



**Botteganove**

# **GUIDELINES FOR INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE**

## Disclaimer

This document provides general installation tips, precautions, and recommendations for our tiles and mosaics. It is not a step-by-step guide, but rather a resource to help ensure the proper handling and care of our products. We strongly recommend that all installations be carried out by a qualified professional to ensure proper application and long-term performance.

**For any specific questions or situations not addressed here, please contact us.**

## Before Installation

### Pre-Installation Product Check

Always verify the suitability of the product before installation

### Check Product Suitability:

Ensure that the application is appropriate for the tile's body and glaze. For wet areas like pools, spas, or environments subject to freeze-thaw conditions, make sure the product is suitable for the intended purpose. For such applications, or similar, please contact us for the correct options

Tools and products used for the installation should be appropriate for the type of tile finishes. **Precious finishes** (such as metal, iridescent luster, or special hand decorations) should be handled with care and properly maintained to ensure they look their best.

### Natural Material Features and tiles layout:

Typical grout spacing ranges from  $\pm 3$  mm ( $\pm 1/8$ "") to  $\pm 2$  mm ( $\pm 5/64$ ""). Size variation is accentuated by grout spacing, so it's important to carefully consider the grout joint size before installation. If deviating from the recommended spacing, please create a suitable mock-up to replicate the site conditions. Be sure to lay out tiles and pull from different boxes to achieve the best color blend. Lay out tiles (or tile sheets) to determine cuts and grout spacing, and double-check that you have enough tiles to complete the project with some spare pieces.

**Once installed, claims regarding color and size variations will not be accepted.**

If you require additional pieces, do not start the installation until you have them. Each tile order is handcrafted and unique, so additional pieces may vary in color from the original order.

## Recommended Tools and Materials

### General Cutting Tips

Handling Imperfections: If any tiles have imperfections, set them aside for cuts. Always prioritize using tiles that are free from visible defects for the visible areas of the installation.

Cutting Blade: Use a new tile blade for cleaner cuts. An overused blade can result in rough edges and uneven cuts.

Water Management: Ensure that the water on the cutting blade is clean and flowing at full force. This helps maintain a clean cut and prevents tile damage during the cutting process.

Edge Treatment: After cutting, if necessary, stone or sand the edges to smooth them out. This is particularly important for tiles with sharp or rough edges.

Placement of Cut Edges: Always position cut edges against the outside walls or ceiling where they will be hidden from view. This ensures that any visible imperfections in the cut are not noticeable.

Faucet Cut-Outs: Make sure the faucet flange or any similar fixtures cover any chipping on the edges of a cut-out, as these can be prone to damage during the installation.

Pre-Cutting Preparation: Dip tiles in clean water before cutting to help with the cutting process and minimize dust.

Post-Cutting: After cutting, dry the tiles thoroughly before applying any silicone or caulking. This ensures better adhesion and avoids moisture-related issues during installation.

### Setting Materials:

#### Recommended Tools:

Notched trowel, sponge, safety glasses.

**Substrate and adhesive:** the appropriate substrate and adhesive should be selected on a case-by-case basis. However, in most cases, the tile application (where the tiles are being installed) clearly dictates the best adhesive option. Consult with your installer, contractor, or architect for guidance. Be careful not to spread the adhesive over areas larger than can be set within 5-10 minutes.

To compensate for slight irregularities in the flatness of the tiles, adhesive can also be applied to the back of the tiles. This helps ensure even coverage and a smoother finish.

**When applying tiles or mosaic sheets, avoid applying excessive pressure.**

### Overview of Tile Adhesives

Selecting the right adhesive is essential for ensuring proper tile installation. Here are the main types:

**Cement-Based Adhesives:** Common for ceramic and porcelain tiles, these adhesives are versatile and ideal for most indoor installations.

**Epoxy Adhesives:** Durable and moisture-resistant, perfect for wet areas like pools or high-traffic zones.

**Mastic Adhesives:** Pre-mixed and easy to use, suitable for dry areas with lighter tiles.

**Polymer-Modified Adhesives:** Offer enhanced bonding strength and flexibility, ideal for areas exposed to moisture or temperature fluctuations.

### Choosing the Right Adhesive:

Ensure the adhesive is compatible with your tile type, the installation area (e.g., wet or dry), and the environmental conditions. For more details on suitable adhesives, visit the following sites:

<https://www.litokol.it>

<https://www.mapei.com>

<https://www.kerakoll.co>

# Tile Installation

## Grout Joint Spacing:

For mosaics, keep the spacing consistent with the grout joints within the sheets. For individual tiles, avoid too tight of a grout joint. For the **Flora collection**, we suggest placing the tiles next to each other without spacers and rotating them so the joints form naturally.

Due to the handcrafted nature of our tiles, slight size and thickness variations (up to  $\pm 2.5/4$  mm -  $\pm 7/64$ " -  $1/8$ ") are normal. We recommend using larger grout joints to minimize the impact of these variations and to make the installation appear more uniform.

## Grouting and Cleaning

### Recommended Tools:

Rubber gloves, grout float, soft sponge (not abrasive), clean water, soft grout float.

### Grout Release:

Grout release: should be used with tiles with crazing/crackle-surface or on our STANDARD FINISHES (please see below on these sections) and CLEAR SATIN FINISHES. Grout release" is a removable, water soluble surface coating that is used to protect tile from staining when using a colored grout. It also makes grout clean up a little bit easier.

### Advantages:

Protects the surface against grout, construction dirt and mortar stains.

Makes grout cleanup easy.

Forms an invisible, protective barrier resistant to moisture and stains while allowing water vapor to escape.

