

Glass Tile Installation For Pool Lines

As for proper installation of glass tiles in a pool, QDI surfaces recommends the following:

Brown coat (pool plaster) has to be cured for at least 28 days.

Installation of water-proof membrane such as RedGaurd or similar with a non-woven polyester mesh.

Tiles to be installed with even coat of two-part latex modified thinset (KeraBond / Keralstic).

Tiles to be allowed curing time of 14 days prior to grouting.

Grouting to be latex modified colored grout (some colors may be unacceptable for pool installation).

Grout must be cured 14 days prior to contact with water.

Following these instructions allows for the substrate and glass tiles to be uniform in their ability to move when exposed to extreme thermal shock.

Glass Installation - Directly quoted from 2011 TCNA PUBLICATION "Handbook for Ceramic, Glass, and Stone Tile Installation"

Salt Water Pools and Travertine

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One of the most frequently asked questions about natural stone around a pool involves the use of a salt water system. The ever dreaded "SALTY WATER ATTACK" - it sounds like a Hollywood movie set up. Don't panic! We have answers.

There are 3 treatable problems caused by the presence of water and salts. Our growing environmental awareness is creating the demand for salt water pool systems over traditional chlorinated pools. At the same time, porous materials, such as travertine, limestone, and sandstone, are becoming more popular for pool surrounds and copings. Limestone and travertine are perfect for use around pools in many ways - they look great, are soft underfoot, not too slippery when wet and don't get too hot under the summer sun. So, it is crucial to understand how to protect these materials in a wet or salt water environment.

3 types of salt attack:

Efflorescence. Appears as an unsightly white grainy plaque on any porous surface, and is the most common salt issue. Water, full of dissolved salts, travels through the pores, where it evaporates, leaving the salt behind. **ANSWER:** Fresh efflorescence is easily removed with a dry brush or broom and can also be hosed off; if left over weeks building up, the salts react with the air and harden, until only acid washing or grinding will remove it.

Salt spalling. This happens the same way as efflorescence. Only, when water evaporates from below the surface of the stone, salt crystals are left behind under the surface, where they grow and spall or break off microscopic pieces, eventually causing larger visible pits.

ANSWER: A good anti-contaminant back sealer will prevent salt spalling. We recommend **FILA PW10**. This product was specifically designed for natural stone and should be applied to the back and sides of the stone. This will form a breathable protection layer that prevents mineral deposits from rising through the substrate and sides of the stone and protects the surface from streaks or stains caused by efflorescence. We would also recommend sealing the surface with a good penetrating sealer to help staining and other damaging issues. This can either be water based or solvent based. Both are effective, but solvent based sealers tend to have a little better penetrating level. Again, **FILA** offers a number of quality sealers for both a natural look or an enhanced color look. Good sealers can last for a number of years before having to be reapplied. This will depend on exposure to the elements and usage. A good way to test whether you still have a good seal, simply place a drop of water on your stone and watch it; if it beads for several minutes, your sealer is still working well. If it soaks into the stone, it may be time to reseal the stone.

Salt leeching. This can happen in any wet environment. Some Natural stones and manmade pavers contain amounts of salts, even salt pockets. As water travels through the pores, it dissolves these pockets of salts, leaving empty spaces and weakening the stone or pavers.

ANSWER: Sealing stone with a suitable water-repellent impregnating sealer can provide enough protection to give softer stones and pavers a reasonable lifespan around a salt water pool.

In this case we would recommend the FILA water repellent sealers such as Hydroprep or FILA PRW200 Grout Release sealer. These products will penetrate right into the pore structure creating a deep water repellent barrier which will be very effective at keeping out the water and any dissolved salts.

What To look For During Installation of Stone

- Are the installers pulling materials from multiple pallets? Taking materials from one pallet at a time and not blending them will create light/dark spots, almost always right in the middle of the main floor area!
- Are the installers "keying" the thin set into the back of the stone before laying into the adhesive on the floor? This is critical to ensure the least amount of "breakthrough" voids in the future.
- Are the installers keeping the surface of each tile level to the adjacent tiles? If not, you will have "trippers" where one tile will be higher than the next.
- Are the installers keeping the grout joints lined up to form straight line of site joints? Not done correctly will produce a stair step effect from tile to tile.
- Are the installers using enough adhesive? Putting dabs of thin set on the back of the tile to adjust height will create voids leaving hollow sounding areas throughout the floor. Damage may occur for the life of the tile as broken corners or cracked tile.

Common Maintenance - What to Expect In The First Year

Living with travertine you will find is very forgiving, hiding dirt and dust better than most other types of flooring. You can expect the following:

Holes - It may seem that the fill has come out of the stone but, it is usually due to pushing through the surface in high traffic areas where there may have been a void just beneath the surface, not visible from the front or the back. Do not be concerned, this is quite natural and easily remedied. A quick trip to your local "big box" store for a small bag of un-sanded grout (as close a match

to the original fill as possible) will fix the problem. Mix a small batch to clay like consistency (formable in your hand). Fill in void and remove excess with a credit card, leaving the surface to the same even height. Lastly, dip a finger in some clean water and smooth out the grout. Let cure overnight.

Common Maintenance

Through experience we have found the very best method of maintenance is to use a simple dust mop or vacuum (without beater bar). Clean spills and sticky messes as they happen with a damp cloth. You can also use a PH neutral cleaner that is specifically designed for natural stone. The FILA Everyday Cleaner, is a good product for this. Over cleaning by mopping can actually end up leaving more residues (especially in areas with hard water) than doing nothing at all. Your travertine just like a favorite leather belt, will age and build up a patina as it becomes used. Travel to any European cathedral and you will see the results of hundreds of years of use without any mopping with chemicals. That is the real beauty of natural travertine floor finishes.

Re-Finishing Travertine

Although not a requirement, some people need the consistency and uniformity on their flooring. In this case there are many qualified floor finishers who have the proper equipment to come in and re-finish your travertine. Just like finding an old wood floor underneath modern day carpet, you can sand and re-finish the wood to a point where you don't know whether it is 1 month old or 300 years old. You can do the same to a beaten scratched and abused travertine floor. Letting the floor age with use brings about a real beauty to the earthy natural look often sought after.

Final Cleaning After Grouting Is Completed

First check to see if the floor clean with no grout haze present? *If grout haze is left on the surface for more than 12 hours after grouting, it may become very difficult to remove.* In this case, we would recommend the FILA Detertek, Grout Haze Remover. This is an excellent product and is effective in eliminating grout haze, efflorescence and hard water stains. It also removes soap scum, paint and other dirt stains.

Check to see if there are any areas missing grout?

Are there any foreign materials stuck in any of the joints?

Do not use fans or leave doors open to hurry the drying process! *Faster drying grout will be lighter in color than slow drying grout.*

For new construction be sure to cover the floor after the above precautions have been addressed. This will prevent damage by other trades.