

INSTALLATION – CERAMIC WALL TILES



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Thanks for purchasing ARTO high fired terracotta tiles, handmade in Southern California since 1966, and available both glazed and unglazed.

PRODUCTS

- California Revival Decos
- Monrovia Tiles
- Studio Tiles
- Glazed Brick
- 3D Impressions Wall Veneer
- Oleson Tiles

GENERAL TIPS

- **Cover pallets or store indoors** to protect from the elements and other trades.
- **Unglazed tiles may be sealed**, depending on application, but glazed tiles do not need to be sealed.
- **Water intrusion can damage tiles and the installation.** Waterproofing membranes are strongly recommended for exterior installations and mandatory for wet areas.
- **A clear overglaze must be specified for tiles installed in waterline or submerged applications.** Water chemistry should be tested and adjusted regularly to prevent etching of the glazed surface.
- **Do not use acids, alkalis, or other harsh chemicals** to clean tiles before, during, and after installation.

SUBSTRATE PREPARATION



- The substrate is the surface to which your ARTO tile will be stuck.
- Approved substrates include cementitious backer boards, concrete masonry units, concrete panels.
- Bonding direct to drywall or wood substrates is not recommended.
- Gypsum backer boards should not be used for exterior applications, wet areas, or anywhere moisture is a concern.
- Concrete substrates must be clean, dry, and free of contaminants.
- Concrete substrates should have roughened surface for best bonding.
- All substrates must meet minimum deflection requirements L/360.

- **Movement joints**
 - Must be included per the TCNA Handbook¹ and are mandatory for walls and floors.
 - Interior: 20' to 25' in each direction
 - Exterior: 8' to 12' in each direction
 - Interior: 8' to 12" in each direction (areas exposed to sun or moisture)
 - Do not tile over movement joints.
 - Soft joints are required at perimeters and transitions to different materials.

MORTAR

- **Large format mortar is recommended for Monrovia tiles².** Thin set mortar may be used for Studio tile and Glazed Brick.
- **Do not apply mortar thicker than recommended** in order to repair substrates, level tiles, create transitions, or for any other purpose.
- Mix mortar and clean cool water using a variable speed electric drill or mixer with a birdcage mixing attachment.

¹ Section EJ171 of the TCNA Handbook provides more details and extended discussion.

² Large format mortar is recommended for tiles weighing more than 5 pounds per square foot or with any edge 15" or greater.

- Stir occasionally with trowel to keep fluffy. Do not retemper (add water) to already mixed mortar.
- **Use ½” square or ¾” rounded notched trowel to spread mortar** on the substrate using the flat side of the trowel
- **Form grooves in one direction under each tile** using the notched side of the trowel.
- Using the flat side of the trowel, **spread mortar on the back of each tile to achieve 100% mortar coverage.**
- **Place tiles by moving them perpendicular to the mortar ridges** so that the ridges collapse and all voids are filled.

GROUTING

- **Make sure grout selected is appropriate** for grout joint width.
- **Unglazed tiles and textured glazes can be presealed** to ease grout clean up.
- **Clean grout promptly** with wet sponge to avoid staining.
- **Using a grout bag is recommended** to fill the joints rather than floating or smearing grout.
- Fill grout bag and twist until slack is taken up. Roll the bag tighter to maintain constant pressure.
- Squeeze bag in order to completely fill each joint slightly higher than the tile surface.
- **When grout begins to set up, tool the joint** to compact the grout.
- **Clean excess grout before it hardens** on the tile surface.
- **Do not use too much water when cleaning** as it can weaken grout and cause cracking
- Damp curing by misting the grout joints two or three times daily is strongly recommended. This will help minimize grout shrinkage and cracking.
- **Allow grout to cure for 72 hours.**

SEALING

- **Unglazed tiles can be sealed with penetrating or topical sealer** depending on application and desired appearance.
- **Do not mix sealers, mixing sealers can create bonding issues.**



- Penetrating – matte, “invisible” finish that protects below surface
- Topical – glossy or satin, coats surface to create barrier
- **Make sure sealer selected is appropriate** for installation type and location.
- **Apply sealer per the sealer manufacturer’s instructions.**
- Two coats of sealer are typically needed.
- Make sure to allow sealer the recommended time to cure in between coats.
- **Water should initially bead up on surface when tiles are sealed.**
- **Stains should be cleaned promptly**, sealer does not waterproof tile and stains will eventually penetrate or etch sealer.

CLEANING

- **Clean regularly with warm water and pH-neutral cleanser.**
- **Do not use acids, alkalis, or other harsh chemicals** for regular cleaning.
- A mild acid or alkali cleanser may be used for spot cleaning. Make sure to test first on a small, unobtrusive area to ensure desired results.
- **Do not use chemical or mechanical abrasives** including stiff bristle and wire brushes, sandpaper, or power washing.