

Solus Handcast Concrete tile is a unique product that should be handled and installed like natural stone, similar to semi-gauged slate. There are a few important recommendations that should be noted.

General notes:

Concrete tile should only be stacked on edge, never stack them flat.

-Each tile will be slightly bowed (bowing increases as length of tile increase), so if flat stacked, they will break in half! Always keep them on edge.

Store in a dry place.

-Concrete tiles will efflorescence or discolour if left in a moist environment or if water is left on the surface.

Unwrap the tile completely.

-Each tile is individually wrapped which fine for storage, but if you open up the wrapping please unwrap the whole tile. This prevents uneven moisture penetration into the tile. If you leave the tile partially wrapped you may end up with a permanent moisture shadow.

Tape will leave permanent marks!

-There are acids in the glue of the tape that react with concrete and will leave a "tape shadow" if left on for too long. You can use tape and we do so for every job, BUT you must remove the tape within 30 min. Always use small amounts of tape as you proceed, removing it immediately after use.

The surface is soft, like limestone.

-Be careful not to scratch the surface, especially when edge stacking.

Large tiles are very heavy.

-Having an understanding about how to work with heavy finishes will make the job much easier. A stone mason is the best professional to install our product.

Tiles are not flat.

-Due to the nature of concrete, each tile may cup or bow or have un-equal thicknesses.

Sub-floor.

-Concrete is only as strong as the substrate upon which it is set. Properly cured concrete, or plywood of at least 1-1/4" is adequate. If the sub-floor is at all questionable, we recommend using an anti-fracture membrane.

Installation notes:

Sealing...FOUR TIMES!

-Concrete is more absorptive than other stone and may draw moisture from wet cutting, mortars and grouts. Pre-seal each tile as you unwrap them and then again as you randomize before setting. Then AGAIN just before grouting. And a final light buff and seal to finish it off.

All of this sealing will help to prevent grout haze which can take a considerable amount of time get rid of. Do it...it's worth the effort.

AuqaMix Sealer's Choice (solvent based) and Miracle 511 Porous Plus are recommended.

Randomize the tiles.

-Concrete is poured from batches. There will be a certain number of tiles that have a similar colour and the next batch may have a slightly different colour and so on. So it is imperative that you unwrap them all and randomize the different shades. There may even be a few that are too dark (or light) and should be used in non conspicuous areas. A bit of artistry will give a beautiful result.

Cutting is tricky & there will be chipping.

-Concrete is made up of a soft "body" (cement) with hard chunks (granite aggregate) suspended inside. What tends to happen is the saw "grabs and pulls" on the hard bits causing "blow out" in the adjacent softer cement. To minimize the chipping, cut from the outer edges inward towards the center of the tile (~2"). Then cut a shallow line across the whole face. Then do a deep cut all the way through, making sure the tile hasn't shifted. Always do some test cuts on scrap to get the feel of the material.

Once you have your cut piece you will need to use a dressing stone, or grinding wheel to bevel the chipped edge. Use a light touch with multiple passes to match the factory bevel. This will clean up the chipped edge and render it less visible after grouting.

It is best to use tiles whole with factory edges left intact. Cut edges should be hidden by baseboards or along wall edges.

No miters!

-Concrete cannot be mitered due to the reasons explained above. The soft cement "body" cannot hold an edge. It just wont work. Design a tile layout using butt joints only.

1/4" grout joint between tiles.

-Because each tile may not be the exact same size you will need some space to shift the tiles around to make them appear correct. You can go down to 3/16", but be warned that this will make it a bit more difficult to adjust the tiles over a larger distance. Do not go any less than 3/16" gaps.

Turn off the in floor heating.

-if there is in-floor heating turn it off and allow to cool for at least 1 day. No more than 15 deg. Celsius.

Backbutter tiles.

-Because the tiles may be cupped or bowed you will need to fully backbutter and then place into bedding. Wiggle the tile a bit to ensure full contact over the entire area.

Use a thinset mortar.

-choose a product that works for semi-gauged slate.

Cut with a standard diamond wet saw.

-After cutting, immediately wipe the tile dry and clean off debris. Do not leave water standing on tile.

Expansion joints.

-For larger tiles (24"+) we advise an expansion joint at 20' spacing.

Grouting.

-We recommend the use of Mapei Ultracolor Plus or a non-cementitious grout. When washing grout, do not allow standing moisture to remain on the tiles. Wipe tiles dry and clean well to remove grout haze. Keep tiles clean!

Final steps.

-Use a soft broom and sweep away debris. Buff the entire floor using an orbital floor buffer with a "white" buffing pad. Vacuum up dust and apply the final sealing coats.

-Make sure to protect finished areas from other construction debris or traffic. Remember...NO TAPE ON THE CONCRETE.

Exterior Applications.

-Solus tile can be used outdoors, but it will wear and age with time and exposure to the elements. Eventually the smooth finish will be eroded and aggregate will be exposed.

-To maintain a shiny and "new" looking finish, use an exterior grade acrylic concrete sealer. Be aware that these types of finishes will need to be reapplied.

Maintenance.

-Cleaning: day to day cleaning can be done with a damp mop and water. Add about 1-ml of dish soap to the bucket. You want enough soap to do the job, but you don't want foam or bubbles. It won't take much.

-For heavy cleaning, use a neutral pH detergent such as Aqua Mix Concentrated Cleaner.

-Our concrete tile will tend to become shinier as it wears. This can also be achieved mechanically by buffing with an orbital floor polisher and a "white" pad.

-Water marks may or may not be permanent. You can attempt to buff them out with a green Scotch Brite pad. Use very light pressure in a circular motion and buff outward around the whole area, not just where the water mark is. If you only buff the effected area, you may create a "buff burn". This is a shiny or dull spot which may draw more attention than the original mark! So your aiming to buff out

Please be careful when buffing the concrete. It is also possible to buff too much, exposing the aggregate beneath the surface.

-Acidic substances such as cola, wine and oils will stain the surface. To help avoid staining, spills should be wiped up as soon as possible.

THESE ARE GUIDELINES ONLY AND ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR A QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED STONE MASON.