

INDEPENDENT TILE & SHOWER INSPECTION REPORT

Sample document — names, street address, contractor identity, and photographs redacted. Written in the form used for actual Valley Tile inspection reports. Not a live case file.

Report no.	VT-IR-2026-0XX (sample file)	Report date	March 18, 2026
Inspection date	March 14, 2026	Time on site	Approx. 1 hr 50 min
Property	[REDACTED STREET] · Encino, CA 91316	Weather	Clear, dry, ~68°F
Requested by	[REDACTED] — property owner	Also present	[REDACTED] (owner's representative)
Installer of record	[REDACTED CONTRACTOR] · CSLB #[REDACTED]	Year of work	Stated as 2024
Assignment	Independent inspection of master bath shower and related finishes. Written report only.	Inspector	Bryan Blair, Valley Tile & Plumbing, Lic. 990845

1. Why I was called

The owner asked me to look at a master bathroom shower that has been leaking into the ceiling of the room below. They also said a lot of the floor tile sounds hollow, and they are in a dispute with the installer about whether the shower was built right.

This was an independent inspection. I did not install this work. I was not asked to bid a repair. I was asked to look at what is there, write down what I found, and say what that means against ordinary trade practice and the standards that apply to this kind of assembly.

2. Scope and limits

I inspected the master bath shower stall, the tiled bathroom floor immediately around it, the accessible ceiling below, and the visible plumbing connections at the valve and drain. This was a visual and sounding inspection. I used a 4-foot level, a tape, a moisture meter on finished surfaces, and a camera. I did not open walls except where the owner had already removed two loose floor tiles at the curb. I did not flood-test the pan. I did not perform laboratory testing, slip-resistance testing, or structural engineering.

Opinions in this report are based on conditions as they existed on March 14, 2026, on what I could see and measure that day, and on the documents the owner handed me (a short contract and a few progress photos). If more of the assembly is opened later, the picture can get clearer. That does not make today’s findings wrong. It means the hidden layers were not fully exposed.

3. What I looked at

The stall is a standard 36" x 60" ceramic tile shower with a curb, a single niche, a built-in bench at the back wall, and a center drain. Wall tile is 12x24 porcelain, stacked bond. Floor of the stall is 2x2 mosaic on a mesh sheet. The bathroom floor outside the curb is 12x24 porcelain, same run. Valve is a pressure-balanced trim. No steam. No linear drain. No accessible / no-curb design.

Owner stated the shower was finished in 2024 as part of a hall-bath and master-bath package by [REDACTED CONTRACTOR]. Permits were not produced. I did not search Building & Safety for this sample file.

4. Findings

Finding 1 — The shower floor does not drain.

I set a 4-foot level on the mosaic floor in four directions from the drain. There is almost no slope. Water from a small bottle test stood in two low spots: one at the back left corner and one along the curb. The drain is not the low point. A shower floor has one job before anything else — get water to the drain. This one does not.

TCNA and ordinary wet-area practice call for a sloped shower floor, generally on the order of 1/4 inch per foot toward the drain, built in the pan — not faked in the thinset. What I am looking at is a flat field with two birdbaths. That is not a small finish issue. That is the structure of the pan.

PHOTO REDACTED FOR SAMPLE

Photo 3 — Level on stall floor, standing water at back corner [REDACTED]

Finding 2 — This is not a mortar-bed pan.

At the two tiles the owner had already lifted at the inside of the curb, I could see the build-up. There is cement board over what appears to be a thin sheet membrane, sitting on a substrate that was not packed as a traditional mortar receptor. The board is sitting close to flat. There is no presloped mud bed under the membrane that I could see in that opening. The curb itself is a framed lumber curb with board wrapped over it. The membrane termination at the curb is short and is not clamped in a way I would trust long-term.

I build mortar-bed pans for a living. I know what a packed, presloped receptor looks like when you open it. This is the other method — board and thinset over a membrane, on a floor that was never sloped correctly in the first place. You can do a board assembly right. This one was not done right. Flat board over a flat floor is how you get a shower that looks finished on day one and holds water on day two hundred.

PHOTO REDACTED FOR SAMPLE

Photo 7 — Opened floor at curb, board and membrane visible [REDACTED]

Finding 3 — Hollow tile and poor coverage.

I sounded the stall floor and the first two rows of bathroom floor outside the curb. A large percentage of the mosaic field and several of the 12x24 floor tiles ring hollow. On the two lifted tiles, thinset coverage on the back was in the range of half the tile or less, with ridges that never collapsed. That is spotty bonding, not full coverage.

ANSI A108 installation practice for this class of tile in a wet area is not “enough mud to make it stick.” You want collapsed ridges and coverage in the high range — commonly discussed around 80% in dry areas and 95% in wet areas, with the corners and edges actually in the mud. Hollow tile in a shower floor is not a cosmetic complaint. Water gets under it. The bond does not improve with time. It gets worse.

Finding 4 — The leak below matches the stall.

