



# Stone and Tile Care Guide

## TDS 262

Tile and stone are great choices as finishes for floors, walls, countertops, facades, and many other applications. They will provide years and years of functionality, but what is often forgotten or misunderstood is that in order to retain its beauty, some simple but important maintenance is necessary.

LATICRETE® STONETECH® is passionate about stone and tile. We believe that natural stone and tile are precious and beautiful materials that deserve to be treated with the utmost care. That's why we provide products of only the highest quality which have been formulated by scientists who understand how to care for stone and tile surfaces of every kind. This Stone and Tile Care Guide is intended to provide basic information in the care and maintenance of stone and tile. If you have specific questions regarding these matters, we encourage you to contact LATICRETE Surface Care Technical Services at 1.888.786.6343.

### **OUNCE OF PREVENTION**

The best way to prevent stains on stone is to treat it with a STONETECH protective sealer. Sealers repel spills on the surface, slowing down absorption of the liquid into the stone, and give you time to wipe them away before they have a chance to penetrate into the stone.

Some sealers can enhance (darken) stone while others retain the stone's natural look and color. Different stone types require different grades of sealer based on what the tile or stone will be used for or what you want the stone to look like.

As kiln-fired products, most ceramic and porcelain tile are practically impervious to liquid penetration. However, some unglazed tiles may have microscopic pores in the surface which liquids may fill and then dry, making it appear as if the tile is stained. Cement-based tile grout may be porous and therefore may easily be stained by spilled liquids. Protecting cement-based grout with a high quality sealer (e.g. STONETECH Advanced Grout Sealer) is highly recommended to protect against stains caused by water or oil based materials.

### **HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS**

Once your tile, stone and grout is sealed with a suitable STONETECH sealer, cleanup is a snap. But, what should you use for everyday cleaning? You would not use a harsh, ordinary cleaner to wash your nice, new car, would you? Stone demands the same kind of attention as a car; it needs cleaning products which are specifically made for its unique chemical composition. General cleaners, not specifically formulated for stone or tile are never recommended. These types of cleaners can break down a sealer, thereby removing its protective properties and making the stone, tile or grout more susceptible to staining. Worse yet, many cleaning products, including those that contain abrasives, lemon, vinegar, bleach, or ammonia can etch away the polish, discolor the surface, or even scratch stone.

For everyday cleaning or care, we would recommend using STONETECH REVITALIZER® Cleaner & Protector which has a gentle formula that removes soils while reinforcing the original protective seal to help prevent future staining issues.

### **ETCH MARKS**

While everyday messes are not the end of the world, many common household items have the power to degrade the beauty of your tile or stone. Etching is the result of a chemical reaction that occurs when acid comes into contact with a reactive surface. Etch marks on polished natural stone surfaces resemble water spots/marks or as polish which has worn out.

Seemingly innocent items like orange juice, coffee, vinegar, wine, tomato products, mustard, soft drinks, and some commonly used cleaners are highly acidic and will etch, discolor or even scratch the surface most marble, limestone, travertine, and cement based grout. The majority of ceramic and porcelain tile as well as acid-resistant stone (e.g. granite, slate, sandstone) will typically not etch.

Sealing will provide you with some time to wipe up a spill, but it cannot stop the chemical reaction that may leave an etch mark. Remember to always use coasters and place mats on acid-sensitive stones.

## **WHAT TO DO WHEN A SPILL OCCURS**

It usually does not take long for common household spills to occur as a result of cooking near, playing on or just simply living with natural stone or tile.

### Food and Drink Spills

Quickly scoop up the food and wipe up the liquid spill with a clean, dry cloth. Spray the area with STONETECH REVITALIZER® Cleaner & Protector and wipe with a clean, dry cloth. Repeat if necessary.

### Oily Stains

If you know the stain is oil-based (often from foods like salad dressings, cooking oils, butter, cosmetics, etc...) use STONETECH Oil Stain Remover to absorb the stain from deep within the stone.

### Mud

Let the mud stain dry completely before removing dried mud with a soft plastic or nylon brush. Spray affected area with a STONETECH stone and tile cleaner (e.g. STONETECH® Stone & Tile Cleaner). Wipe dry with a clean cloth and repeat if necessary. If the stain remains, contact a stone care professional.

### Others

Pets and kids can potentially present you with some of the worst tile and stone care challenges as urine, feces, blood, and vomit occur from time to time. Needless to say, these should be cleaned up as quickly as possible to minimize damage caused by acids or staining. Dispose of the waste properly, spray your stone with REVITALIZER Cleaner & Protector and wipe with a clean, dry cloth.

## **MAINTENANCE**

Keep your tile and stone looking great by taking some simple precautions.

### Kitchen and Bathroom Counters

Many household foods, beverages, cosmetics, and other items can degrade tile grout and damage stone. Common toiletries like toothpaste, mouthwash and perfume/cologne as well as common foods such as orange juice, vinegar, and soft drinks contain acids and other ingredients that can degrade sealers or damage your stone's surface.

Whether you have stone slab counters or stone, ceramic or porcelain tile counters, using STONETECH Stone & Tile Cleaner will remove residues from cooking oils, everyday food spills and hairspray.

### Stone or Tile Floors

Clean your interior stone and tile floors frequently using a clean, non-treated, dry dust mop, as abrasive particles of sand and dirt can damage natural stone and tile surfaces. Mats outside entrances will help to minimize damage. Also, be careful when using a vacuum cleaner as the metal or plastic attachments and wheels can scratch soft stone surfaces.

Damp mop your stone or tile floor with a properly diluted solution of the appropriate STONETECH® stone and tile cleaner. Avoid walking on the floor until completely dry, as wet stone and tile floors tend to be slippery.

## Bath and Other Wet Areas

Frequent use of STONETECH REVITALIZER® and Protector or STONETECH Stone & Tile Cleaner will minimize soap scum and hard water deposits. In the bath, or other wet areas, using a squeegee after each use can minimize these common residues. For areas which have mold and/or mildew issues use STONETECH Mold & Mildew Remover, a specially formulated product which contains a component of bleach, to remove mold and mildew from the surface.

### **DOs AND DON'Ts**

- DO use STONETECH Sealers to protect your stone, tile and cement based grouts
- DO clean up spills immediately to minimize damage to your stone and tile
- DO use trivets or mats under hot dishes and cookware
- DO use coasters under glasses, especially if they contain alcohol, citrus juices or other acidic liquids
- DO use placements under china, ceramics, silver, and other objects that can scratch the surface of your stone
- DO place a small rug or mat at entry ways to trap dirt and sand from normal foot traffic
- DO dust or carefully vacuum countertops, islands, vanities, and floors frequently
- DO clean stone, tile and grout surfaces regularly with STONETECH REVITALIZER Cleaner & Protector
- DO call the LATICRETE Surface Care Technical Services hotline at 1.888.786.6343 for maintenance assistance
- DON'T wait to clean up spills on stone, tile or grout. Clean up as quickly as possible
- DON'T use dish soap, vinegar, bleach and water, bleach containing cleaners, ammonia, or general purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners, or tub and tile cleaners
- DON'T use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleaners or soft, gritty cleaners
- DON'T use alkaline cleaners which are not specifically formulated for stone

Technical Data Sheets are subject to change without notice. For latest revision, check our website at [www.laticrete.com](http://www.laticrete.com)  
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