



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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Aqua Mix Sealers Moisture content for sealing

Aqua Mix sealers require the surface to be dry before sealing. This is so the sealer can both penetrate and cure properly. If the surface is too moist then it can stop a penetrating sealer from being absorbed evenly into the surface and prevent it from curing properly. Excess moisture can cause the same problems for coating sealers. The most common method for determining if a surface is dry enough to apply an Aqua Mix sealer involves two steps.

- **Test for water absorption.** Apply water to the surface to see if it is absorbed into the tile or stone. If it is then the surface is most likely dry enough to apply sealer. It is advisable to do a number of tests across the surface to make sure the entire area is dry.
- **Visual inspection.** Look at the entire area to see if you can see any moisture in the surface. This will usually manifest itself as a darker tone or color. Pay special attention to grout joints and to any low points in a floor (where there are falls), as well as around the wall to floor junction. The low points are where water will collect and therefore take longer to dry. Also check around drains for the same reasons.

Measuring Moisture with a Moisture Meter. There are some instances where the method above does not work for example on very dense surfaces like porcelain tile. Also architects and specifiers often require a quantitative definition of “dry” to incorporate into a specification. The maximum ranges of moisture content for Aqua Mix sealers (as measured by a moisture meter using a WME- wood moisture equivalent- measurement) are

- **15-20%.** Sealers Choice Gold Rapid Cure, Ultra Solv, Pro Solv, Penetrating Sealer, Pro Block, Grout Sealer. Note Same Day Grout Sealer can be applied with higher moisture content; see product label and data sheet.
- **10-15%.** Enrich N Seal, Stone Enhancer, Grout Colorant, Seal and Finish Low Sheen, High Gloss Sealer

Why express the moisture content as a range? The majority of moisture meters are calibrated for timber measuring the actual percentage moisture content, as the critical levels of moisture for timber are known. However when testing other types of building materials like stone and tile the meters measure the WME (wood moisture equivalent) of the particular material. The WME is the moisture level that would be attained by a piece of wood in equilibrium with the actual material being tested. WME is a relative measurement rather than an absolute, with the meters expressing moisture content within a percentage range. Variables such as surface density, climate, the type of meter etc, can all affect the accuracy of the measurement, further supporting the need to express maximum moisture as a range rather than as a specific percentage.

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