

## Carpet tile installation guidelines

### Sub-floor preparation

#### Floor Condition

Tiles should not be laid directly over floors containing mastic asphalt or any other surface containing bituminous or migratory substances. A damp proof membrane must be laid where tiles are placed directly onto earth and other sub-floors e.g. quarry tiles, concrete floors etc.

Whilst latex smoothing compound/self levelling screed can be applied to surfaces where there is some residual adhesive from a floor covering, it is essential that the existing sub-floor is well prepared to obtain a good key.

All floor surfaces must be dry, level, dust free and clear of debris prior to beginning installation. Arrangements should be made ahead of time to ensure that areas are clear of all other trades. Any unevenness in the floor will show in the finished installation and may result in premature wear. Sub-floors should be prepared in accordance with BS 8203, to Surface Regularity Standard SR.1 (3mm to 3 metres).

#### Conditioning of tiles

Tiles should be taken out of the box and left to condition for at least 24 hours prior to installation.

#### Access floors

The application method of release adhesive to access flooring is of paramount importance and should be carried out in accordance with the adhesive manufacturer's instructions. Care should be taken to prevent excess adhesive seeping between the access floor joints as this could stick them together making subsequent access difficult.

The tackifier should be applied as a thin even film and be given sufficient time to dry before the carpet tiles are installed otherwise a permanent bond may be obtained. An uneven film of tackifier can reduce the effectiveness of the suction grips commonly used to remove the access panels and any moisture trapped under the carpet tile can have adverse effects, including the possible corrosion of the top surface of the access floor panel.

The installation contractor should therefore check compatibility of the adhesive being used with the access floor panel manufacturer and ensure the correct adhesive is used in accordance with the relevant manufacturer's instructions. Tiles should be offset so as not to coincide with the joints in the floor panels.

#### Concrete

New and old concrete floors must be structurally sound, smooth and level. New concrete must be fully cured before installing carpet tiles. This usually requires 90 days to allow full moisture evaporation. The moisture content of any sand/cement and concrete screed must not exceed a relative humidity of 75% when tested by a hydrometer according to the method specified in CP 203 or BS 5325 1983 (or subsequent revisions).

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## Wood

Loose boards must be secured. Missing or damaged boards must be replaced or repaired. All surfaces must be level, therefore uneven boards may require sanding. Old floors with greater degrees of unevenness may require particle boarding (hard board etc.) prior to commencing installation. Small cracks can be filled using a latex screed (see product recommendations on the back of this leaflet).

## Existing floor coverings

It is imperative that the sub-floor is clean, dry and sound, particularly when bonding to existing smooth floor coverings such as vinyl, thermoplastics and linoleum. It is essential to remove all traces of polish and any cleaning agent.

## Site planning and installation

### Tools:

Tape measure (steel)

Chalk line

Light roller (approximately. 68kg)

General installation tool kit

Straight edge

Suitable adhesive spreader

## Measuring

Find the centre of the area to be laid. In some cases the start point may not be the centre of the area. Early consideration should be given to the perimeter tiles, doorways and partitions. Wherever possible, the perimeter tiles should be at least half size or larger. Major consideration should be given to doorways and main traffic flow. The good appearance of the finished installation will be decided at this point.

## Pile Direction

Reference must be made to the arrows on the back of the tiles. These must be laid in the same direction to give a monolithic effect (see diagram 1).

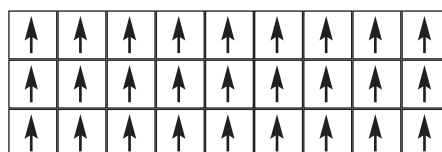


Diagram.1: monolithic

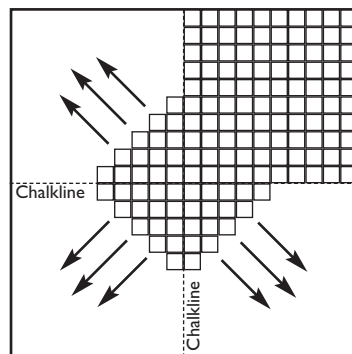
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## Installation/Quadrant method

Draw a chalk line across the room in both directions through the centre. This will divide the room into four sections. Apply the adhesive to the total floor area, in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. When the adhesive has dried in accordance with manufacturer's instructions (normally when the colour has changed) commence the installation.

