

Frequently asked questions about Alcolin Flexi-Tiler

1. What is Alcolin Flexi-Tiler?

Alcolin Flexi-Tiler is a flexible, ready mixed, thin bed tile adhesive for light duty application onto internal and sheltered external walls and floors. It is particularly suited for laying of tiles onto flexible dimensionally unstable surfaces.

2. What is Alcolin Flexi-Tiler used for?

Alcolin Flexi-Tiler is suitable for fixing lightweight ceramic, brick, mosaic, stone and clay tiles, to flexible surfaces such as primed timber and chipboard, pre-primed corrosion-free metal surfaces as well as plaster, concrete, primed cement fibreboard and primed gypsum plaster

Alcolin Flexi-Tiler can be used in areas prone to moisture e.g. bathrooms. It is ideal for putting up skirting boards and cornices.

3. How do I use Alcolin Flexi-Tiler?

It is critical to first ensure correct floor and wall surface preparation. We recommend that one reads the technical data sheet for Alcolin Flexi-Tiler for full details on surface preparation.

Alcolin Flexi-Tiler is a ready to use paste adhesive and must not be adulterated by addition of water or any other substance. Stir before use.

Tiles should not be butt joined. A minimum grouting joint width for walls is 2mm and for floors, 3mm. Apply a 3mm bed of Alcolin Flexi-Tiler to the surface using a 6x6x6mm notched trowel. Heavily lugged, grooved or dovetailed tiles must be buttered with adhesive before bedding into the troweled adhesive in order to prevent any voids. If the tiles do not have spacer lugs, plastic spacers may be inserted between the tiles to help maintain straight grout lines. Remove these after placing the tile, before they become firmly set in the adhesive. Do not spread more adhesive than can be tiled in 10 minutes. Press tiles firmly into wet adhesive with a twisting action (before surface drying/skinning occurs). Use a "RUBBER Mallet" to bed large or heavy tiles. Occasionally lift a tile to check that full contact is being made between the tile and the adhesive. Use only dry tiles – do not pre-wet tiles in water. Clean excess adhesive off tile surface, grout joints and tools while still wet.

Do not tile over existing structural movement joints. Movement joints should be located in both directions at a maximum 5m for interior applications and every 3m for exterior applications. Movement joints should also be located in all horizontal and vertical corners, and against obstructions fixed to the structural background and over all discontinuities in building materials e.g. interfaces between concrete and brickwork.

4. Can I use Alcolin Flexi-Tiler if I am butt joining tiles?

No, it is not suitable for butt joining tiles – space must be left between the tiles for tile expansion. These spaces can be filled with a tile grout such as Alcolin Grout.

5. How long should I wait before grouting?

Allow a minimum of 24 hours before grouting.

6. Can I tile over existing expansion / structural movement joints?

No, all expansion and movement joints must extend through the adhesive bed and tiling.

7. Can I use Alcolin Flexi-Tiler for porcelain or vitrified tiles?

No, you must use Alcolin P301 or Alcolin Porcelain Fix for these tiles.

8. Can I use Flexi-Tiler for light coloured natural stone tiles?

No, as these tiles are usually large 'heavy duty' tiles. You must use a white coloured cement based tile adhesive such as Alcolin Mosaic Marble Fix. A grey coloured tile adhesive may cause discolouration on natural stone, marble and travertine tiles.

9. I have a wooden floor that I want to tile using ceramic tiles. Is there an adhesive and grout, which I could use for this type of floor construction?

One can use Alcolin Flexi-Tiler, however due care must be taken when doing this job. Before laying the floor tiles, ensure that the existing timber floor is secure and free from movement. Remember a ceramic tile is not flexible and will crack if the substrate is not sound. If in doubt the timber may be secured by overlaying it with treated flooring grade chipboard. Ensure that the surface is free from any polish; dirt or similar contaminants; if in doubt sand the surface down. Prime the boards with an undiluted solution of Alcolin Permobond, using a paint brush/block brush and allow to dry. Using a 6x6mm notched trowel apply Alcolin Flexi-Tiler to the substrate and lay the floor tiles within the adhesives open time. Due care must be taken when fixing tiles of low porosity such as porcelain tiles. Being water-based, Alcolin Flexi-Tiler may not set if placed between two non-porous surfaces. Grouting can be carried out as soon as the adhesive has set firm. Mix Alcolin Cement Based Grout with Alcolin Latex Bond or Permobond by replacing the rate of water of addition. Grout joint widths should not be narrower than 2mm, nor wider than 10mm.

10. Does a new cement/sand render/screed require a minimum drying time of 3 weeks prior to the fixing of ceramic tiles? If this is correct, is there an alternative material that allows the fixing of tiles within a shorter time scale?

This is correct, and is recommended by the SABS 0107:1996 specifications : The design and installation of ceramic tiling.

If the subfloor is new, then there are no shortcuts, however if the subfloor is aged, and one is only repairing the surface prior to tiling, then instead of repairing the surface with a standard cement screed, one could use a rapid setting self levelling screed such as Alcolin Z101, or a rapid set patching cement such as Alcolin Anchoring and Patching Cement. These products would allow for tiling between 4-5 hours after application.

11. I want to fix a light colour natural stonewall or travertine tile to a cement/sand rendered wall. Is it true that staining of the tiles can occur as a result of the dark grey cement tiling adhesive? What precautionary procedures would you recommend?

Yes, staining will occur if using a grey coloured ceramic tiling adhesive. The natural stone / Travertine tiles are very porous and the cement can absorb into these pores causing staining. Also the dark colour of the cement adhesive can show through light coloured tiles. It is best to use a white coloured cement tiling adhesive such as Alcolin Mosaic Marble Fix for these applications – Alcolin Flexi-Tiler can also be used if the tiles are light weight. The tile adhesive can also be used as a grout if necessary. In addition to the above, it is normally recommended that the tiles are pre-sealed prior to the installation with an appropriate sealer. Seek advice from the tile/stone merchant where the tiles were purchased. , depending on the circumstances, the tile adhesive may also be used as the grout.

12. What are expansion joints and where should these be installed?

Stresses build up in tiling installations due to a combination of a number of factors such as the drying shrinkage of cement in the adhesive, irreversible expansion of tiles due to moisture ingress, temperature differentials, movement in the subfloor, etc. These stresses need to be alleviated by means of expansion joints (movement joints).

According to the South African specification SABS 0107:1996 The Design and Installation of Ceramic Tiling expansion joints need to be at least 5mm wide, coincide with any structural movement joints, where tiling meets other surfaces, across junctions of different backgrounds, dry interior areas, interior & exterior wet areas, areas where there large temperature variances and additional joints are required in large areas extending every 5m² in both the horizontal and vertical directions. Failing to insert expansion joints in the installation it could result in the following consequences: Lifting or tenting of the tiles, cracking and crazing on the tiles surface etc.

13. What is the difference between Alcolin Flexi-Tiler and Alcolin Easy-Tiler?

Alcolin Flexi-Tiler is a high quality ready mixed tiling adhesive with excellent flexibility and is ideal for application on flexible, dimensionally unstable surfaces. Alcolin Easy-Tiler is a more economical ready mixed tiling adhesive and is ideal for bonding of lightweight ceramic tiles, interior application only.

