Installation of
FLOOR & LARGE FORMAT TILE

Chamber Cliff Sterling
18 in. x 18 in. tile shown in brick pattern

1 STEP 1: SURFACE PREPARATION

- Tile may be installed over most structurally sound substrates.

- Make sure surface is clean, smooth, dry and free of wax, soap scum and grease.

- Any damaged, loose or uneven areas must be repaired, patched and leveled.

- Remove any moldings, trim, appliances or anything that could interfere with installation.

- Doorjambs may be undercut for tile to slip under.

2 STEP 2: LAYOUT

- Mark the center point of all four walls.

- Snap chalk lines between the center points of opposite walls. (Adjust if necessary.)

- Using tile spacers, lay out a row of loose tiles along the center lines in both directions. Leave space for uniform joints.
  TIP: If cuts leave tiles smaller than half of their original size, adjust the center line by snapping a new line a half tile closer to the wall. Repeat along other center line if necessary.

- Divide the room into smaller grids (approx. 2 ft. x 3 ft.) by snapping additional lines parallel to center lines.

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3 STEP 3: APPLYING ADHESIVE

- Mix only enough adhesive or mortar to be used within 30 minutes.

- Using the type of trowel recommended on the adhesive package, spread a 1/4 in. coat on the surface of one grid area, using the flat side of the trowel.

  NOTE: Do not cover guidelines or a larger area than can be set in 15 minutes.

- Use the notched side of trowel to comb adhesive into standing ridges by holding trowel at a 45° angle.

- Remove excess adhesive, leaving a uniform, ridged setting bed.

- For large format tiles, butter the backside of the tile to ensure proper full-coverage. Use a medium bed mortar for tiles with a dimensional length greater than 15 inches on any one side.

  NOTE: 90% mortar contact is recommended.

4 STEP 4: CUTTING TILE

- Carefully measure tiles and mark with a pencil or felt-tip pen.

- Make straight or diagonal cuts with a tile cutter, curved cuts with a nipper (chipping away small pieces for best results), and full-length curved cuts with a rod saw. Smooth out sharp-cut edges with a carborundum stone.

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5 STEP 5: SETTING TILE

- Install tiles in the center, one grid at a time. Finish each grid before moving to the next. Start with the first tile in the corner of the grid and work outward. Set tiles one at a time using a slight twisting motion.

  NOTE: Don't slide tiles into place.

- Insert tile spacers, as each tile is set, or leave equal joints between tiles.

- Fit perimeter tiles in each grid last, leaving 1/4 in. gap between tile and wall.

- When finished, tap in all tiles with a rubber mallet or hammer and wood block, to ensure a good bond and level plane.

- Remove excess adhesive from joints with a putty knife, and from tile with a damp sponge.

- Do not walk on tiles until they are set (usually in 24 hours).

6 STEP 6: GROUTING JOINTS

- Using the instructions on the package, make enough grout to use in about 30 minutes.

- Remove tile spacers and spread grout on the tile surface, forcing down into joints with a rubber grout float or squeegee.

- Tilt the float at a 45° angle and remove excess grout from surface immediately with the edge of float.

- Tilt it at a 90° angle and scrape it diagonally across tiles.

- Wait 15–20 minutes for grout to set slightly, then use a damp sponge to clean grout residue from surface and smooth the grout joints, rinsing sponge often.

- Let dry until grout is hard and haze forms on tile surface, then polish with a soft cloth and wait 72 hours for heavy use.

  NOTE: Don't apply sealers or polishes for three weeks, and then only in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

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7 STEP 7: INITIAL CLEANING

- The complete removal of grout and construction dirt after products have been installed will improve daily maintenance.

- Clean successfully by scrubbing the installation with hot water and a pH neutral liquid cleaner (soapless), followed by a thorough rinsing, then remove the rinse water with a wet vacuum or dry toweling.

- If some residue remains, further cleaning will need to be done in consultation with the grout manufacturer.

- For more aggressive cleaning, floor scrubbing machines equipped with nylon pads or brushes should be used. Wet vacuuming of the suspended dirt and grout is recommended.

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Back-butter — spreading of a bond coat to the back of a ceramic tile before placing the tile to ensure a strong bond with the thin-set mortar.

Balanced cuts — perimeter tile cut at equal size and installed on opposite sides of an area; also, equally sized cuts on each side of a miter.

Butt joint — a plain square joint between two members with no grout joint.

Grout — a mix used for filling tile joints, commonly based of cement.

Mortar — a mixture of cement paste and fine aggregate used to bond masonry together.

Plumb — perpendicular to true level.

Substrate — the underlying support for a ceramic tile installation

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