

WHY IS WONDERBOARD® LITE 7/16" THICK?

We have been asked the question, "Why did we reduce the thickness of WonderBoard® Lite Backerboard to 7/16"?" The answer is simple: to make it easier to work with and install! The thinner board is lighter weight which is important when carrying several sheets to an upstairs bathroom. The thinner board is easier to hold and also easier to cut to the needed size. Other changes were also made to improve the surface and ease the installation of the board. Overall, the 7/16" WonderBoard® Lite is a much improved cement backerboard for the installation of ceramic and natural stone tile in wet areas.

How much thinner is it than the old 1/2" WonderBoard? The easy answer would be 1/16", but it is more complicated than that. The ANSI A118.9 Cement Backerboard Standard states that the board can vary from specimen to specimen by as much as 1/32". So, the old 1/2" board could be as thin as a 15/32" thick and the new 7/16" board can be as thick as 15/32". So the actual difference may only be 1/32".

The TCNA Handbook allows for a variance in the thickness of the mortar bed used for the installation of tile. It allows a thin-bed mortar to be applied behind the tiles at a thickness of 3/32" - 1/4" for tiles with one side less than 15". For larger tiles, with one side greater than 15", the handbook recommends a medium bed mortar that can range in thickness from 3/16" - 3/4". The thickness of the mortar used to bond the ceramic tile to the wall can vary more than the 7/16" - 1/2" thickness of the cement backerboard.

In many cases the thinner backerboard makes it easier to match up the tile installation with the surrounding wall finishes. When you take into consideration the thickness of the mortar and the tile, it can be difficult to achieve an acceptable transition to a painted drywall surface that surrounds the tile assembly. A slightly thinner board may help with these transitions.

There are also additional changes to WonderBoard® Lite in addition to a reduction in thickness. These changes were made to maintain the properties of the board and to maintain the same physical strength and industry performance requirements as the old 1/2" WonderBoard. It retains the same level of performance and exceeds the requirements of ANSI A118.9 and other building requirements for a cement backerboard that is installed behind a ceramic and natural stone tile assembly in both wet and dry applications. We're so confident in WonderBoard® Lite's performance that it's still included in our Lifetime System Warranty.

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