

ZELLIGES and BEJMATS

1. GENERAL TILE LAYING RECOMMENDATIONS :

Our technical instructions sheets always take precedence over the information printed on the packaging of tile laying products. We will not accept any complaints after the tiles are laid.

Laying the tiles constitutes acceptance of the goods.

Therefore, it is very important to read and comply with these instructions. Failure to respect the present instructions is considered to be a serious fault that justifies refusal of the work.

Products for substrate preparing, tiles laying, grouting, sealing and upkeep are usually available in stock.

VERIFY THE CONFORMITY OF THE TILES BEFORE LAYING.

VERIFY THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK AND ITS EVOLUTION.

Laying edge to edge: All our tiles must be laid almost edge to edge, with a gap of maximum 1 mm.

Laying tiles on a wooden floor: must be carried out by an experienced professional.

Laying tiles on wooden floors always entails a substantial risk, for several reasons:

A wooden floor may be subject to bending movements or deformations, particularly in the case of overloading due to laying tiles.

Wood is sensitive to moisture, whether it is the humidity in the air, or that in the high-bond mortar used, and swells, moves or becomes deformed by it.

Floors and wood have many joints between planks and panels that need to be neutralized to avoid shearing or cracks.

Nevertheless, an experienced professional can, under the right conditions, lay the tiles in an acceptable way, by fixing, loosening, waterproofing, leveling and filling the joints on the substrate in accordance with good trade practice, and laying the tiles with a sufficiently thick layer of very flexible high-bond mortar (OMNICEM PL85) to absorb the movement and the unevenness of the substrate.

Laying tiles in a shower tray or cubicle: must be carried out by an experienced professional.

A shower tray may be tiled with zelliges and bejmats, on condition that:

- **The shower tray is completely waterproof.** That waterproofing may be achieved relatively easily by covering it with a permanent coating, using a thick coat of OMNIBIND COAT (3kg/m²) after impregnating the substrate with OMNIBIND TP (0.2 L/m²).
- **The mortar used is highly water-resistant** (OMNICEM PL85).
- **The gradient to the drain hole must be sufficient** and designed in such a way as to avoid any stagnant water which would leave limescale marks on the tiles.
- **The walls of the shower tray are also made waterproof** using a thick coat of OMNIBIND COAT (3kg/m²) after impregnating the substrate with OMNIBIND TP (0.2 L/m²).

An experienced professional might also use other waterproofing techniques.

Laying tiles on wooden or plasterboard panels (Gyproc, Placoplatre): must be carried out by an experienced professional.

Check the soundness of the substrate.

Impregnate the support using OMNIBIND TP (0.2 L /m²).

Risk of contact with water: waterproof using a thick layer of OMNIBIND COAT (3kg/m²)

Laying on a heated floor: must be carried out by an experienced professional.

Since a heated floor is subjected continually to strains due to expansion and contraction caused by substantial differences in temperature that the substrate can undergo, it is essential to lay the tiles using a **double spread of adhesive with a coat at least 3 mm thick of a very flexible high-bond mortar (OMNICEM PL85)**. Obviously, the risk of crazing and cracking is higher, and the question of expansion joints must be evaluated carefully.

2. TILE LAYING IMPERATIVE REQUIREMENTS

LAYING EDGE TO EDGE:

All our tiles must be laid almost edge to edge, with a gap of maximum 1 mm. However, the irregular character of zelliges means that in certain places, it has to be accepted that the joint will be slightly wider.

DOUBLE SPREAD OF ADHESIVE AND ADJUSTMENT OF THE TILES in relation to each other.

The double spread is to allow the zelliges to be adjusted, thus avoiding sharp edges to become visible.

USE A VERY LIQUID GROUT, never a pasty type. This is essential for filling thin joints.

The tiles must also be very carefully cleaned with water to which chlorine-free non-acid detergent has been added after grouting and before the final waxing phase.

3. USE :

Traditional Moroccan terra cotta enameled or unglazed tiles, mainly for the walls.

Also suitable for floors exposed to moderate traffic : bathrooms, alcoves, recesses.

The “floor zelliges” or bejmats are thicker, thus more resistant. The glaze is relatively fragile though. In the ancient Moroccan palaces, the enamel is sometimes very used and showing the terra cotta underneath, in places where the traffic is heavy, in spite of the habit of taking one’s shoes off when entering these places. The glazing on floor zellige and bejmat is also more rustic than that of wall zelliges. The wall zelliges are cut out of 12x12cm tiles to obtain smaller shapes or mosaic pieces, this operation allowing the artisan to select the parts with less defects and to avoid the other ones. This explains why the wall tiles show less defects than the floor ones, that aren’t cut out from larger zelliges.

These imperfections and small defects must be appreciated by each according to one’s personal taste and tolerance. Some will love the patina and “ancient” effect of the naked terra cotta on floors where the traffic is intense.

4. SPECIAL FEATURES

- The method of manufacture of zelliges means that there may be variations in colour within the same box, as well as between two boxes.

