 to 2 mm between tiles, using plastic tile spacers to keep the spacing even. Where underfloor heating is installed, we recommend a slightly wider joint.

8 Provide the corresponding expansion joints in the floor (consult the technical department responsible for site supervision).

9 The main raw materials of encaustic cement tiles are cement, natural stone, marble powder and pigments. As they are made entirely by hand from natural materials, they can vary in tone and texture; we therefore recommend opening several boxes and mixing the tiles at random to obtain a handsome finish.

10 Never mark the tiles (pencil, pen, etc.): the mark will not come off afterwards. It is also important to protect the material from scuffs and scratches caused by shoe soles or other objects.

11 Once installed, cover the material with a breathable protection sheet such as geotextile to protect it from the other trades still working on site. Avoid cardboard, which can stain the tile, and plastic, which stops the tiles breathing.

## SEALING TREATMENT

1 Once the floor is completely dry, it is advisable to apply a sealing treatment with our Torra Sealer. Sealing reduces the porosity of the tiles, protecting them from stains and limiting the absorption of water, coffee, oils and other liquids that could stain them. The treatment is intended for accidental spills that are cleaned up promptly.

2 For a good seal, apply two coats of Torra Sealer and two coats of Torra Wax Tile (matte wax), always leaving 24 to 48 hours between coats and making sure the floor is completely dry before each application.

3 The first coat of Torra Sealer must be applied before grouting the floor, to prevent future staining, and always onto a clean, dry surface. Leave 72 hours after washing the tiles so the water used for cleaning has fully evaporated and the sealer can penetrate the whole pore of the tile; also check that any residual moisture from the bedding materials has completely gone. Apply one coat of sealer with an applicator, working horizontally and then vertically. (Do not over-apply: unabsorbed product leaves shiny patches on the cement tiles.)

4 24 hours after applying the sealer, grout the cement tiles (see the next section, Grouting). Once the floor is completely CLEAN AND DRY of any grout residue or dirt left on the surface, wait 24 hours and apply the second coat of sealer.

5 To improve the seal, we recommend applying two coats of Torra Wax Tile before the cement tile floor is put into use.

6 Torra Sealer helps protect the cement tiles from staining. The sealer will stop an accidental spill from penetrating the tile, provided the spilled liquid is removed as soon as possible.

7 Torra Sealer is a sealer; it is in no case a finishing product for encaustic cement tiles.

8 Note that Torra Sealer will not protect the tiles against poor handling, poor installation, shoe marks or the improper use of tools that may stain them.

9 For a more satin, gloss or crystallized finish on our cement tiles, consult our technical department: we can recommend a specialist for this type of work.

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PLEASE NOTE

- Test the treatment on a loose tile before applying it to the whole floor.

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## GROUTING

1. Once the tiles are laid, fill the joints with a flexible polymer-modified grout (always use light colors, as dark ones can stain the tiles). Mix it fairly fluid and work it in with a rubber float until the joint is completely filled, repeating until no gaps remain. Clean off excess grout immediately with a damp cloth or sponge; on relief tiles, make sure the tile is completely clean before applying the sealer. Do not use acids to remove excess cement or to clean the tiles: they can be damaged. To clean off builders' residue, cement and the like, use our Torra Floor Cleaner.

2. Once the whole installation is finished, white marks (efflorescence) may appear for a time in some cases, caused by soluble salts in the water crystallizing. This is entirely normal in this type of material. The marks will fade with everyday use and as the floor is washed with water and pH-neutral soap.

## FINISH AND MAINTENANCE

1. Clean with water and pH-neutral soap only.

2. Do not use strong detergents, acids or alkaline detergents: they can damage the tiles irreversibly. To keep your cement tile floor in the best condition, we recommend mopping it regularly with Torra Floor Maintenance.

3. For a glossier or aged-looking floor, we recommend our Torra Wax Tile Plus speciality wax.

*Encaustic cement tiles must be stored somewhere dry and under cover: damp or contact with water can stain the tiles, and that damage is irreversible.*

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IMPORTANT

- No claims can be made once the product has been laid. Installing the product constitutes acceptance of it.
- Exchanges and returns of material are not accepted either.
- Encaustic cement tiles must not be ground down under any circumstances.

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THE TORRA TEAM