



COMMON PROBLEMS

Natural stone tiles and mosaics.



It is important to understand that almost all problems encountered with Natural Stone tiles and mosaic products are due to incorrect installation or maintenance. Natural Stone and Timber Ltd go to every effort to ensure that our customers receive the best possible product in the best possible condition. Over the years we have seen many excellent installations ruined at the last minute by a lack of understanding of the products being used. Here is some guidance on the most common problems to hopefully prevent you from making the same mistakes. Some of these topics are covered in more detail in our tiles and mosaics installation guide.

CHIPPING, DAMAGE, AND BREAKAGES

There is always a level of imperfection with natural stone tiles, this is part of the production process and is unavoidable. Every level of care is taken in packaging and delivery of these products but some level of damaged will be present this is completely normal and acceptable within the natural stone industry. Any tiles where the damage may be visible should be used for cuts or in area that is not going to be seen. You can expect between 10-15% to be affected within your orders and this should be allowed for when ordering.

CRACKING

Cracking is a common problem with all tiled floor installation. In every case the cracks are due to movement in the substrate that is transferred through to the tiles and is never the fault of the tiles themselves.

To help with this movement joints in walls and floors should be placed at all plane changes such as ceiling and floor positions and vertically at the end or start of each wall, or where the flooring hits a restraining surface, such as perimeter walls, thresholds etc.

It is also worth considering isolation or 'decoupling' matting when laying natural stone tiles, particularly in areas with underfloor heating, on newly screeded floors, where movement is likely to occur, on wooden substrates or where your floors have more than one type of substrate.

This will create a barrier between the floor and the tiles, which will soak up any movement and protect the tiles from cracking, one of the most common causes of problems in travertine, limestone, marble and slate tile installations.

COLOUR VARIATION

Occasionally customers come to us wanting to replace tile as they are not happy with the colour of one or more of the installed tiles. This is purely an installation mistake and can be easier rectified if the installer were to dry lay the tiles before fixing. This allows you to ensure that you have mixed all the colour shades within your batch of tiles prior to fixing. Every batch of natural stone will be different and there will always be colour variation within each of these batches. Ensure that your contractor opens all the crates or boxes of natural stone and selects from each one as he lays.

PLEASE NOTE: AT THE POINT OF INSTALLATION NO COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE APPEARANCE OR SUITABILITY OF THE PRODUCT WILL BE ACCEPTED BY NATURAL STONE AND TIMBER LTD.

GROUT HAZE

Grout haze is the residue left after inadequate cleaning of tiles after the completion of grouting. If grout is allowed to dry on the surface of the tiles, it will result in unsightly powered marks on the surface and if not sealed beforehand. The grout can also penetrate inside the tile surface. This can be extremely hard to remove and may require specialist cleaners and expert advice.

Please ensure that particular care is taken to clean and wipe away grout until the surface is completely clean and the sponge you are using runs clean. Finally going over with a clean dry cloth to ensure the surface is completely clean prior to sealing again.

UNSUITABLE SEALERS

Always use an impregnating sealer that is suitable for natural stone paving products. A small test area must be trialed first to ensure that you are happy with the finish. Do not use topical sealers that sit on the surface of the stone. These will not allow the stone to breathe and do not allow the salts, naturally present within the stone, to escape and can cause unsightly marks between the stone and sealer.

IF YOU NEED ANY ADVICE PLEASE CONTACT A MEMBER OF STAFF AT YOUR LOCAL DEPOT, ON ONE OF THE NUMBERS BELOW, WHO WILL BE HAPPY TO ADVISE YOU ON ANY OF OUR PRODUCTS.



INDOOR

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CHEMICAL DAMAGE

Most natural stone will react badly to anything acidic. Stones such as travertine and limestone are especially susceptible and the reaction between the acid and the tile can cause it to slowly start to disintegrate, etching the surface and leaving unsightly, rough, opaque marks on the surface of the stone. This why it is so important to use a PH neutral, non-abrasive, cleaner, and if you are using a cleaning contractor ensure they are always using the correct products. PH neutral cleaners are widely available from all supermarkets and will never affect the surface of the tiles. They will help keep your tiles looking in perfect condition for many years to come.

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PORTSMOUTH **02392 652923**
MON-FRI 7:30-16:30 SAT 9:00-14:00

POOLE **01202 736629**
MON-FRI 8:00-16:30 SAT 9:00-14:00

ROMSEY **01794 322908**
MON-FRI 7:30-16:30 SAT 9:00-14:00

TADLEY **01183 342256**
MON-FRI 8:00-16:30 SAT 9:00-14:00

WINCHESTER **01962 883708**
MON-FRI 7:30-16:30 SAT 9:00-14:00

WWW.NATURALSTONEANDTIMBER.CO.UK