



Technical Article – May 2010

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[Aqua Mix and Grout](#)

Over the past few months whilst promoting Aqua Mix to our valued customers, a number have told us they had no need for our products, more specifically Aqua Mix sealers. The rationale behind their decision was they either sold mainly porcelain or glazed tile that did not require a sealer, or their stone sales were gravitating more towards engineered stone that also did not require sealing.

It would have been easy to enter into a long debate over both these points because as we all know both surfaces can benefit in many cases from the application of a sealer, but instead it was decided that it was smarter to approach the issue from another level, that of grout. After all, every tile and stone installation has grout and this certainly can benefit from sealing.

Hence this month's Article focuses on the issues relating to grout that are easily addressed with our wide range of Aqua Mix products.

Firstly, let us define "**grout**" for the purpose of this discussion. Grout can be the traditional blend of sand and cement, latex or polymer modified sand and cement, cement modified epoxy or 100% solid epoxy. The first issue that arises with grout is that of completely cleaning the residue left by the installer. The advent of polymer modified grout means not only is the cured grout much harder and more durable but so is any residue not completely removed from the surface. The first product to address this issue is Aqua Mix Grout Haze Clean Up (GHC). Add GHC to the last bucket of clean up water and it will cut and remove the grout residue from the surface, be it cement or epoxy grout. Use GHC correctly and there will be no grout haze issues. However; when GHC is not used then you have to address the issue of grout haze!

Aqua Mix NanoScrub is the safest way to remove almost any type of grout residue from polymer modified to 100% solid epoxy. It will not damage the grout binder (cement or resin hardener) nor bleach the pigments used to colour the grout. However; if there is a very heavy residue then NanoScrub may need some assistance. This comes in the form of Sealer and Coating Remover for epoxy grouts and Phosphoric Acid Substitute for cement and or polymer modified cement grouts.

What type of sealer is best for the job? Grout has two characteristics a sealer must try and confront. Water absorption is the obvious one, but the grouts surface texture not only attracts dirt through increased surface friction but also makes it more difficult to remove. Aqua Mix Grout Sealer is specifically designed to address both issues, and it

does so by using a unique formula that both penetrates, to reduce below surface contamination caused mainly by absorption, as well as coating the surface to reduce the effect of the grouts texture in attracting and trapping dirt.

Now that the grout is sealed the next issue is general maintenance. With cement having a ph of approximately 12 (not relevant to 100% solid epoxy grout) it is prudent to clean grout with ph neutral or alkaline cleaners as these will not damage the cement binder. For routine cleaning neutral is best hence Aqua Mix Concentrated Stone and Tile Cleaner and for any heavy duty requirements Aqua Mix Grout Deep Clean.

However; there are many occasions where a grout has been neglected and suffers from a number of specific problems. Common amongst these are:

- Soap and body fat contamination in shower cubicles – easily removed with Aqua Mix Heavy Duty Tile and Grout Cleaner and NanoScrub
- Efflorescence found in many exterior installations or interior wet areas – use Aqua Mix Eff-Ex even on calcium based stone as it contains no acid
- Uneven colour – this could be due to historical stains or to poor hydration during installation. Aqua Mix (Epoxy) Grout Colorant can be installed over the top of properly prepared grout to completely re-colour and rejuvenate the grout. Being an epoxy it also completely seals the surface as well.

In summary - it is easy to see how grout does require a number of Aqua Mix products to address the issues of installation, protection and maintenance. In fact products from all three product groups, Sealers, Cleaners and Problem Solvers are required, making Aqua Mix an essential ingredient in the proper care of grout.



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