

Care & Maintenance of Porcelain Tile Flooring

Product Quality

Although porcelain tile is by definition impervious, it is still possible for its surface to stain. Characteristics of the tile finish and product performance should provide insight on the tiles resistance to staining. The floor system provided by AutoStone that is marketed with the “Bright Finish” attribute are unique and will not absorb permanent stains, unlike other porcelain products that do.

However, there are non-Bright finish products sold and/or installed by AutoStone that are impervious, yet may still accept a surface stain. Polished tiles, by their very nature will accept stains. The process of polishing tiles opens the pores of the tiles up, by grinding the surface down, thus allowing for the ability for the surface to stain. Many polished tiles from AutoStone come with a stain inhibitor to help reduce this ability.

Ask your AutoStone associate for information on the exact tiles your brand program comes and how those tiles should have a cleaning program established to best maximize the performance of your floor system investment.

Unpolished porcelain tile

Following is a simple procedure to clean unpolished/unglazed porcelain tile flooring with a moderate soil load.

- Sweep or vacuum the dirt from the floor.
- Saturate the floor with a light dose of **neutral** cleaning solution and hot water, stir and allow it to stand on the floor for 5 to 10 minutes. Do not allow cleaning solutions to dry. Also, for this procedure, do it on a small test area first, then when successful, do it in small batches at a time to make sure you are properly managing the cleaning process.
- For more difficult stains, scrub the cleaning solution with a floor machine equipped with an abrasive pad and preferably and an additional stiff nylon bristle brush. This should both brush the tile surface and allow for the bristles to clean out the grout joints.
- Rinse the porcelain tile floor with clean and clear water thoroughly to remove the cleaning solution.
- Wipe away the dirty cleaning solution and do a good rinse (clean water) of the surface and wipe with a clean mop, sponge mop or preferably, a wet vacuum.
- You might have to use a more aggressive cleaning method if the unpolished porcelain tile is heavily stained.
- In all cases, more cleaning chemical is not always the solution. More chemicals applied require additional flood rinse to remove.

Polished porcelain tile

For polished or glazed porcelain tiles, these instructions must be followed for general cleaning:

- Sweep or vacuum loose dirt and dust from the floor. Use an untreated, dry dust mop instead of broom.
- Mop the floor with a **neutral** mild cleaning solution. The concentration of the cleaner should be 50% less than the amount used on an unpolished porcelain tile floor.
- Rinse the porcelain tile floor with clean and clear water thoroughly to remove the cleaning solution.
- Dry carefully to increase the shine and to prevent water spots.
- Wipe away the dirty cleaning solution and do a good rinse (clean water) of the surface and wipe with a clean mop, sponge mop or preferably, a wet vacuum.
- In all cases, more cleaning chemical is not always the solution. More chemicals applied require additional flood rinse to remove.

Textured tile

A textured porcelain tile surface demands additional cleaning procedures. Just a standard wet-mopping will not effectively clean such surface. For AutoStone, this applies as well to our **driveseries!** Enviroshop series, Clinkershop and BMW exterior tiles (specifically). Ask your AutoStone representative for assistance on the surface texture of the tile for your specific brand.

Textured tiles normally are applied to shop and service areas in an automotive dealership. The very nature of a textured means it is designed to provide more surface traction, thus the texture may hold on to more dirt, grease and grime. AutoStone created our Bright finish to aid dealership cleaning practices, but due to the environment, dealership management practices, chemical and other variables, additional attention to cleaning is often a necessity.

Texture requires you to clean it more frequently and do it in a specific manner. For cleaning textured surfaces these are good cleaning suggestions:

- Sweep or vacuum dust and debris from the floor. For sweeping use a soft-bristle broom and sweep in two directions. First follow the direction of the tile, and then sweep diagonally to ensure complete cleaning of all foreign material that might be residing in the texture.
- Saturate the surface with a **neutral** cleaning solution in hot water and stir. Allow the cleaning solution to remain on the floor for five to ten minutes. Scrub with a brush, again using a two direction method.
- Rinse the porcelain tile with clean, clear water to remove the cleaning solution.
- For high traffic locations, it is recommended to scrub the floor once a day and clean with a good floor scrubber sweeper at regular intervals (no longer than 48-hours apart).
- Your level of acceptable cleanliness will determine your regularly scheduled cleaning regimen.

Prevention and Safety Measures:

- Do not clean porcelain tile flooring with ammonia or with cleaners that contain bleach and/or acid for cleaning.
 - Acid and ammonia based cleaners may alter grout color.
 - Acid when applied in too high concentration can cause damage to polished tile surfaces (creating a burnished appearance).
 - Acid can etch the surface of tiles (when applied in too high concentration).
 - Acid can leave acidic residue behind and multiply your cleaning problems by holding on to rubber from tires and soles of shoes, etc.
- Do not use any oil-based detergents, wax cleaners or sealants.
- Do not use agents that contain any dyes or colors on unglazed porcelain tile.
- Do use rugs at outdoor entrances to prevent grit from being tracked on tile flooring. Grit, over time will show excessive wear on tile surfaces.
- Do not use steel wool pads, because the loose steep particles may cause rust stains in the grout, etc.
- Always use commonsense.
- If your chemicals come in a steel canister because of the caustic nature of the chemical, you may not want to use it on your floor.
- If your chemicals may damage the interior hoses and lines of your floor scrubber sweeper, don't use them.
- A good floor scrubber sweeper with long battery life are good tools to help keep and maintain your floors in proper working condition.
- A good floor wet vacuum is an essential component for keeping your floors clean and contaminant free.
- When you change cleaning services, make sure the new crew reviews our cleaning recommendations.

3rd party cleaning professionals:

If your cleaning falls off and you need assistance to get your floors, AutoStone Floor Systems can provide qualified professional cleaning contractors for your dealership.

Call AutoStone today if we can help: 800-772-1473

or email: hello@autostoneusa.com