

Cleaning and Maintenance 1

Natural Tiles products possess extremely high resistance to staining as detailed in *Technical Data Sheet No.4*. They are easily maintained and the following guidance gives advice on the correct methods to be adopted in specific situations.

Post Fix Cleaning

After fixing flooring installations frequently exhibit a white scum which is insoluble in water and is not removed by normal cleaning techniques. This arises from the use of Portland Cement in the grout mix and should be removed using an appropriate acid based agent. It is recommended that a specialist product is used such as HG Extra, which is an environmentally safe, concentrated, non-hazardous acid detergent.

Where epoxy grout has been used and residues remain on the tile surface it will be necessary to use a specially formulated agent such as HG Spot Stain Remover.

It is critical, during cleaning, that all removed contaminants are rinsed away with copious amounts of clean water to prevent them re-depositing elsewhere on the flooring surface.

Sealing

Natural Tiles **do not** recommend that any sealer, polish, wax, or oils should be applied to quarry tiles as the tiles are highly moisture resistant. Any such treatments applied would detract from the natural slip-resistant properties of the tiles and also provide a medium that would attract and retain dirt and other contaminants. However, if a satin sheen were required for aesthetic reasons or to aid future cleaning, an application of HG Golvpolish would be suitable on clean and dry domestic floors.

General Cleaning

Under normal circumstances, NTL quarry tiles require little maintenance and can be kept clean by sweeping and washing with warm water to which a suitable detergent has been added.

For regular use we recommend the HG range of cleaners which are available for every possible application. For general cleaning use HG Quick, for hygiene areas such as commercial kitchens and toilets HG Green should be used.

If an application of HG Golvpolish has been used HG Superfloor should be used for regular maintenance. Detergents containing waxes or polishing agents should not be used.

Cleaning of Food Processing Areas

For commercial kitchens, industrial applications, or anywhere that food is being prepared or stored, a strict cleaning regime is essential to keep the floor clean both for reasons of hygiene and for the physical safety of persons working in the area.

The type, degree and frequency of cleaning the ceramic tiles will depend on the activities and processes being carried out in the area, together with the amount and type of trafficking.

To ensure that all areas are appropriately and adequately cleaned a programme of cleaning should be developed for each area or establishment.

The following cleaning procedures are recommended:

Daily Cleaning Procedures

On at least a daily basis, the gross debris should be removed by brushing, vacuuming and the scraping of deposits. Then the entire tiled floor should be washed with warm water to which a neutral, low sulphate detergent has been added.

Natural Tiles recommends the use of HG Green. The cleaner may be applied by mopping or by mechanical scrubbing machine and allowed to act on the tile surface for 5 to 15 minutes. After this process it is essential that the solution is completely removed from the floor by the final rinsing process.

It is the rinsing process that removes the dirt from the floor.

Surfaces should not be allowed to remain wet after cleaning. Not only may this present a physical slip hazard, but it could also allow micro-organisms to grow in the water film.

The disinfecting process may then be applied. The type of disinfectant used will be determined principally by the type of food being processed and the type of micro-organisms to be eliminated. For general purpose cleaning in food processing premises, chlorine based compounds or liquid hypochlorite solutions are amongst the most suitable.

Periodic Cleaning Procedures

In addition to the daily cleaning schedule, it is prudent to undertake periodic deep cleansing by a more vigorous cleaning technique to remove any build up of lime scale, grease or cleaning agent residue.

The use of a strong alkaline or acidic cleaning agent or both sequentially may be required to remove the accumulated deposit. A rotary-action scrubbing machine fitted with polypropylene brushes and a detergent tank is suitable for this operation.

Greasy deposits can be removed by use of a detergent incorporating either an organic solvent or a highly alkaline detergent (PH > 9). HG Remover is recommended for this purpose.

Mineral salts or hard scale can be a source of bacterial contamination. These may be detected by ultraviolet light and removed by use of an acidic cleaner such as HG Blue

Abrasive cleaners can be beneficial but should only be used occasionally and only on unglazed tiles.

No polish, sealant or oil should be applied to a ceramic tile floor in any food preparation or processing area.

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Removal of Stubborn Stains

Stubborn stains on quarry tiles may be removed principally in three ways:

- Physically - by scrubbing with an abrasive soap such as Vim or Ajax and/or an abrasive scouring pad.
- Chemically - by reaction or dissolution with an appropriate chemical or solvent.
- Bleaching - to remove colour from the stain.

Whichever method is employed final rinsing with copious amounts of fresh water is required. The Natural Tiles technical department can advise on the most suitable products for successful stain removal. In addition to cleaning the surface, procedures should be established for the cleaning and disinfection of the cleaning equipment such as mops, swabs and buckets. There must be proper management to ensure that all cleaning procedures set down are carried out in an effective manner at specified intervals of time.

Care must be taken when handling and using industrial detergents and disinfectants. The appropriate protective clothing and goggles must be made available and worn where appropriate. Cleaning material containers must be kept separately from food and packaging. Their contents must be clearly marked and the manufacturer's instructions adhered to. The effectiveness of cleaning and disinfection procedures should be verified by microbiological monitoring of the food product and the contact surfaces.

Renovation of Existing Floors

The degree of renovation required will be proportional to the neglect and general condition of the floor. The floor must be checked for structural integrity, continuous grouting and freedom from any small pits or cracks in either the tiles or the grout.

The tile surface may be renovated by the application of an alkaline, heavy-duty floor stripper such as HG Remover. This is designed to remove waxes, floor sealers,

oils and soap residue. The treatment should be carried out according to the manufacturer's instructions. Thorough rinsing of the floor is essential. Then clean as described previously.

The application of Linseed Oil or polishes to quarry tiles is not recommended, since they are not absorbed into the surface and tend to make the tiles more slippery and more difficult to clean.

Cleaning & Maintenance Products

There are many products specially formulated for the cleaning and maintenance of quarry tile installations and these are widely available through tile distributors and retailers who can also offer advice on suitability and use.

Natural Tiles Ltd highly recommend the HG range of tile cleaning products which have been specially formulated for the cleaning and maintenance of our ceramic tiles.

HG Extra

Safely removes cement film without affecting the joints and should be used following installation. Also suitable for removing lime scale and rust stains

HG Quick

A special cleaner for lightly & heavily soiled floor tiles and stoneware.

HG Green

Specially formulated for the hygienic cleaning of large surfaces such as commercial kitchens.

HG Blue

A powerful yet safe product for the removal of stubborn limescale and residues such as soap and body oils etc. in shower areas and swimming pool surrounds.

HG Golypolish

A removable surface coating which imparts a satin gloss and aids future cleaning.

HG Superfloor

Designed specifically for floors which have been previously treated with Golypolish.

HG Spot Stain Remover

Will remove epoxy grout residues and other difficult stains.

HG Remover

For stripping back quarry tiled floors to their original finish. Used extensively for renovation in removing waxes and polishes etc.

Note: This information is of a general nature and intended for guidance purposes. It is recommended that the most suitable materials and methods for cleaning specific installations should be established in consultation with an appropriate specialist.

The following detailed cleaning and maintenance guides are available on request from our Customer Services Department:

- Renovation guide for quarry tiles.
- Large areas of ceramic tiled floors in shopping malls, public and office buildings.
- Commercial kitchens etc.
- Leisure and sports centres etc.
- Car showrooms and workshops
- Fire Stations