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An Eligible Supplier to the EDC Companies

General Information

Taylor Studios is an eligible supplier to the EDC companies of the Virgin Islands.

The Taylor family has been making concrete products on St. Croix since 1968. The following information has been collected from other craftsmen, our own experiences, and industry standards over all these years; and while we have tried to present as complete an explanation as possible, we make no guarantees as to the outcome of your project.

Taylor Tile are handmade individually from a mixture of portland cements, mineral pigments, sand aggregates, and locally quarried "blue bitch" rock. The tiles are molded in handmade forms, not pressed in a machine. They are left to cure overnight, and then turned out for finishing.

The texture of the tile surface can be as smooth and shiny as polished marble, as rough as cut coral or stone, or slightly textured like travertine-type marble. You can choose the degree of texture best suited for the different areas of your project: perhaps smooth or lightly textured tile indoors; and twenty-five, fifty, or seventy-five percent of the surface textured for walkways, patios, or pool areas.

Our concrete pigments are made of crushed minerals and become an integral part of the surface layer of the tile, which varies from 3/16" to 1/2" thick, depending on the size and usage of the tile. It is unlikely you will wear through the surface of these tiles in a lifetime, while the thin glazes of some other tiles are much less durable.

Our tiles, installed in high traffic public areas over thirty years ago, are available for inspection. Some have had little or no care during their lifetime, and are faring well. Quality workmanship and materials enable smooth tiles installed in private homes to achieve a rich translucency much like aged marble, with only casual care over the years.

We have many color variations available, and if necessary, colors can be specially created to complement the interior and exterior of your home.

Notes on Installation

Taylor Tile can be installed in a variety of patterns using cut tile pieces and whole tile, or in regular rows. Different colors can be added for accent borders, mosaic centerpieces, or thresholds. Design possibilities are extensive, and indeed are a major benefit of using locally handmade tile. Custom tile can usually be molded in the color of your choice.

The 8" X 8" tile are molded with flat sides and can fit together with a very small grout joint - 3/32" or less. The larger tile have rounded edges and are slightly beveled to provide for a grout joint of 3/8" to 1/2". Larger grout joints do not usually look as good or last as long as smaller ones, and finishing the joint by striking it with a convex rodding tool to slightly compress and smooth the joint gives the best effect and the strongest joint.

On a slab that needs elevation corrections, our tile and brick should be laid on a mortar bed, to a string that can correct the height of the tile as well as the in-line placement. See Brick Installations on the Downloads page of our web site, www.taylorstudiosvi.com, for a good mortar recipe.

On a good slab, Taylor Tile should be laid with thinset using a 1/2" or 3/8" notched trowel. Thinset must be applied to both the floor and the bottom of the tile to ensure a good bond and leveling bed. It is NOT recommended that the tile be beaten with a mallet of any kind. Seat and level them with a twisting motion and hand pressure only as with marble, limestone, or quarry tiles. Clean frequently as you go with a damp sponge. The 12" tile can be laid to a string stretched tightly every 12 1/4". Setting one side of the tile to this string will ensure nicely spaced tile, and the slight hand made discrepancies between the tiles will add to the pleasing effect.

The next day, the exterior clean, dry tiles may be lightly sealed with a silicone or siloxane penetrating sealer (available from Taylor Studios). Interior tiles should be clean and dry, and unsealed. The tiles can then be grouted: fill the joints with a pourable cement and sand grout mix, which should be pigmented to match the tiles. Fill a small, connected area of joints at a time, overfilling slightly to allow for slump in this wet mix. The joint can be rodded, smoothed, and compressed when the grout filling is no longer wet, but just damp and workable. A damp sponge or the edge of your trowel does a good job of cleaning any crust that may be left on the edge of the tile. It is important to realize that smearing grout over the entire tile will not work, as the texture of the exterior tile surface may be ruined. **Don't let the grout dry out on the tile surface.** Keep the interior and

exterior tile surfaces very clean as you go.

After the tiles are grouted, they should be wiped thoroughly clean and sealed (again, in the case of exterior tile). Interior acrylic sealers (also available from Taylor Studios) will give you a shiny, mop-able finish but care must be taken that the tile are thoroughly dry, both on top and below, before they are sealed. Water based acrylic sealers have been known to crack off and peel when excessive moisture is present. There are petroleum based acrylic sealers available, but they are tricky to use and should be left to the professionals.

Both acrylic sealers and siloxane sealers should be resealed as necessary, perhaps as often as every year. If the exterior tile darken when wet with water, they need to be resealed. If the interior tile are scuffed and scratched, especially in high traffic areas, they need to be resealed.

We recommend hiring an experienced professional tile setter, and we are, of course, available for consultation.

Notes on Care and Maintenance

With minimal care and maintenance, your Taylor Tile floor or wall will last a lifetime. Weekly damp mopping, or simply vacuuming, will keep your floor clean. Using an oil base soap (such as Murphy's Oil Soap) to clean the interior floor and wall tile will maintain the attractive patina of the surface of the smooth tile; Mop and Glow type products used on acrylic sealed interior tile will maintain this finish for many years. Harsh chemicals are generally not necessary or advisable on properly sealed tile.

It is probable that sealers will have to be renewed from time to time. Where high traffic paths begin to lose their shine, spot applications of sealers will restore the finish you wish to maintain. Exterior sealers need to be renewed when water visibly darkens the tile surface. As time passes this will be less frequently necessary. Be sure the tiles are clean first.

For exterior and interior tile, there are two cleaning procedures that must be avoided: acid washing and pressure washing. Both techniques can erode the surface of any concrete product, leaving you with a porous surface more easily stained as the finish is eroded away. For exterior tile, low-pressure washing, such as your garden hose, and scrubbing with a stiff broom and bleach will not harm the tile.

Stains and outdoor algae can best be removed by using a high concentration of bleach, soap, and water - or even straight bleach poured right on the stain. This will not hurt the tile, and if you let the bleach sit for awhile, especially in the sun, chances are you can just rinse off the dirt. Sealing the tile will help prevent stains from causing any problems. Be careful with outdoor furniture, though, as any rust stains from metal feet are next to impossible to remove.

Notes on Replica Danish Pattern Brick

Replica Danish pattern brick are cement reproductions of the low fired clay slump brick brought from Europe or produced locally for use in our historic buildings and public works. There was much variation in the size of the originals, and after random sampling we determined an average size to be 8 1/2" or 9" long by 4 1/4" wide by 1 5/8" thick. The length and width of our brick are somewhat regular; the thickness varies more as both the original brick and the replica are slump brick products. The 'soaps' are brick 8 1/2" long by 4 1/4" wide by 7/8" thick, to be used on floors, walkways, or walls where the full thickness brick are unnecessary or too thick to match the adjacent tile. Both thicknesses of brick are available in many colors including the traditional Danish earth tones. They may be used for floors, walkways, arches, flower boxes, etc.; in new construction, additions, and restoration, in combination with our tile or other masonry products. Please also seal and maintain these portland cement products as outlined above.

We also make vehicular Danish pattern brick, a thicker brick for use in driveways and areas where vehicles might drive. These measure 8 1/2" X 4 1/4" X 2 1/4" (approx.).

Brick and soap installations are discussed on our website, www.taylorstudiosvi.com, on the Installation page, and also on the Danish Pattern Brick and Sidewalk Pavers page.