Therefore, we advise taking tiles at random from several boxes during laying, to avoid areas of different colour being too pronounced.

- There will always be minor defects which, taken in isolation, may seem unacceptable, but which contribute to the subtle overall appearance.

So there is no reason to sort the zelliges so as only to use "perfect" tiles. Given the very traditional character of the production methods, up to 5% of larger defects will have to be tolerated (breakage or chips of more than 0.5 cm²) which do not allow the full tile to be laid.

However, there will be very little wastage if care is taken to use these tiles where cut tiles need to be laid. In fact, our zelliges are already subject to very strict selection during manufacture, and it should be borne in mind that there is an inherent contradiction in wanting tiles that are traditional in character, at the same time as wanting total uniformity.

- Nowadays, tilers are used to laying tiles with a wide joint.

But it was not always that way: since Delft tiles, and via the tiles and floor covering that were found in all our houses since the mid 19th century, up to the "metro" beveled tiles, the joints are so fine that they seem to be no more than a hair's breadth.

It would be a real pity to lay zelliges in any other way, because they were not designed for that, and the presence of a wider joint detracts from the comparison of their infinite qualities.

A tiler who is used to handling sometimes perfectly sized industrial tiles will initially be disturbed by the irregularities of the zelliges, but will not have any particular difficulties with laying them.

5. LAYING ZELLIGES WITH ADHESIVE

We recommend laying zelliges on very even substrates, using flexible white high-bond mortar or flexible white paste adhesive, with a double spread of adhesive forming a coat of at least 3 mm after laying.

We recommend using the powder adhesive **OMNICEM PL85** (5 kg/m²), and impregnating the substrate beforehand with **OMNIBIND TP** (0.2 litres/m²).

If tiling shower trays, shower and bath walls, bath, sink and washbasin surrounds, floors and joints between wall and floor in small bathrooms, kitchen work surfaces, and any surfaces in direct contact with water: it is essential to ensure an absolutely watertight substrate, especially when it is sensitive to water, like wood or plaster. We recommend to apply with a broad paintbrush, after the impregnator **OMNIBIND TP**, a thick coat of absolutely waterproof paste **OMNIBIND COAT** (3 kg/m²).

WARNING: no adhesive or joint will ever be totally waterproof, even if its technical information sheet suggests it is.

- Measure out the quantity of adhesive onto the substrate and onto the back of the tile so as to be able to adjust the zelliges in relation to the tiles immediately around them.
- **PLACE THE ZELLIGES ALMOST EDGE TO EDGE, WITH THE NARROWEST JOINT POSSIBLE (MAXIMUM 1 MM), WITHOUT WORRYING TOO MUCH ABOUT THE REGULARITY AND ALIGNMENT OF THE JOINTS.**
- We consider a wider joint as a serious defect, justifying refusal to accept the work, except of course, if the customer prefers a wider joint.
- Adjust the zelliges alongside a taut string and in relation to each other so that the edges touch as far as possible, so as not to leave any sharp edge exposed.
- There can be differences in thickness between zelliges of approximately 1.5 mm and they are never perfectly flat.
- Make sure that the whole surface of the zellige is in contact with the high-bond mortar (otherwise an overhanging tile may crack in the corners).

6. GROUTING OF GLAZED ZELLIGES

- The grouting can be done 2 or 3 days after laying with **OMNICEM PL85** high-bond mortar.

Use a highly water-resistant joint compound for thin grey joints.

We recommend **OMNIFILL 100WD**: (0.3 kg/m²) (except for the unglazed “natural” zelliges).

Just before grouting, wet the joints until they do not absorb any more water.

This is essential for filling thin joints.

- Use a very liquid grout, then wipe the edge of the joints with a damp sponge. Perform this operation several times, until the joints are completely filled.
- Clean immediately with water, a mop or a sponge, and remove any remaining blemishes as soon as possible by hand.

7. SPECIAL TREATMENT OF "Natural" UNGLAZED ZELLIGES

1. Grouting

For grouting, in the case of “natural” unglazed zelliges, use a grout containing few additives. We recommend **OMNIFILL 102** (0.3 kg/m²) water-resistant grout for thin joints. If used very liquid, it does not adhere much to the surface of the zelliges if the surface is wetted until it can absorb no more water before grouting.

Just before grouting, wet the joints until they do not absorb any more water. This is essential for filling thin joints and in order to prevent the jointing product from penetrating into the slightly porous surface and thus forming a veil of cement, which is invisible while wet, but tarnishes the appearance of the surface when it dries.

Use a very liquid grout, never a pasty one.

Grout very quickly, working on small areas at a time, and clean with water to which a household detergent has been added, immediately after grouting. This way of working should avoid the forming of a cement veil on the surface of the “natural” zelliges.

Nevertheless, if a veil of grouting cement remains on the “natural” zelliges, it can be easily removed by rubbing it out, cautiously and parsimoniously, with a sponge soaked in diluted hydrochloric acid (10% of hydrochloric acid for 90% of water). A higher concentration of acid would attack the cement joints. This is a delicate and potentially dangerous operation and it should be done very cautiously, using protection gloves and glasses, and only if absolutely necessary.