Start installing each section from the centre working outward in a pyramid fashion. Additional tiles within the quadrant should be installed using a step technique. In this technique, the tiled area grows steadily away from the centre of the room.

Growth should not take place along the vertical or horizontal chalk line but rather along the imaginary diagonal line between them (see diagram below).



## Adhesives/Tackifiers

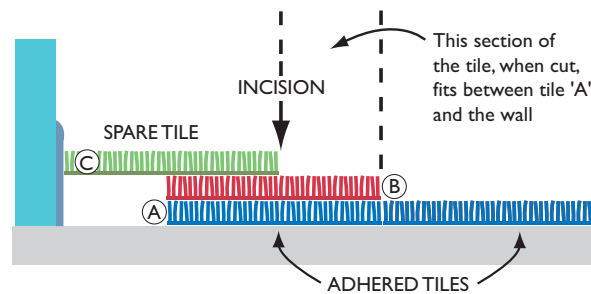
Tackifiers are adhesives which are designed to provide a permanently tacky film which prevents carpet tiles from moving under normal conditions but enables tiles to be lifted and replaced when necessary. The tackifier is designed for an all over application to the sub-floor.

## Joints

It is important that the tiles in the complete installation be snugly jointed together. Laid tiles must constantly be checked to ensure they are being placed together with the correct firmness. A check should be made that laid tiles are neither too loose so as to cause gaps, nor too tight so as to buckle. To check for snugness, measure the distance across 10 tiles. The gap between tiles should be less than 7mm/1/4" per 10 tiles. When laying tiles, brush the pile back from the edge of the tile and slip the tile into place. This will prevent the pile becoming trapped in the joint. When using the quadrant technique the corner of a tile is inserted first, which makes correct positioning of the tile easier.

## Cutting Perimeter Tiles

1. When the last whole tile (A) closest to the wall has been adhered to the floor, place the tile to be cut (B) face up on top of the last whole tile (check pile direction is correct), aligning it as closely as possible to the tile underneath.
2. Place a spare tile (C) face up against the perimeter wall bridging the gap between the last whole tile (A) and the wall.



3. With a knife, make a small incision in each side of the tile to be cut (B) at the back of the spare tile (C) which is held flush to the perimeter wall.
4. Remove both tile (C) and (B). Place the tile to be cut (B) face down, and place a straight edge across the back of the tile level with the incision. The tile can now be cut from the back, and will fit perfectly between the last tile and the perimeter wall.

## General information

Installation of the carpet tiles should be carried out in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice for Installation of Textile Floor Coverings: BS 5325 1983 (or subsequent revisions).

## Carpet tile identification

The colour and design details and number of tiles etc. are printed on the outside of each carton.

## Tile Installation Recommendations

Heavy duty carpet tiles should be installed by a specialist flooring contractor. The installation layout will depend upon the building configuration and the type of foot traffic, wheeled equipment expected, areas of exceptionally high traffic and positioning and movement of office partitions. For commercial/contract installations it is recommended that tiles be fully adhered to the sub-floor (see adhesive recommendations).

Do not walk on or move furniture on the carpet tiles until all grid and perimeter anchors are complete.

Heavy use of a newly laid tiled floor may disturb the adhesive bond and weaken it before it has reached its critical set. Areas particularly susceptible to heavy traffic should be covered with a suitable protective material for 48 hours.

## Under Floor Heating

Tiles can be used with underfloor heating provided the floor surface temperature does not exceed 35°C. The use of permanent or tackifier adhesive with tiles will determine whether the heating is switched off 48 hours prior to, during or after installation. This fact should be checked with the relevant adhesive manufacturer.

## Maintenance

The early implementation of a cleaning and maintenance programme will help preserve the good appearance of the carpet tiles.

Traffic paths caused by either pile flattening or by tracked-in soil can be reduced by periodically interchanging and cleaning the tiles. Damaged tiles or tiles marked with permanent stains can be replaced or moved to a less conspicuous position. An additional quantity of tiles for maintenance purposes should be allowed for at time of order.