

Successful glass tile installation for pools

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Once you've seen a swimming pool finished with glass mosaic tiles, their popularity for both residential and commercial installations is immediately appreciated. Because they reflect natural light, glass mosaic tiles can give swimming pools a lustrous, shimmering appearance. They're available in almost any color, size and pattern imaginable.

Here are the seven main components of a beautiful and long-lasting glass tile pool installation.

1. Choosing tile

Today, mosaic glass tile manufacturers often create sheets of tile by bonding the individual

tiles to a paper or plastic facing or by adhering the backs of the tile to an open-weave mesh that allows the mortar to come into contact with the tile backs. Using this type of tile can help save time. However, if a water-soluble adhesive was used to bond the mosaic tiles to the mesh backing, that adhesive



Porcelain or glass tile is the right choice for saline pools. Use a premium mortar that can withstand salt exposure and a chemical-resistant grout.



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could re-emulsify once submerged. To avoid this, confirm with the tile manufacturer that the mosaic glass tile itself, and the sheet mounting method used, are suitable for pool installations in their environment, whether interior or exterior. Or use paper-faced tiles, which provide an unimpeded surface on the tile back for bonding.

2. Cutting tile

If the tile layout requires partial sheets, simply score the plastic sheeting, mesh or paper holding the tiles together with a utility knife as needed. If you need to cut the tiles themselves, use specialized glass mosaic tile cutting tools, as other cutters may shatter the small tiles.

3. Waterproofing pools

Over the primary waterproof membrane on the shell of the pool



The Robert D. Love Downtown YMCA in Wichita, Kan., contains more than 50,000 sq. ft. of mosaic and large-format tile.

(per TCNA P602-16), you must provide a secondary waterproofing and crack isolation membrane.

Before applying the secondary membrane, smooth the substrate with a deep patch and patch additive that's fast-setting, or a bonded mortar bed. Then clean the substrate of all contaminants, residues and dirt. Pre-fill all concrete cracks up to 1/8" wide. Treat all control joints, substrate joints, field seams and corners; anywhere vertical surfaces meet horizontal surfaces, such as curbs, bench seats and columns; anywhere dissimilar materials meet, such as drains and expansion/control joints.

Then, apply the waterproofing membrane. Install it just below the tile to help prevent water from leaking into the mortar bed and to help prevent problems associated with saturation and moisture expansion. For an efficient installation, use a membrane that allows for the direct bonding of tile. After the membrane is properly cured, test for leaks.

4. Setting tiles

Glass mosaic pool tile applications require polymer-modified mortars that are suitable for submerged installations. Keep in mind the mortar's color can affect the appearance of clear or translucent glass mosaics. White mortars typi-



NTCA Five Star Contractor Fox Ceramic Tile of St. Marys, Kan., turned to TEC® products to aid with fast-paced tile installation in a variety of challenging environments.



The 110,000 sq. ft. LEED®-Certified facility features large-format porcelain tile on its lobby floor, ceramic and porcelain tiles throughout the building, and porcelain mosaics in its pools, whirlpool and steam room.

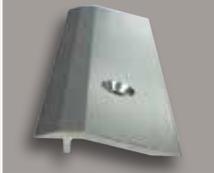
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cally produce the most pleasing and consistent appearance – allowing glass tile to maintain its natural luminosity. Similarly, mortar ridges may be visible through clear or translucent tiles. Therefore, after troweling the mortar, use the flat side of the trowel to flatten mortar ridges before setting tile. Back-butter the tile to achieve a uniform appearance and proper coverage.

5. Grouting tile

Only certain grouts are appropriate for submerged areas. Consider a high-performance, ready-to-use grout or an advanced-performance cementitious grout, that can be used in submerged areas for glass tile installation. Saltwater pools require a grout that can be fully submersible and has chemical resistance, such as an epoxy grout. Proper pool water chemistry is essential for the future condition of the tile and grout. Use an appropriate flexible caulk joint, in place of grout, for predetermined movement joints in the tile installation.

6. Wait time

Advise your customer to refer to the grout and mortar manufacturer wait time before filling the pool with water to allow the tile grout and mortar to fully cure before use in submerged areas.

7. Maintaining Tile

In general, glass mosaic tile is very low maintenance. It is natu-

rally stain resistant, and the use of a high-quality grout will help the installation maintain its appearance. However, tile in even the cleanest pools will eventually accumulate calcium deposits and other residue.

Cleaning techniques will vary depending on the tile system and condition, but always do a small sample test area to determine the best procedure.

Regardless of the type of tile used, fun in the swimming pool begins with a successful tile installation. If you follow these simple steps and manufacturer instructions, your tile glass project will

make a splash for a long time after your work is completed.

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