Ideal for absorbent materials: unpolished natural and reconstituted stone, quarry tile and terracotta.

**Before full application, test the product on a small, inconspicuous area of the surface or loose sample to check for any changes in color. Do not apply the product outdoors if rain is in the forecast.**

### Grout Color:

**Our technical office is always available to suggest grout combinations based on our experience to help achieve the best result for your project.**

### Matching:

If the tile color has to be the center of attention, we suggest matching grout color (or just get as close to it in tone if a bright color have been chosen). This will prevent the eye from being distracted from the pattern found within the grout line.

### Contrasting:

A contrasting grout highlight the pattern found in the layout and shape of the tile

### Neutral:

A neutral grout is always a safe choice - most of the time it goes with everything. The pattern will be more noticeable than a matching grout but not the main feature as seen with contrasting grout installations.

# Recommended Grout Product

## General recommendation:

Always use high-performance, non-sanded, and non-grit grout. **Before full application, test the product on a small, inconspicuous area of the surface or on a loose sample to check for any changes in color.**

## PRECIOUS FINISHES:

We recommend using a non-sanded epoxy grout. Epoxy grout is the most durable, but also the most expensive option. **Always test the chosen grout in an inconspicuous spot first and perform preliminary practical tests.**

Over the years, we have successfully tested the epoxy grout **Starlike by Litokol**. <https://www.litokol.it/en>

For certain precious finishes (like **Metal Golden shade**) we recommend using a cement-based grout, such as **Fugabella by Kerakoll**. <https://www.kerakoll.com>

Our technical office can advise you on the most suitable grout for your project.

## STANDARD FINISHES

As a first choice, we recommend using a non-sanded epoxy grout, as it provides the best durability (see PRECIOUS FINISHES chapter). Alternatively, Fugabella by Kerakoll (cement-based) can also be used. **Always test the grout in a hidden area first and perform preliminary tests as needed.**

Our satin finishes are considered standard finishes but should be treated with care.

**Note: These are suggestions based on our experience and industry best practices. They are intended to guide you in selecting the most appropriate materials and methods for your project, but they are not binding instructions.**

## Grouting Process and Cleaning:

In addition to the text below for epoxy grouting, please refer to the **'Technical Guide for Epoxy Grouting'** which provides detailed explanations and illustrations.

### Grouting Technique:

Try grout in an inconspicuous spot first.

Apply grout in **small sections** and remove excess grout as you go. While the grout is still fresh, adjust the joint depth using a wet grout sponge (non-abrasive). Use only water to clean the tiles. Water need to be cleaned quite often to obtain a faster initial cleaning.

Do not clean too soon or you may pull grout out of the joints.

### PRECIOUS FINISHES / GROUT REMOVAL:

#### Important Guideline:

**Both the first cleaning and the removal of grout haze are critical steps in the installation process. Improper handling during these phases may compromise the finish, potentially affecting its color or appearance.**

Cleaning Instructions:

First cleaning: Clean with warm water and a soft cellulose sponge.

Do not use acid or alkaline-based cleaners, as they can damage the finish.

For grout haze removal, we recommend using Litonet Gel by Litokol, this is typically used in two steps as a detergent:

- 1) The first cleaning is done about an hour after the grout has been applied and followed by cleaning with a soft sponge and warm water.
- 2) The second operation, to remove grout haze, is usually performed 10-12 hours later.

**Always proceed with care and avoid excessive pressure when cleaning the grout excess or grout haze to prevent any damage affecting the appearance of the finish. Always test the chosen detergent in a hidden area before using it.**

### STANDARD FINISHES / GROUT REMOVAL:

#### Important Guideline:

**Both the first cleaning and the removal of grout haze are critical steps in the installation process. Improper handling during these phases may compromise the finish, potentially affecting its color or appearance.**

If epoxy grout has been used, please refer to the PRECIOUS FINISHES / GROUT REMOVAL section.

If a cement-based grout (such as Fugabella by Kerakoll) has been used, follow the instructions below to remove the grout excess:

Cleaning Instructions:

First cleaning:

Once the grout has set slightly (about an hour after application), clean the surface as much as possible with a soft sponge and warm water (ensure the water is as clear as possible).

Second cleaning:

After a few hours (depending on the temperature of the area where the tiles have been installed), use a neutral cleaner or a specific grout cleaner designed for cementitious grout residues, such as Keranet by Kerakoll. Using a soft sponge, gently clean the grout haze from the surface. Avoid applying excessive pressure to prevent damaging the tile surface or finish.

Please follow the manufacturer's instructions for each product to ensure proper cleaning and maintenance. If you need additional guidance, feel free to contact us.

## Maintenance:

### PRECIOUS FINISHES:

Clean using only warm water and a soft cellulose sponge. Avoid using any acid- or alkaline-based cleaners.

### STANDARD FINISHES

Use a neutral pH cleaner and always test in a hidden area before applying to the entire surface.

### Post-Installation Care

#### Tile Storage:

If tiles need to be stored before installation, keep them in their original packaging and off the ground to prevent exposure to dirt or moisture. If wrapped in plastic cellophane, do not remove it. Keep tiles covered with a tarp or plastic covering to protect them from the elements. Ensure the tiles are stored in a dry area, and avoid stacking boxes higher than 75 cm (2.5 feet).

## Important Notes

### Responsibility:

Botteganove SRL is not liable for any damage incurred during installation or grouting. Complaints regarding materials once installed will not be accepted. Color variations, surface irregularities, and shade differences are inherent to the handcrafted nature of our tiles and are not considered defects



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