



Installation Guide: Etched Stone

Elon® **ALWAYS** recommends that all installations be done in accordance with local building codes and adheres to Tile Council of North America specifications.

The etching process achieves a surface cut or abrasive pattern on a stone surface.

Preparation

Prior to installation of Natural Etched Stone:

- Open and inspect all etched stone cartons.
- All cartons should be opened, and material should be separated to allow the installer to layout all pieces and blend them together to give the final installation a uniform color blend, known as "Dry Laid."
- On large jobs, blend material from multiple pallets during Dry Laying.
- DO NOT set etched stone with a "Butt Joint". For mosaic grout joints, match the manufactured joint found on the mosaic sheet.
 - For grout joints 1/16" - 1/8" width, use Unsanded Grout.
 - For grout joints 1/8" - 5/8" width, use Sanded Grout.

Installation

When installing Natural Etched Stone:

- Use white thinset for light-colored natural stone.
 - Grey thinset may show trowel ridges or shading through the etched stone, affecting the finished installation color.
- On natural etched stone with mesh backing, always use quality Latex Modified Thinset for proper adhesion to the mesh.
- Many manufacturers recommend using latex modified thinset for marble rather than mastics, which may stain and discolor many natural stones.
 - Always follow manufacturers' Limitations and Instructions.
 - Test for compatibility
- When used in showers or tubs, Etched Stone should never be set with the bottom course extending into the shower base or tight to tub lip. Always leave a minimum gap of 1/4" above and perpendicular to the floor or lip of the tub or shower base and use a waterproof flexible sealant where they meet per TCNA specification B412-23.
 - Prevents water from wicking up the body of the etched stone, causing discoloration.
- For etched stone shower floors, recommend installations with a Complete Water Management System (e.g., Bonded Waterproof Tiled Shower Assemblies - Schluter) instead of Traditional shower installations (Mud job).

Grouting

Grouting Natural Etched Stone:

- Pre-Sealing etched stone before grouting is a MUST.
 - The use of products like Aqua Mix's Grout Release or pre-sealing marble prior to grouting helps prevent pigments in grout colors from staining the etched pattern.
 - Easier cleanup of grout residue from the etched pattern.
- When using High-Performance grouts, ones which don't require that the joint be sealed, natural stone should be pre-sealed prior to grouting with 2 coats of products like Aqua Mix's Sealers Choice, Enrich n Seal or Grout Release. This will minimize the polymers in the grouts from discoloring the natural stone.
- When using Epoxy, Urethane, Sanded or Unsanded grout, always conduct a test sample first to determine compatibility with the stone.
- Always confirm the finished look of the grouted product; some grout colors may affect the finished look of etched stone.
 - Test samples before grouting.
- Grouting etched material will require approximately twice the amount of grout compared to a honed finish.
- When removing excess grout, multiple diagonal washings following the grain of the pattern are needed.

Prior to Sealing of Finished Work

Remove any excess grout residue from Natural Etched Stone:

- A soft bristle nylon scrub brush may be required to remove grout residue from the etched pattern.

Sealing Finished Work

Sealing Natural Etched Stone and Grout Joints after installation:

- Use a high-quality penetrating sealer like *Aqua Mix® Sealers Choice® Gold* for the stone's natural color.
- Color-enhancing sealers on natural etched stone may blend the contrasting color of the etched pattern with the natural stone color, giving a less desirable look.
 - Test samples first.
- When sealing natural etched stone, apply each coat in a different direction (e.g., first coat Left to Right, second coat Front to Back).
- Multi-sided or 6-sided sealing of material 48 hours before installation will help minimize darkening of Marble on shower floors caused by water absorption and reduce the formation of effervescence and rust.
 - Use on material in areas with excessive moisture exposure: shower floors, marble walls along the base of the shower or tub flange, soap niches.
 - As per National Tile Contractors Association Reference Manual, Custom, or Mapei technical articles.

Common Problems

Common problems in Natural Etched Stone:

- Stain Removal:
 - Sealing etched stone helps reduce staining.
 - Always clean up spills promptly.
 - Minor stains can be removed using a Product like *Aqua Mix® Poultice Stain Remover* per the manufacturer's directions.
- Etched Stone will not have perfectly uniform grout joints due to the placement of the etched pattern design.
 - This is a characteristic of Etched Patterned material.
- Always inspect material for uniform thickness before installation.

Installation is Acceptance

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