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Cleaning Tile Grout Residue and Haze

Various factors have seen us and the entire industry experience a higher number of cleaning issues related to grout residue or grout haze recently. A few factors contributing to this increase are an increase in high slip rating finished tiles, higher polymer modification of modern cementitious tile grouts, and higher use of high-performance epoxy grouts.

Neither of these points mean that the products mentioned are faulty and these issues can be completely avoided if correct process is followed during the grouting process. Historically, although not necessarily recommended, tile fixers have grouted up to 20 m² at a time before cleaning away grout and grout residue. This allows time for grout to potentially dry and stick, additionally cleaning such a large area at once generally means that the sponge and water is dirty by the end of the clean and grout residue is being spread around the surface of the tile.

This leftover grout residue we refer to as 'grout haze' can be visible immediately after grouting but at other times the tiles can appear clean. This can also be dependent on the tile and grout colour being used. When the tiles appear clean it can lead to further complications as the grout haze itself takes in dirt, footprints etc that are very hard to remove. It appears the tiles are staining, when in actual fact the grout haze on the surface is holding in the stain and must be removed for the floor to be clean.

Here are some simple steps we recommend you pass onto your clients to provide their tilers to avoid grout haze;

- Use 2 buckets when grouting, one with clean water to rinse the sponge and the other to be used for removing excess from the sponge, which will naturally become dirty faster
- Grout a small area, 2-3m² at a time before cleaning away grout. This will give grout less time to dry on the surface
- Consistently change over the clean water bucket to ensure you are not collecting excess grout from earlier in the clean when rinsing your sponge and placing it back on the surface

A mistake that can be made in cementitious grout cleaning is using too much water which can discolor the grout. Follow the above recommendations and limit the amount of water used in grout cleaning process for the best finish.

If after installation it is identified that grout haze has occurred, it can be cleaned



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which will also make ongoing maintenance simple. The following can be used from Mapei depending on the grout type used;

- **Cement grout haze:** Use Mapei's [ULTRACARE KERANET](#) or [ULTRACARE KERANET EASY](#) acid-based cleaning solutions.
- **Epoxy grout haze:** use Mapei's [ULTRACARE KERAPOXY CLEANER](#) special epoxy cleaning solution

Always ensure to follow the product data sheet for the full application information and to conduct a test area first to check the process.

It is important to be able to identify when it is grout haze causing the perception of a tile staining as often when we see that incorrect cleaning procedures have already been tried. This can cause the correct clean to be more difficult or labor intensive, as the haze holds in remnants of previous products used.

Another common misconception when grout haze occurs is that the tiles mark easily, are hard to clean and therefore should have been sealed. Glazed Porcelain Tiles do not need to be sealed, this is what the glaze is for. In actual fact the haze needs to be completely and properly removed and then normal maintenance procedures can apply.

Grout haze is an issue that has existed in our industry for many, many years but with the evolution of tile and grout products it is important to continually provide clients and tilers with reminders of correct process. Although we are always available to assist with information to help solve grout haze issues if the information in this document is communicated correctly issues related to grout haze should not occur, or if they do should be easily solved.

Regards,

The Volare Team