

## **TABARKA STUDIO**

### **CEMENT TILE PRODUCT INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

**\*\* Be sure to have a copy of these recommendations and familiarize yourself or installer with these installation guidelines. Contact us with any questions prior to start installation.\*\***

Cement tile is a product that shows variation in color and design; cement tile will not be identical piece to piece. When installed properly, the result of the handmade process and the nature of cement is something to be enjoyed for years to come.

#### **CARE AND INSPECTION**

- 1) Prior to installation, material should be stored in a dry area. Sustained moisture or dampness during storage can cause tiles to stain, color fade or damage the surface – potentially showing cracks and pitting.
- 2) Inspect your order carefully. Tabarka will not be responsible for material that has been cut or installed. Throughout the installation process and handling of the tile, be careful not to damage the finished surface.
- 3) Cement-based product may have residue on the surface. Before starting installation, it is highly recommended to clean all tiles with a damp, clean cloth to remove any residue and get a clean tile surface. Allow tiles to fully dry prior to installation.
- 4) Cement tile will vary in color and shade. Blending tiles from different boxes/cases during setting is required to produce a beautiful, naturally rich appearance. We highly recommend doing a “Dry Lay” prior to installation to achieve desired arrangement.

#### **BRASS INLAY CEMENT**

- 5) Collections featuring brass or aluminum inlay will require additional maintenance both before and after installation. This includes material from the BASEL and KAVIM collections.
- 6) Upon receipt of tile, installer may need to treat brass with fine sandpaper (150-200 grit) to remove any tarnish or residual adhesive. This process should be done before sealing the product. Brass inlay can be sealed with brass lacquer; product selection will need to be determined by the installer.
- 7) After installation and sealing, you may choose to maintain material with non-scratch scouring pad or damp cloth by treating the affected area with the appropriate cleaner. Brass will require a brass specific polish. Always test on a small area to ensure the treatment does not damage the material.

Tabarka Studio embraces the natural aging process of brass and encourages their clientele to celebrate this outcome over time.

#### **INSTALLATION**

- 8) Tiles must be installed over a flat, level, stable and completely dried concrete or wall surface. Excess moisture and water can cause stains, pitting or cracking on cement tile surfaces. Tabarka Studio will not be responsible for damage to the tiles installed in improper site conditions and ongoing property environments that incur excessive weather- such as freeze or thaw climates.
- 9) When installing our tile to achieve a “Pattern”, we recommend to install first the center tiles, then the borders tiles and finally the field tiles that will surround the pattern. Be sure to handle the tiles face to face to avoid scratching the tile surface.

10) Use a high quality thin-set adhesive that is approved for Cement tile products such as a Laticrete or Mapei product. Follow adhesive manufacturer's instructions and when in doubt, contact the adhesive manufacturer to verify. Ensure adhesive is applied to the full back of each tile (100% coverage). A full "Back Buttering" technique is recommended to get better adherence. Cement tiles are not intended for installation methods employing large quantities of water. Do not install during excessively hot weather or full, direct sun.

11) Do not beat with a mallet or rubber hammer to set tiles as this can break the tiles or form thin cracks on the tiles surface. Level your tiles using hand pressure. Remove excess FRESH adhesive from the surface with a damp cloth or sponge to avoid any stains. Tiles should be cut using a sharp diamond blade in conjunction with water to avoid chipping of edges.

12) Allow tiles and mortar bed to dry completely before starting to seal and/or polish the tiles. Do not cover the tiles. Covering will not allow breathing and evaporation of all moisture. Do not step on tiles until mortar bed is dried.

### SEALING, GROUTING & RE-SEALING

13) Cement tiles are porous and not pre-sealed. Therefore, **sealing with a penetrating sealer is necessary before applying the grout**. Use caution with dark color grout as it can stain the tiles - especially in light colored tiles. We recommend testing a single tile to see the result before applying it to the complete area.

14) Make sure to seal with an impregnating or penetrating sealer **after cleaning and before grouting**. Apply 2 thin coats of the sealer and allow each sealer coat to dry completely. Use a dry absorbent white cloth, clean mop or a solvent resistant sprayer - do not use abrasive tools. Follow sealant's instructions and remove all excess sealant from the tile surface.

15) There are different types of sealers that offer different finishes: matte, enhanced and gloss sheen. If you prefer a glossy finish, tiles can be polished with wax. This process must be done by a professional. Never buff tiles with an abrasive pad or disc, this process will damage the color surface.

16) Cement tiles are typically installed with a minimal grout joint using un-sanded grout to allow expansion. If electing to use large grout joint, use sanded grout. Our recommended grout joint width is 1/16" - 1/8". Joints should be full and free of all voids and pits. Once grout has been applied and starts to dry, remove excess grout immediately. Do not affix duct tape, gaffer tape or acid tapes directly onto cement tiles surface. Tape can discolor or stain your cement tiles.

17) Post grouting, and after a cleaning process has been completed and accepted, re-seal the tiles and grout lines for extra protection to avoid any water filtrations and moisture.

18) After installation, wash floor with a PH neutral detergent. Do not use acid or alkaline to clean tiles. Use a single disc floor machine with a white pad to remove any residue, excess dirt or water. You may also use a PH neutral cleaner to remove any stain or fine sandpaper to remove any residue. Do not allow water or other liquids to spot, pond or ring on the surface tiles.

### MAINTENANCE

19) For ongoing maintenance, clean regularly with a neutral detergent and buff tiles with a soft white pad. Heavy foot traffic or out-door installations may require additional maintenance. **A natural patina will occur as the floor is maintained and wears. Tabarka Studio celebrates the aging process and encourages their clientele to as well.**

20) The use of properly sized walk-off mats at entrances and sweeping or dust mopping is most important to remove abrasive grit that may cause wear. Do not allow any water accumulation or filtration, moisture will cause stains, pitting and cracking on tiles surface.