

# ***WET DOG TILE CO.***

## ***INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS***

### ***General:***

-Inspect all material for any damage and let us or your dealer know as soon as possible.

-Make sure to have your client approve all pieces prior to installation. Use is acceptance, and no exceptions will be made.

### ***Setting:***

Choose your trowel based on what is most appropriate for surrounding field tile, but as a guideline we suggest a 1/4" x 1/4" square notch for the wall and 1/4" x 3/8" for the floor.

For application of mesh-mounted murals and borders on vertical surfaces, use a high-quality non-sag thinset adhesive. Note: It is sometimes helpful to tack a couple small finish nails through the mesh to hold until adhesive has dried (for waterproofed surfaces, fill nail holes with silicone prior to grouting).

For application of mesh-mounted murals and borders on horizontal surfaces, ridges in adhesive should be troweled flat to avoid excess thinset from bleeding into grout joints. Any high quality, polymer modified thinset adhesive is suitable.

Any application that includes glass "Puddles" or "Currents", or will be grouted with a light color grout, should be installed with white thinset only, to avoid discoloration.

Note: Large "Friends" in murals and borders are shipped loose (not mesh-mounted), and must be installed separately. These should be back-buttered prior to installation to ensure full coverage.

For installation of "Individual Friends", back-butter all pieces; taking extra care with thinner, more fragile ones like the Mermaid and Flat Crab, as well as hollow-backed pieces like the Quahog Shell.

### ***Grouting:***

For borders and murals that include "Pebbles" or "Skipping Stones", which are a natural stone material, a high quality "penetrating" stone sealer should be applied to the surface prior to grouting to aid in cleanup.

A Sanded or "Hybrid" Grout should be used on all mosaic borders and murals,

never use an Unsanded Grout as the joint size is too large, which will result in shrinkage and cracking. See below for list of recommended grouts.

If using a Sanded Grout for any design that includes glass “Puddles” or “Currents”, take extra caution during application to avoid scratching the surface. A “Hybrid” grout, which is designed to work with a variety of materials and grout joint sizes, is highly recommended.

Due to the varying height and texture of our borders and murals, grouting will require extra time and care. Make sure to plan for extra time to adequately blend any low and high areas as well as extra cleanup time for sponging so as not to hide any detail. A thorough and detailed grouting job makes all the difference in the final result of a Wet Dog installation. It may be helpful to use a combination of a standard rubber margin float and a softer polypropylene float.

Do not try to remove all grout haze with just one or two passes of the sponge. Grout needs a chance to set-up properly before final cleanup can be performed. Note: A toothbrush is a helpful tool for cleaning excess grout from detailed areas that a sponge cannot reach. It may also be helpful to use painter's tape to mask off more textured pieces where grout can easily be trapped.

All borders and murals that integrate “Pebbles” or “Skipping Stones” should be sealed a second time after grout is applied and cured to protect from staining. Most grouts require a sealer to be applied anyway, so the full surface may be sealed at this stage. Any high quality “penetrating” stone sealer is suitable.

**\*\* IMPORTANT NOTE:** Some of our “Friends”, incorporate “land bridges” (recessed, unglazed clay connecting glazed areas, included for strength). These can be seen on pieces such as the Crabs, Mermaid, Moose and others. **THIS AREA IS MEANT TO BE GROUTED OVER.** Care needs to be taken to not remove too much grout from these areas when sponging. Grout will stick with no issues assuming it is mixed to proper consistency and is not “flooded” when sponging.

***Recommended “hybrid” grouts :*** Laticrete Permacolor, Tec Power Grout, Mapei Ultracolor, or Custom Prism

*\* These are usually described as a “polymer-modified, color-consistent, non-shrinking, efflorescence-free grout*

*\* Please note that these are also fast-setting grouts, so only mix up enough to work with small areas at a time.*

***\*\*See Below for more detailed information\*\****

## *Preface:*

We provide these ceramic tile and mosaic installation instructions as a supplemental, general installation and grouting guideline only, as it pertains to most applications. The technical service departments of setting material manufacturers should be consulted regarding specific installation and material use questions.