In the room below, the ceiling stain is roughly under the shower drain and the curb line. Moisture meter readings on the stained drywall were elevated compared with dry ceiling a few feet away. I am not a mold inspector and I am not mapping a

whole building envelope. I am saying the wet mark is where you would expect it if the pan and/or the drain detailing is losing water.

I did not pull the drain assembly. From the top, the drain grate sits a hair high of the surrounding mosaic, which does not help the slope problem. Whether the leak is the unsloped field, a drain clamping failure, a membrane termination at the curb, or all three, the water is leaving the stall and showing up on the ceiling below. That part is not a mystery.

PHOTO REDACTED FOR SAMPLE

Photo 12 — Ceiling stain in room below, under stall [REDACTED]

Finding 5 — Walls and niche are the same quality of work.

Wall tile is in stacked bond with tight grout joints and no movement joint at the changes of plane that I would want to see in a stall this size. The niche sill has little to no slope out. A niche that pitches back into the wall is a shelf for standing water. I have seen that detail fail more times than I can count.

I did not open the walls. I cannot swear to the membrane height or whether the board was treated as a wet-area assembly behind the tile. What I can say is the visible work is consistent with the floor: it was finished to look done, not built as a waterproof system.

Finding 6 — Bathroom floor outside the curb.

Several 12x24 tiles in the dry floor field sound hollow. That is a separate complaint from the leak, but it is the same installer and the same setting habits. I am not calling the whole bathroom a failure from one afternoon with a sounding tool. I am noting that the bonding problem is not limited to the stall.

5. What this means

The shower as built does not perform as a shower. The floor does not drain. The receptor I could see is not a properly sloped, properly detailed wet-area pan. Bond coverage is poor. Water is leaving the stall and staining the ceiling below.

This is workmanship and method. I did not find evidence in the opened area of a product recall or a cracked slab trying to tear the tile apart. The failure is in how the assembly was put together.

Patching grout or running more silicone around the drain will not fix a flat pan. If the owner wants a shower that drains and stays dry below, the stall has to come out and be rebuilt as a system — sloped receptor, membrane done right, drain clamped, tile set with coverage, joints where they belong. That is the repair path. I am not pricing that path. I am not offering to do that path on this job.

6. Standards I am measuring this against

I do not write reports by throwing handbook numbers at the wall. These are the references that actually apply to what I saw:

- TCNA Handbook shower receptor and wet-area methods — sloped floor to drain; membrane and receptor as a system; curb and drain detailing.
- ANSI A108 setting and installation practice — coverage, collapsed ridges, wet-area bonding.
- Manufacturer instructions for the board / membrane products visible in the opening — those sheets are not optional reading. They tell you the floor has to be sloped before the board goes down.
- Ordinary standard of care for a licensed tile contractor building a shower in Los Angeles County in 2024.

I am a California licensed contractor, C-54 tile, C-36 plumbing, and C-6 finish carpentry / millwork, license 990845. I have been installing tile and showers in this market since the 1990s. I am not an engineer and I am not claiming laboratory credentials. I am claiming I know what a shower is supposed to look like when you open it, because I have built them and I have opened a lot of the ones that failed.

7. Opinions

These are my opinions, based on the inspection of March 14, 2026:

1. The master shower floor was not constructed with a functional slope to the drain.
2. The receptor visible at the curb opening is not a traditional mortar-bed pan and was not built as a correctly sloped board-and-membrane assembly either.
3. Tile bond coverage in the stall floor is deficient.
4. Water from the stall is reaching the ceiling below. The most probable paths are the unsloped field, the drain / membrane interface, and the curb termination — acting together or separately.
5. Localized grout or caulk repair will not correct the receptor.
6. A proper repair is removal and reconstruction of the shower assembly as a waterproof system.

8. What I am not saying

I am not assigning legal fault. That is for the parties and, if it goes that far, the attorneys. I am describing the work.

I am not saying every tile in the house is bad. I inspected this stall, the adjacent floor, and the ceiling below.

I am not offering a remodel bid. Valley Tile does not bid the repair on a job we inspected.

9. Documents reviewed

- One-page contract between owner and [REDACTED CONTRACTOR], dated [REDACTED]. No specification for receptor method.
- Six progress photos supplied by the owner. Faces and house numbers cropped for this sample.
- No manufacturer spec sheets were in the file. No permit card was produced.

10. Closing

If more of the floor is opened, I can amend this report. An amendment would add what the hidden layers show. It would not erase the slope, the hollow tile, or the stain downstairs. Those are already on the record.

This report is written for the person who hired me. If it is later given to an insurer or an attorney, it still says the same thing. I do not write one version for the owner and another version for court.

Inspected and written by:

Bryan Blair

Owner / Qualifier · Valley Tile & Plumbing

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SAMPLE ONLY. Identifying names, the street address, the installer's identity, and original photographs have been removed. This file is a specimen of report format and tone. It is not an opinion about any particular live property other than the fictionalized composite described herein.

Conditions described were as of the inspection date. This report is not a warranty of the property and is not a repair contract.