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Problems with GROUT

When do you use caulk instead of grout?

INSIDE TILE INC

CERTIFIED TILE INSTALLER (CTI) TEST

A big thank you to all the installers that participated in the CTI test. Thank you to American Olean, Laticrete and Permabase for supporting the event hosted at Tile Inc.



Installers are finishing up their test modules before cleaning up to take the written exam.

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Technically, anywhere there is a change in substrate or backing surface such as the joint between walks and floor and wall joint, caulk should be used in place of grout since these surfaces move independently of each other. However, it is important to recognize and make the end user aware of some important points.

Often, installers use grout in place of caulk for these reasons:

- 1) The caulk may not exactly match the grout color
- 2) Even when the caulk exactly matches the grout color when installed, it may not match 6 months later (Caulk will "age" differently from the grout.)
- 3) Caulk will need to be maintained more often than grout
- 4) Mold may grow more easily on caulk (except caulk treated with mildewcide) than on grout
- 5) Acrylic caulks break down in horizontal wet applications - silicone, urethane, or multi-polymer caulks are better choices but can be harder to apply

However, when grout is used in place of caulk, the grout can cause structural and aesthetic problems:

- 1) The grout will crack allowing moisture to penetrate
- 2) Where the grout is sufficiently strong, movement in the walls, floor, or countertop can damage the tile
- 3) Grout cannot hide corner cuts as well as caulk

In summary, caulk is the better choice - but the customer needs to understand its limitations.

Tile Inc. stocks TEC siliconized acrylic caulk in sanded and unsanded formulas in all TEC colors. These caulks are designed to match TEC AccuColor grouts, have mold and mildew resistance, have water resistance, are a touch and flexible seal, can be used interior or exterior and lastly, are freeze thaw stable.

TEC also offer's 100% Silicon Sealant. This high performance silicon sealant is designed to provide a flexible, long lasting and water resistant seal in swimming pools, spas, fountains and many other wet area applications. It has permanent flexibility and durability that won't crack or soften. This product also has long life, can be used interior or exterior, and is also designed to match the most popular TEC grout colors or is available in clear. Tile Inc. stocks a few of the more popular colors, to include 945 Light Buff, 915 Light Smoke, 910 Bright White and 988 Pearl. Contact your friends at Tile Inc. to order the 100% Silicon Sealant in any of the other offered colors.

http://www.tileusa.com/grout_faq.htm#sizejoint