Below are a few additional insights beyond the already provided common industry installation recommendations. These are not intended to replace the existing industry guidelines but to allow you to better understand the overall contractor activities. Please be sure of your contractor's certification and references and their familiarity with proper methods and materials. Only experienced and professional tile installers should install our products.

Below are recognized and recommended industry authorities for standards details and for providing proper installation guidelines:

The '**National Tile Contractors Assoc.**'- (NTCA) training (workshops, installation videos, training manuals)

The '**Tile Terrazzo and Marble Association**' (TTMAC) and the '**Tile Council of North America**' (TCNA), '**Ceramic Tile Installation Handbooks**'

## *Upon Acceptance*

The end user, not the contractor, is responsible for ensuring the tile delivered is the tile originally selected for the project. Open and inspect each carton. As the manufacturer, we always take every precaution to eliminate any defective or unacceptable tiles before they reach the consumer and we will replace any such tiles at no cost to you.

Once installed, it is no longer the tile supplier's responsibility and no adjustments will be made. **INSTALLATION CONSTITUTES ACCEPTANCE!**

## *Substrates:*

Our tiles can be installed over all conventional tile-setting substrates, in areas such as walls, floors, countertops, backsplashes, etc. (with the exception of certain glazes not recommended for high-traffic areas, which are noted on the provided color palettes). Our tiles are made from a highly durable stoneware clay that makes them impervious and will not absorb liquid; in turn this makes them stain resistant, frost resistant and all around durable. The following substrates are considered acceptable per the Tile Council of America:

Well-cured mortar beds-ANSI A108.1B Standards (cured a minimum of 7 days).

Cementitious backer units (CBU) to ANSI A118.9 Standards (Note: An ANSI A108A-2.1.8 membrane is required behind all CBU installations in wet areas).

Concrete slabs (on grade) cured for 21 days minimum.

Gypsum board (dry areas only) installed to ASTM C1396 or ASTM C1396M-04 Standards.

All surfaces to receive tile shall be sound, smooth, flat, clean and free of dust, oil, grease, paint, tar, wax, curing agents, primers, sealers, adhesive residue, release agents or any other deleterious substance or debris which may prevent or reduce adhesion to the substrate.

Installation materials / Mortars and Grouts are available through tile dealers, home centers, and major setting material companies. Premium thinsets are highly recommended such as Laticrete 254 Platinum, 255 Multimax, and Mapei Kerabond/Keralastic. **MASTICS OF ALL KINDS ARE NOT RECOMENDED!**

## *Setting:*

Use enough setting material to ensure 80%+ tile surface coverage but avoid so much that it will fill the grout joints. Use a 1/4" X 1/4" square notched trowel for walls and a 1/4"x 3/8" square notched trowel for floors. Apply only as much bonding material to be covered with tile within 10 to 15 minutes or while tile surface is still wet and sticky. Do not allow the bonding material to skim over. With firm, even pressure, apply tile down into the bonding material. Push the tile 1/4" perpendicular to the combed material. This will allow the combs to cover the back and eliminate the combed ridges. Use a wooden beating block or rubber grouting float to flatten the surface. Align each tile as it is installed to desired final location. Clean excess setting material from the surface of the tile with a damp cloth or sponge while the setting material is fresh. Allow tile to set until firm.

**Individual "Friend" Tiles, must be BACK-BUTTERED** - The practice of "back-buttering" is often recommended to help achieve maximum coverage; when setting ceramic tile 80% + mortar coverage is to be obtained. We recommend back buttering in addition to the application of a straight-combed troweled mortar.

## *Sealing:*

Borders, murals and accents that integrate pebbles or natural stone **MUST** be sealed prior to grouting. It is imperative to follow the directions of the sealing manufacture as every product is different and over-application can result in a tacky residue or discoloration. Recommended products are Miracle Sealants 511 Porous Plus or Seal And Enhance, VanHearron Stain Guard 5000, or Aquamix Sealers Choice Gold. Follow directions per product for drying times and application.

