

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. With most glazed wall tiles the manufacturing, glazing and firing teams work together to ensure the tile and glaze expand and contract together to minimise any crazing.

However, with crackle glaze tiles they have to create an 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 intensity of this crazing is controlled (you can see the difference between the crackle on our Metro Deco and Sanctuary ranges) it can vary between batches, so it is worth checking tiles from different boxes before installation for any variation.

It is also very important to check that your installer is going to seal your tiles, as regardless of intensity 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 also helps prevent grout getting into the crackle glaze. We recommend and sell the Ardex FS grout range, as other grouts such as those suitable for joints as small as 1mm (like Bal MicroMax) can still become trapped in the glaze. Therefore, if your tiler is planning on using their own grout, then it is worth testing that grout on a sample tile before applying it across the wall.

PRE-INSTALLATION PROCESS

Before installing the tiles, we recommend that you check the boxes to ensure you have the correct amount and there is no damage.

INSTALLATION PROCESS

Your tiler will need to correctly prepare the tiling substrate to ensure it is flat, level, solid and clean before they start laying the tiles.

When installing the tiles, they will need to wipe any dust off the back to ensure a good bond with the adhesive. For the best bond apply Ardex MICROTEC Flexible Tile Adhesive to both the substrate and the back of the tiles.

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

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.

When cutting, we recommend using a water-cooled saw, with a good, clean, sharp blade and to cut through the tiles with the glazed surface facing upwards. We do not recommend that crackle glazed tiles are used for external mitres,

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



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as achieving a clean cut is difficult and the leading edge will be fragile.

The suggested grout joint between the tiles is normally 2-3mm, so your tiler will need to allow for this when planning the layout.

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 FINISHING YOUR CRACKLE GLAZED TILES

FOR PROTECTION AGAINST WATER INGRESS

Sealer – LTP Crackle Glaze Protector at 1 coat

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 covered. Quite often the sealer will sit on the surface of the glaze, so distribute 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.

FINISHING

Once the LTP Crackle Glaze Protector has been allowed to fully cure (2 hours minimum) the tiler can start to apply the grout. If the tiler is not using the Ardex 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, if any sealer remains then it can be applied across both the tiles and grout in order to give an extra level of protection.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

For everyday cleaning use EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare at the appropriate dilution stated on the bottle. For spills, stains and the occasional deep clean, you can use EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner, again checking you are using the correct dilution. After using the EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner you may need to re-apply the LTP Crackle Glaze Protector, to ensure the tiles are well protected again.

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FOR PROTECTION AGAINST DARK COLOURED GROUTS

Sealer – LTP Crackle Glaze Protector at a minimum 3 coats

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 distribute any excess sealer across the surface to ensure full coverage. Allow the sealer to soak into the cracks 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.

FINISHING

Once the LTP Crackle Glaze Protector has been allowed to fully cure (2 hours minimum), the tiler can start to apply the grout. If the tiler is not using the Ardex grout we recommend, then they need to test a sample tile before applying the grout across the wall. This is because some fine grouts (like Bal MicroMax) can cling to the surface regardless of whether the tile has been sealed, 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 in the joints has hardened (approx. 2 hours), use LTP Grout Stain Remover and a coarse rubbing pad, to breakdown the remaining grout residue. Once the grout residue has started to de-bond, wipe away the residue using a lint-free absorbent cloth and buff the surface to a shine. Once completely dry, if any sealer remains then it 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 EcoProTec Stone & Tile Aftercare at the appropriate dilution stated on the bottle. For spills, stains and the occasional deep clean, you can use EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner, again checking you are using the correct dilution. After using the EcoProTec Intensive Cleaner you may need to re-apply the LTP Crackle Glaze Protector if the water is no longer beading on the surface.

