



## **Installation Guide: Travertine**

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

### **Preparation**

*Prior to installation of Natural Travertine:*

- 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, always blend material from multiple pallets when dry laying the stone.
- When laying out the installation, DO NOT set travertine with a "Butt Joint." Tile Council of North America suggests a minimum 1/16" grout joint.
  - Unsanded grout for joints 1/16"- 1/8" width.
  - Sanded grout for joints 1/8"- 5/8" width.

### **Installation**

*When installing Natural Travertine:*

- Use a white thinset when installing any light-colored natural stone.
  - Using grey thinset could show trowel ridges or shading through the travertine and affect the finished installation color of natural stones.
  - On travertine with a fiberglass backer, always use a quality Latex Modified Thinset to ensure proper adhesion to the fiber mesh.
  - Many manufacturers recommend using latex modified thinset for travertine over mastics, which may stain and discolor many natural stones.
  - Always follow the manufacturers' limitations and instructions.
  - Test for compatibility
- When used in showers or tubs, Natural Travertine 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.
  - This will prevent water from wicking up the body of the travertine and causing discoloration and water lines to be seen on the stone's surface along the base.
- For travertine shower floors, recommend installations that incorporate a Complete Water Management System.
  - Bonded Waterproof Tiled Shower Assemblies (Schluter) vs. Traditional shower installations (Mud job).
  - When using a sanded grout, always do a test sample first.

## Grouting

*When grouting Natural Travertine:*

- 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 natural stone.
  - Pre-sealing makes for easier installation cleanup of grout residue.
- 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.

## Sealing

*Sealing Natural Travertine and Grout Joints after installation regardless of the finish:*

- Always use a high-quality penetrating sealer like *Aqua Mix® Sealers Choice® Gold* to leave the stones' natural color or a high-quality color-enhancing penetrating sealer like *Aqua Mix® Enrich 'N' Seal™* to enhance the natural color of the stone.
- When sealing natural travertine, apply each coat in a different direction. This will apply the sealer to all edges of the pores within the stone.
  - First coat: Left to Right
  - Second coat: Front to Back
- Multi-sided or 6-sided sealing of material 48 hours before installing will help minimize darkening of Travertine on shower floors caused by water absorption or to help minimize effervescence and rust from forming.
  - 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 Travertine:*

- Holes in the surface of travertine found during or after the installation can be repaired by filling the open hole with a color-matched cement grout or color-matched epoxy.
- Stain Removal in Natural Stone: Sealing travertine will help reduce staining; sealing only slows down the absorption of a stain and doesn't eliminate staining.
  - ALWAYS clean up spills promptly.
  - Many minor stains occurring in natural travertine after installation can be removed using a product like *Aqua Mix® Poultice Stain Remover* per the manufacturer's directions.
- Etching in natural stone: Sealing Travertine after installation helps minimize etching.
  - Enhancing sealers may help hide the dullness of some etched stones, but professional repolishing may be required to eliminate it.
- Many times, lippage or uneven surface height issues are a result of improper installation.
  - Always inspect material for uniform thickness before installation.

## Installation is Acceptance

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