## *Grouting:*

Grout color can determine the aesthetic final appearance of any ceramic mosaic installation and should be selected carefully. Ceramic mosaic tiles have varying degrees of surface texture that will collect grout during the grouting process. While thorough cleaning after grouting will remove most of the grout, there may still be remaining grout within pinholes, surface creases, texture or relief. The amount of grout visible after installation will depend primarily on the color contrast between grout color and tile color, how well the tiles were cleaned during grouting, and viewing distance. The aesthetic appearance of grout left within the tile, not just the grout joints, has a way of unifying the overall grout and tile.

Grouting may be done after tile is firmly set (we commonly recommended at least 24 hours after installation). Apply sanded or Permacolor grout carefully with a rubber float, making sure that grout joints are completely full and free of voids and pits. We do not recommend Sanded Grout with glass tile as surface scratching may occur, instead use a "Hybrid" grout, like Laticrete Permacolor. If Sanded Grout is the only available kind, then make sure to apply it softly, with as little pressure as needed to fill the joints. Clean the surface with a clean, damp cloth or tile industry hydrophilic sponge. These sponges are used for clean up of ceramic tile, especially after grouting, and easily rinse clean while filtering out particles for a clean surface.

Allow grout to set until a haze forms on the tile and the grout in the joints sets firmly. Use a soft, clean, dry cloth to polish off haze and remaining grout residue. This step is key to avoiding unwanted grout residue and should be done as the work progresses, while grout is fresh and before it fully hardens. The final cleaning of grout haze is done approx. 2-3 hours after initial grout cleanup (depending on air temperature and grout consistency) and tile polishing is done with a clean, dry cotton cheesecloth or terry towel approx. 12 hours after grouting. Allow the grout to cure for a minimum of 7 days before aggressive use or steam cleaning.

Epoxy Grouts are popular for use with ceramic tile because of their longevity, strength, and relationship with the ceramic. Grouts like SpectraLOCK® or Kerapoxy® have a chemical composition that resists stains and breakdown. They are also non-porous and non-absorbent. When mixed with antimicrobial products such as Microban®, epoxy grouts also inhibit the growth of mold or mildew, a common occurrence with regular cementitious grout. Non-absorbent epoxy grouts require little maintenance, so while they may cost more than cement grout up front, they more than make up for it over time. Working with the Epoxy grout is

more labor intensive and sticky, and requires a lot of washing after. However, while the rubbery plastic-like characteristics of epoxy grouts make for a more challenging application, a stronger finished product is obtained, and epoxy grouts will not fade or change color over time. Set times for epoxy grouts are comparable to their cement counterparts but they do not cure in the same way as cement based products; instead, they thermal set. Once this occurs, there is no ability of removing residues or films.

### *Some tips/cautions:*

- All mortars and grouts need to slake (sit) 10-15 minutes after mixing, and remixed before using.
- Wear appropriate gloves and mask when working with dry and wet installation products.
- All methods and material choices should be reviewed with the setting-material supplier or manufacturer.
- All mortar beds must be cured a minimum of 7 days before ceramic tile is to be installed.

### *Cleaning and Maintenance:*

Normal cleaning can be done with room temperature water and light duty diluted neutral detergent cleaner. For applications using our natural stone mosaics, "Skipping Stones" and "Pebbles", use only cleaners approved for natural stone. Tiles can be routinely cleaned with any non-abrasive cleaning solutions that are commonly recommended for ceramic tile. We recommend use of mild soap and warm water, using a soft bristle brush if needed. Miracle Sealants Mira Clean or VanHearron Mighty Indigo, or dish detergent may be used as well, but like all other cleaners should always be rinsed with clean water after as to prevent soap build up.

Tile Council of America offers detailed grout cleaning information on their website, under "Technical Services" URL: [www.tileusa.com/faq\\_main.html](http://www.tileusa.com/faq_main.html)