7

Installation of Rubber tiles

On receipt of tiles, check that colours correspond to those ordered, that quantities are correct and there is no obvious damage. In particular check that tiles are from one batch, if that was requested on the order. On arrival at site, the tiles should be stored, together with the adhesive, at a minimum temperature of 18ºC for at least 24 hours before laying. The tiles should be off-loaded from the pallet and stacked no more than five boxes high during the conditioning period.

Inflammable adhesives require special storage conditions. Contact the adhesive manufacturer or see current literature for details.

To achieve best results, site conditions should be as described in BS 8203. A working temperture of between 18ºC and 26ºC is required for 24 hours prior to, and during, the laying period and for 24 hours afterwards. Conditioning areas and laying areas should be of similar temperature, to prevent thermally induced dimensional changes.

In installations where underfloor heating is used, this should be switched off from 48 hours prior to installation until 48 hours afterwards. It should then be brought slowly back up to the working temperature, a maximum of 27ºC. Adhesives capable of withstanding temperatures up to 27ºC should be used. Where direct sunlight, sometimes in conjunction with underfloor heating, creates high surface temperatures on the floor, an approved epoxy or polyurethane adhesive should be used.

The work area should now be prepared to receive the rubber tiles. Ensure all other trades have completed their work and removed all their equipment and materials. Remove all debris and sweep or vacuum the whole floor area. Check the condition of the subfloor and make good as necessary. Stone or power grind any cementicious subfloor to remove any "nibs" or ridges. Remove any surface contaminants that may affect adhesion. Sweep or vacuum again prior to laying. If required, check the moisture content of the subfloor and record the results and method used. Good lighting is essential.

It is important to note that commencement of work is deemed by many as acceptance of the site conditions as being suitable for laying floorcoverings.

7.1 LAYOUT OF RUBBER TILES

Although many floor layers regard tiles as being easier to lay than sheet, the layout of the tiles can be critical to the success of the installation. The regular form of tiles, especially when laid in contrasting colours, can accentuate deviations in the building line, emphasising the need for detailed planning of the layout. Many floor layers start in the main doorway, believing that the initial impression when entering a room is most important. However, working from the centre of the room and loose laying tiles to check the layout will make the final appearance correct from any viewpoint. This is especially important where a geometric design is incorporated into the floor.

7.2 MEASURING AND MARKING OUT

A. *Measure the room to be laid in both directions, including any alcoves etc.*

B. *Mark a chalk centreline A-B ensuring that it is square to the wall with the doorway.*

C. *Loose lay tiles away from the centreline A-B and check that no small strips will have to be laid at the perimeter of the room. If small strips do result, move the centreline in either direction, keeping it parallel to the line A-B, so that the perimeter tiles will only require a small piece cutting off.*

D. *Mark a chalk centreline C-D, ensuring that it is square to the line A-B. Check squareness with a large square, trammels or geometrically.*

E. *Loose lay tiles away from the centreline C-D and check that no small strips will have to be laid. Adjust centreline C-D as described for A-B. In Figure 20, by moving the centreline C-D towards the door, tile 6 would only require a small amount to be trimmed off, as would tile 8 on the opposite wall.*
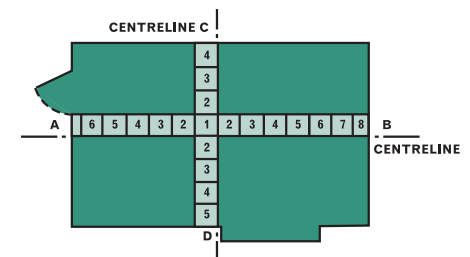
Figure 20 Laying out rubber tiles

7.3 SPREADING THE ADHESIVE

If the subfloor is porous, it should be primed using a primer compatible with the adhesive, as recommended by the adhesive manufacturer.

The amount of adhesive that can be spread at any one time depends upon the prevailing site conditions, such as temperature, humidity and throughflow of air – all of which affect the open time of the adhesive.

Adhesive manufacturers provide details of the open time, and their instructions should be followed. Ideally, the floor area should be divided into workable sections, leaving the perimeter tile areas unadhered until the main body of the floor has been laid.

7.4 ADHERING THE MAIN FIELD OF TILES

Ensure the backs of the tiles are free from dust prior to laying. This can be done whilst waiting for the adhesive to "go off". Once the adhesive is ready to accept the tiles, place the first tile at the starting point, which is the intersection of the two centrelines. Press well down in the centre of the tile and then run a thumb around the edge, ensuring all air is expelled.

Place the next tile in position, alternating the colour if necessary, and proceed down the centreline, laying two tiles wide i.e. one tile either side of the centreline. It is essential to keep the tiles exactly on the centreline.

When using "high tack" adhesives such as contact adhesive, take care not to twist or distort the tile whilst laying. If the tile is stretched, its dimensional stability will eventually return it to its original shape and the adhesive bond will be broken.

Repeat the sequence along the centreline at right angles to the first. Then, working from the completed centrelines, finish the section taking care that tile bond is maintained throughout. Any excess adhesive should be removed as work proceeds. When a section has been laid, except for the perimeter, it should be thoroughly rolled in both directions with a 68kg articulated floor roller. Repeat for each section until the main field of tiles has been laid.

7.5 CUTTING THE PERIMETER TILE

Two techniques are commonly used for cutting perimeter tiles. The choice is mainly dependent upon the run out of the wall.

7.5.1 Overlapping Method

Used when there is little or no run out of the abutting wall.

A. *Place the tile to be cut exactly over the last tile laid, ensuring the colour is correct.*

Figure 21 Measuring using an overlapping tile

B. *Place another full tile on top of the tile to be cut, with its "top edge" against the wall (Figure 21).*

C. *Scribe a line onto the tile to be cut, using the "bottom edge" of the top tile as a guide.*

D. *Cut the tile to the scribed line, loose lay into position and check the fit. Repeat along the whole wall.*

7.5.2 Scriber Method

Used when the wall run out is quite severe or when the wall profile cannot be picked up using a straight edge.

A. *Place the tile to be cut exactly over the last tile laid ensuring the colour is correct.*

B. *Set the bar scriber to the size of the tile being laid.*

C. *Trace the profile of the wall onto the tile to be cut, ensuring the bar scriber is kept upright and square to the edge of the tile. Cut the tile to the scribed line, loose lay into position and check the fit. Repeat along the whole wall.*

Note: Both the overlapping and scriber methods can be used to fit around projections such as door frames. Similarly, a template can be made or templating guide containing movable pins used for awkward shapes.

7.6 ADHERING THE PERIMETER TILES

Once a wall edge has been fitted and loose laid, turn all the tiles inward so as not to lose their position. Spread the adhesive right up to the edges. When the adhesive has lost sufficient moisture, lay the perimeter tiles. Wipe up excess adhesive as work progresses. Roll well with a 68kg articulated roller. Use a small hand roller in areas that are inaccessible. Repeat the process for all four walls. Finally, the whole floor should be given a second rolling, approximately one to four hours later.

7.7 INSTALLING TILES IN LARGE AREAS

The procedure for laying Rubber Tiles in large areas is identical to that for laying vinyl tiles, as described in Installation of Homogeneous vinyl tiles.