

CRACKLE GLAZE INSTALLATION GUIDE

Whilst the crazing in our crackle glaze tiles, such as Metro Deco, Sanctuary and Osaka appears to be random, it is the result of a highly skilled process that combines all the skills of the manufacturing, glazing and firing teams at the kiln factory.

Crackle glazes are created using opposing expansion and contraction between the body of the tile and the glaze. These conflicting dynamics have to be sufficient to crack the surface of the glaze, yet subtle enough not to break the bond between the glaze and the body.

Whilst the style of this crazing is controlled (you can see the difference between the crackle on our Metro Deco and Sanctuary ranges) the intensity can vary between batches, so it is worth checking your tiles for any variation within batch/box before they are installed.

It is also very important to check that your installer is going to seal your tiles regardless of the intensity of the crazing. ALL crackle glaze tiles must be sealed, especially if being used in a wet area or behind a cooker. This is because the crazing can allow liquids to pass through the glaze and contact the body of the tile, creating dark patches behind the glaze.

Sealing will also help prevent grout getting into the crackle glaze. Even once sealed we would still recommend the Ardex FS or FL grout range, as other grouts (such as those suitable for joints as small as 1mm like Bal MicroMax) can become trapped in the crazing of the glaze, permanently staining the surface.

INSTALLATION PROCESS

Your tiler will need to correctly prepare the tiling substrate to ensure it is flat, level, solid, clean and dust free before they start laying the tiles. If the tiles are being installed in a shower or wet-room, they must install a waterproofing system such as the Ardex Waterproof Protection System prior to tiling. Even if the tiles are not being used in a shower, we would recommend the substrate is primed with Ardex P51.

The tiles can then be applied using Ardex X7 Flexible Tile Adhesive combed across the wall with a 6mm notched trowel, set out with a 2-3mm grout joint.

We recommend taking tiles from different boxes whilst installing, to ensure that any slight variation between boxes is blended across the wall.

To cut the tiles, we recommend using a water-cooled flat-bed tile cutter that has a clean, smooth-profile, continuous diamond blade fitted. Always cut through the tiles with the glazed surface facing upwards and push it through the cutting edge slowly to minimise chipping.

We do not recommend that crackle glazed tiles or profiles are used for external mitres and where possible, we would advise avoiding cuts of less than 15mm. If a cut of less than 15mm is required, we would suggest cutting the tile a little wider, then hand-filing the tile to the correct width.

If you require any further assistance, or have any queries regarding the installation of crackle glaze tiles, please contact us at enquiries@claybrookstudio.co.uk



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After placing the tile in the adhesive, the tiler will need to level the surface to make sure the tiles are flat and there is no lipping, before grouting. Once the tiles have been laid and the surface has been cleaned, the tiles MUST be sealed at least 2 hours before grouting.

SEALING AND GROUTING YOUR CRACKLE GLAZED TILES

FOR PROTECTION AGAINST WATER INGRESS

Sealer - LTP Crackle Glaze Protector at 1 coat minimum

Grout - Ardex FS flexible grout

Cleaner - EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare

SEALING

Either before the tiles are laid, or at least 2 hours before grouting the tiles must be sealed with at least 1 coat of LTP Crackle Glaze Protector to protect them against water. To ensure a good seal, apply the sealer with a brush or thin roller, ensuring the entire surface of the tile is coated. Quite often the sealer will sit on the surface of the glaze, so keep distributing any excess sealer across the surface to ensure full coverage. Allow the sealer to soak into the cracks and cure for 1 hour, before buffing away any excess sealer left on the surface with a soft lint-free cloth.

GROUTING

Once the LTP Crackle Glaze Protector has been allowed to fully cure (2 hours minimum) the tiler can start to apply the Ardex FS grout. If the tiler is not using the Ardex FS grout we recommend and sell, then they need to test a sample tile before applying the grout across the wall. This is because some finer grouts (like Bal MicroMax) can cling to the surface, causing permanent staining. Ideally the tiler should not slurry grout, but compress or pipe the grout into the joints to minimise the amount of grout across the surface. Once the excess grout has been removed and the grout is fully dry any remaining sealer in the bottle can be applied across both the tiles and grout in order to give an extra level of protection.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

For everyday cleaning use a ph neutral detergent, such as our EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare. For spills, hard-water stains and the occasional deep clean you can use EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner.

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FOR PROTECTION AGAINST DARK COLOURED GROUTS

Sealer - LTP Crackle Glaze Protector at a minimum 3 coats

Grout - Ardex FL flexible grout

Cleaner - EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare

SEALING

We advise against using dark grouts on crackle glaze tiles, as it can result in a patchy finish if the sealer has not been correctly applied. However, if your heart is set on having a crackle glaze tile and dark grout, then the tiler will need

to apply a minimum of 3 coats of Crackle Glaze Protector. The sealer will require 2 hours curing between coats and should be applied at 90 degree angles to each other, to ensure maximum coverage. Quite often the sealer will sit on the surface of the glaze, so keep distributing any excess sealer across the surface to ensure full coverage. Allow the sealer to soak into the craze and cure for at least 2 hours before grouting. Do NOT buff away any excess sealer, as this forms part of the protection against dark grouts.

GROUTING

Once the LTP Crackle Glaze Protector has been allowed to fully cure, the tiler can start to apply the FL grout. The FL format grout has a slightly larger grain, so will be less inclined to enter the crazing. If the tiler is not using the Ardex FL grout we recommend, then they need to test their grout on a sample tile before applying the grout across the wall. Once the excess grout has been removed and the grout in the joints has hardened (approx. 2 hours), they can use LTP Grout Stain Remover and a coarse rubbing pad to breakdown the remaining grout residue. Once the grout residue has been removed, wipe away any remaining residue using a lint-free absorbent cloth and buff the surface to a shine. Once the excess grout has been removed and the grout is fully dry, any remaining sealer in the bottle can be applied across both the tiles and grout in order to give an extra level of protection.

An instructional video is available here – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqOfLzxBmBE&t=7s>

If you require further advice please contact the Technical department at technical@claybrookstudio.co.uk

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

For everyday cleaning use a ph neutral detergent, such as our EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare. For spills, hard-water stains and the occasional deep clean you can use EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner.

