

Patchy Grout

Causes of Patchy Grout

Patchy grout can be caused by various factors that affect its consistency and application. Understanding these causes can help prevent or address patchiness. Here are the common reasons behind patchy grout:

- 1. Inconsistent Mixing:** Properly mixing the grout is crucial for achieving a consistent colour and texture. If the grout mixture is not thoroughly mixed, or if the mixing ratios are inconsistent, it can result in a patchy appearance. Excess water or inadequate hydration can lead to uneven colour distribution.
- 2. Insufficient Cleaning of Joints:** When grouting, it's important to ensure that all joints are cleaned and prepared uniformly. Failure to remove spacers or not raking the joints to a consistent depth can result in uneven grout application. Thicker sections dry slower, allowing for full hydration, while thinner sections may dry out too quickly and appear lighter.
- 3. Improper Cleaning:** Inadequate cleaning of the grout after application can leave behind residue or haze on the surface, leading to patchy or discoloured areas. Excessive water during the cleaning process can also affect curing, resulting in uneven coloration.
- 4. Uneven Drying/Curing:** Uneven drying or curing of the grout can cause variations in colour and texture, resulting in a patchy appearance. Insufficient curing time of the tile bed, waterproofing membrane, or screed can lead to excess moisture migrating through the grout which can also cause uneven curing and potentially lead to **efflorescence**. Variations in temperature and humidity during the curing process can also contribute to patchiness.
- 5. Uneven Absorption:** Tiles with uneven absorption characteristics can result in patchy grout. Porous or irregularly textured tiles may absorb moisture differently, leading to variations in colour and patchiness.
- 6. Grout Staining:** In some cases, grout can absorb stains from surrounding materials or substances used during installation, such as adhesives or sealants. These stains can create patchy or discoloured areas in the grout.

Tips to Minimise Patchy Grout

To minimise patchy grout, consider the following procedures:

1. Grout within a temperature range of 10-30°C.
2. Ensure that the adhesive bed, waterproofing membrane, and screed are fully set and dry before grouting, and that grout joints are cleaned of excess adhesive.
3. The area to be grouted should be free from dirt, dust and any other contaminants. Grout joints should be uniform and free of excess adhesive.
4. Mix the grout with the correct volume of water, following the **Dribond Construction Chemicals** instructions for **Kemgrout Sanded** and **Kemgrout Flexible**.
5. Use a slow-speed drill to mix the grout, gradually adding the powder to the water. Allow the mixture to stand for 2-3 minutes, then restir before use. Aim for a thick toothpaste consistency.
6. Use the grout mixture within 20 minutes of mixing.
7. Clean the grout with a damp sponge rinsed frequently with clean water. Avoid using excessive water or acidic cleaning agents.
8. Allow the grout to dry and cure evenly by maintaining suitable environmental conditions.
9. Conduct a small test patch to assess the absorption characteristics of the tiled surface if necessary.

By following these guidelines, you can help minimise the occurrence of patchy grout and achieve a more uniform and consistent finish.