

MOISTURE CONTENT FOR SEALER APPLICATION

Sealers require that the material to be treated is relatively dry before sealing to ensure maximum protection and performance attributes are achieved. This is so the sealer can both penetrate and cure properly. If the surface is too wet, it can stop penetrating sealer from being absorbed evenly and prevent it from curing properly. Excess moisture can cause the same problems for coating sealers and color-enhancing sealers. While sealer labels do indicate minimum times after installation for which a sealer can be applied, it is important to note that these are minimum time frames and do not necessarily indicate that a given surface is suitable to be sealed. The most common method for determining if a surface is dry enough to apply a sealer involves two steps:

Test for water absorption. Apply water to the surface to see if it is absorbed into the tile, stone or grout. If it is, the surface is most likely dry enough to apply sealer. It is advisable to do a number of tests across the surface to ensure the entire area is porous enough to accept the sealer.

Visual inspection. Look at the entire area to see if you can see any moisture in the surface. This will usually be noticeable as a darker tone or color. If an uninstalled piece of the tile or stone is available, this is a good way to verify and validate whether excess moisture is present. Pay close attention to low points in a floor, such as drains, as water will tend to collect in these areas, taking longer to cure out. Mud bed or thick bed installations will also likely require longer cure times prior to sealer application to ensure that the sealer will be absorbed and provide the desired protection and appearance.

Measuring moisture with a Moisture Meter. While the methods above are routinely used for determining suitability of sealer application, the most reliable results will be achieved by using a non-destructive moisture meter. For dense tile and or natural stones with high shade variation, the above tests may not be completely reliable. For determining suitable moisture levels, a meter with a relative scale measurement from 0 to 100 is preferred.

Penetrating / Impregnating Natural Look Sealers: Readings from 0 to 60 are acceptable for the application of these sealers.

Color Enhancing Sealer and Topical Sealers: Readings from 0 to 40 are acceptable for the application of these sealers.

Limitations and Special Notes – It is important to note that the values and numbers in this technical bulletin are general guidelines and recommendations and may not be applicable for some specific installations and conditions. If moisture levels exceed the specified ranges listed, it is recommended to allow the moisture more time to cure prior to sealing. This may require additional days or weeks depending on job site conditions and variables. Consult with the local Custom® Building Products representative and or Technical Service Department for more specific options and remedies. Determining suitability for product use must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with specific job site variables considered by all concerned parties.

For more information on sealers, moisture content and the suitability of sealers for application, please go to custombuildingproducts.com or contact our Technical Services Department at 800-282-8786.

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