Never machine-sand the tiles.

Oiling or waxing the zelliges beforehand is not recommended. This may cause the oil or wax to react with the grouting cement, thus forming of a putty veil, that can hardly be removed by any method.

Using acid on cement tiles is not recommended, as the acid would attack the surface of the tiles.

2. Surface filling

Natural, unglazed zelliges are matt terracotta and are highly porous.

They absorb stains very easily.

Therefore it is essential to fill the surface.

- Clean the tiles thoroughly with water to which a household detergent has been added before surface filling (any grout stain or veil which is not removed at this stage is liable to remain on the tiles until the next thorough cleaning).

Use a stiff brush or a scouring sponge (Scotch-Brite).

Really effective surface filling can only be done **ONCE THE TILING IS COMPLETELY DRY**. Otherwise, the wax does not penetrate the tile surface sufficiently. Surface filling with semi-pasty white wax: apply two thin coats (using a rag) a couple of hours apart, then polish with a clean dry rag (or polishing machine for large areas). When done, let a drop of water fall on the tiles. The drop should stay on the surface of the tile (it should not penetrate into the tile nor leave a darker humidity mark). If it doesn't, do not hesitate to apply a third very fine layer of wax, then polish again.

- For surface filling, we recommend our **EMERY & Cie. FLOOR WAX**, traditional wax, colourless, semi-pasty, made from carnauba wax and beeswax, diluted in turpentine. Also suitable for wood and parquet flooring, natural stone and marble.

8. ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

The maintenance of glazed zelliges does not require any special precautions.

For “natural” unglazed zelliges, use a fatty soap for natural stone or terracotta floors. Possible regular waxing. Polish to produce a shine.

Wash after waxing to obtain a satin finish.

9. PRODUCTS: ZELLIGES

PRIMER - IMPREGNATOR

Description	Consumption	Capacity
OMNIBIND TP: indispensable primer. (dries in 12 hours). Clear green liquid made from synthetic resins in water dispersion. Increases the adhesion of OMNIBIND COAT or OMNICEM PL85 on any substrate. Must be used for suspect substrates or on any plaster substrate. Apply with a broad paintbrush.	0.2 l / m ²	1 litre
		3 litres
OMNIBIND COAT: for absolutely waterproof substrate. (dries in 12 hours). Very waterproof white paste, with long-term elasticity, made from latex in an aqueous emulsion. Indispensable for effectively waterproofing: shower trays, shower and bath walls, bath, sink and washbasin surrounds, floors and joints between wall and floor in small bathrooms, kitchen work surfaces, and any surfaces in direct contact with water. Apply with a broad paintbrush in a thick coat, after impregnating with OMNIBIND TP. For effective waterproofing, a layer must be approximately 2mm thick. Apply two or more layers. WARNING: indispensable to ensure an absolutely watertight substrate, especially when it is sensitive to water, like wood or plaster. No adhesive or joint will ever be totally waterproof, even if its technical information sheet suggests it is. If less than 3kg/m ² are used, the waterproofing might be insufficient.	3 kg / m ²	5 kg
		16 kg

ADHESIVE

Description	Consumption	Capacity
IN POWDER FORM: OMNICEM PL 85: very flexible. White high-bond mortar in powder form, made from cement and synthetic substances. Very flexible and very water-resistant, for all substrates (undersoil heating, old tiles and panels). Indoor and outdoor. Impregnate the substrate beforehand with OMNIBIND TP. Apply with an 8 to 10 mm notched spreader. Wait 2 to 3 days before grouting.	5 kg / m ²	5 kg
		25 kg

JOINT

Description	Consumption	Capacity
OMNIFILL 102: Water-resistant joint mortar for thin grey joints. If used very liquid, it does not adhere much to the surface of the “natural” unglazed zelliges if the surface is wetted until it can absorb no more water before grouting. Allows the water steam to dry out of the walls. Also suitable for glazed zelliges if there is little contact with moisture.	0.3 kg / m ²	5 kg
OMNIFILL 100WD: very water resistant - for glazed zelliges. Highly water-resistant joint compound for thin grey joints. Not recommended for “natural” unglazed zelliges: adheres to the surface. Recommended for kitchens and bathrooms, where humidity is high.	0.3 kg / m ²	5 kg

SURFACE FILLING & MAINTENANCE

Description	Consumption	Capacity
EMERY & Cie. FLOOR WAX: For “natural” unglazed zelliges Traditional wax, colourless, semi-pasty, made from carnauba wax and beeswax, diluted in turpentine. Easy to apply with a dry cloth on small areas. Also suitable for wood and parquet flooring, natural stone and marble. Apply two coats (50g/m ²) for an initial surface filling. After surface filling, clean regularly using a fatty soap for floors. Use this wax at regular intervals to brighten up the colours and protect the tiles.	100g / m ²	1 kg
		5 kg

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