

CAULKING COMPOUNDS USED IN CERAMIC TILE INSTALLATIONS

Latex-based caulks are similar to latex paints in chemical makeup. They will provide years of service but must be maintained or replaced as necessary, depending on the amount of exposure to the elements: water, heat, steam, cleaning agents, etc. Latex caulks are more prone to attack by any of the above vs. Portland cement grouts and are not considered or expected to be as durable. If caulks were as durable as Portland cement grouts, the ease of application, color uniformity, and use of fewer tools, would certainly be reasons to use them in place of Portland cement grouts for entire installations instead of limiting them to specific joints. When caulk has been installed properly but requires replacement due to constant exposure to any of the above, it is not a product or workmanship related issue. When paint has been properly applied to a properly prepared surface but begins to peel and crack after exposure to the elements, the painter is not expected to repaint the affected areas at their expense because it is understood and expected that this will eventually occur. Most people have a basic understanding of concrete and paint and its life expectancy, so it simply becomes an educational process and understanding that grouts and caulks are different forms of concrete and paint and that various forms of exposure, care and maintenance or lack thereof, will impact service life.

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