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November 2022

TileLetter



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TileLetter

THE INDUSTRY'S LEADING TILE INSTALLATION MAGAZINE

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Lesley A. Goddin



"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."
– John F. Kennedy

Giving thanks

Coming into November – the season of thanks – this year, there really is a LOT to be thankful for. Yes, we are dealing with inflation and supply chain issues and mid-term elections – but the energy in the country is at a level it hasn't been the last couple of years. COVID is still around but it is moving into a still-to-be-avoided, but more manageable malady. There's a lot of excitement in the industry with new products, and new training opportunities – both for installation and business – resurgence of conferences and trade shows, and the infusion of beauty the growing artisan movement is bringing. So, yes, a lot to be grateful about.

For instance, I have been blown away learning about new NTCA member Aryk Snowberger's work with Snowbee Custom Tile LLC in Ohio. This young man is producing beautiful installations with precision and elegance, and maintaining a work-life balance that is inspiring to behold. Learn more about him in this issue's Member Spotlight.

Trisha Guinn, a tile setter apprentice at Columbia River Tile & Stone, is another impressive force in the industry. Her path from an educator in California, to a union brick mason finisher to a tile finishing apprentice and now a tile setter apprentice is incredible. And she started her journey through tile after age 50! Rising Stars usually focuses on young members of our industry, but this determined, young-at-heart woman is the focus of this issue's Rising Stars feature.

We take a look at the efforts



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Associated Builders and Contractors are making in the area of inclusion, diversity and equity in the construction industry in our Business section. And our Training and Education story by contributor Heather Carter recaps the value of an NTCA workshop for students of the Sierra Nevada Job Corps at the Reno Floor & Decor back in the spring.

CTEF's Scott Carothers explores the standards-based methods of installing curbless showers, and our cover story details an installation story using CUSTOM products at Corso Atlanta, a luxury senior living community in Atlanta's upscale Buckhead neighborhood.

We give thanks for the energy, presence and leadership that NTCA President Martin Brookes invested in our association in his tenure over the last two years, as he moves on to chair the NTCA Board of Directors. And Bart Bettiga pays homage to Pedro Riaza, the former General Secretary of Spain's tile manufacturer's association, ASCER, who the industry mourns in his passing last month.

This month is a time to count our gains – and our losses – and take a moment to ponder it all, with grace and gratitude and positive anticipation of the days to come.

Happy Thanksgiving and God bless,



Lesley
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Martin G. Brookes

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It has been my pleasure to serve as President of the NTCA for the past two years. I have learned a great deal while serving in this role, and it has been a truly rewarding experience.

During my tenure as president, our membership has grown and become more diverse. Expansion of our membership brings value to the association because it generates income that allows us to allocate these funds to sponsor training and education programs, which reflect a core value of our association. Our commitment to training and education will continue under new leadership in the coming year.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Sam Bruce. Currently, Sam serves as President of Visalia Ceramic Tile, Inc. Sam has been actively involved in a leadership role with NTCA as a member of the Executive Board for the last four years. I am confident that he will be an asset to the association and will make important contributions to promote and advance the NTCA. I am looking forward to working with Sam and the other members of the Executive Board, in my new role as Chairman of the Board.

Again, it has been a pleasure to serve you as President of the NTCA. I hope to see you all soon, perhaps at a training event or trade show. I thank you all for your support of NTCA and hope you continue your support for years to come.

Martin G. Brookes, President
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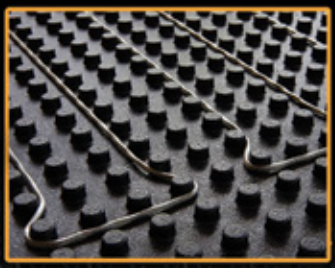
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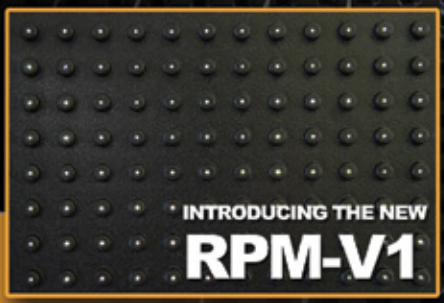
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QUESTION

I have a question on the best practice for installing 12" x 24" large-format tile in a 1/3 offset pattern. If layout results in alternating small cuts – no less than 3" occasionally on one end and larger – is that acceptable as best practice? When laying out to 1/3 offset pattern, the center tile was divided with equal cuts on each side for the bottom course.

ANSWER

The tile industry standards address your question like this:

ANSI A108 (American National Standard Specifications for the Installation of Ceramic Tile Section .02 (General Requirements; Materials, Environmental, and Workmanship sub-section 4.3 (Workmanship, cutting, fitting and grout joint size) states:

- A108.02 4.3.1 – Center and balance areas of tile, if possible.
- A108.02 4.3.2 – An excessive amount of cuts shall not be made. Usually, no cuts smaller than half size should be made. Make all cuts on the outer edges of the field.

This isn't a lot of information to go on, but it is essentially defining the standard/best practice as ensuring there is not less than 1/2 tile wherever possible. The easiest way to adjust for small tiles is usually to shift the layout from the center of the tile to the center of the grout joint. On a 1/3 offset, this usually offers more than one alternative for centering to avoid small cuts at the ends of the field.

When it comes to layout, the installer or designer should confer with the owner to ensure the final layout is acceptable. If the owner is not available, we advise the installer to ensure their layout is defensible, in other words, that all layout options were considered and the layout installed was the best one that met the criteria for centering/balancing/no small cuts, and it also considered the most prominent focal point of the installation.

RESPONSE

I found the section you quoted helpful about standards/best practice as ensuring there is not less than 1/2 tile wherever possible, especially the statement of "wherever possible" and "centering the tile" or shifting the tile, as key components to achieving the best layout for a 1/3 pattern.



Thank you Veterans.

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In my case, I explored shifting the centered tile on the first course and it still resulted in smaller cuts on the alternating ends. I'm working with 12" x 24" large-format tiles on a shower wall that is 59-1/2" in width. I started my layout for the first course by using the center of the wall and tile, which resulted in two side cuts on each side of the full 12" x 24" centered tile of approximately 18-1/2". I began the 1/3 offset install starting from left to right. This resulted in the first end cut being 4-1/2" to start the 1/3 offset. The right end cut resulted in a 3-1/2" cut, which equals 1/3 of the 12" x 24" tile. This is the layout I chose to go with in order to control not having any smaller cuts on the ends.

ANSWER 2

One of the workshops NTCA conducts is titled "The Ins and Outs of Layout." At this workshop, we are involved with discussing a wide variety of layout issues similar to the one you are working on, as well as others. We'd love to have you attend this program when we are near you. Follow our schedule here and keep checking back as we will be adding many more programs for 2023 soon https://bit.ly/3CHK79H – or go to the Community Calendar at www.tile-assn.com under the Training & Education tab.

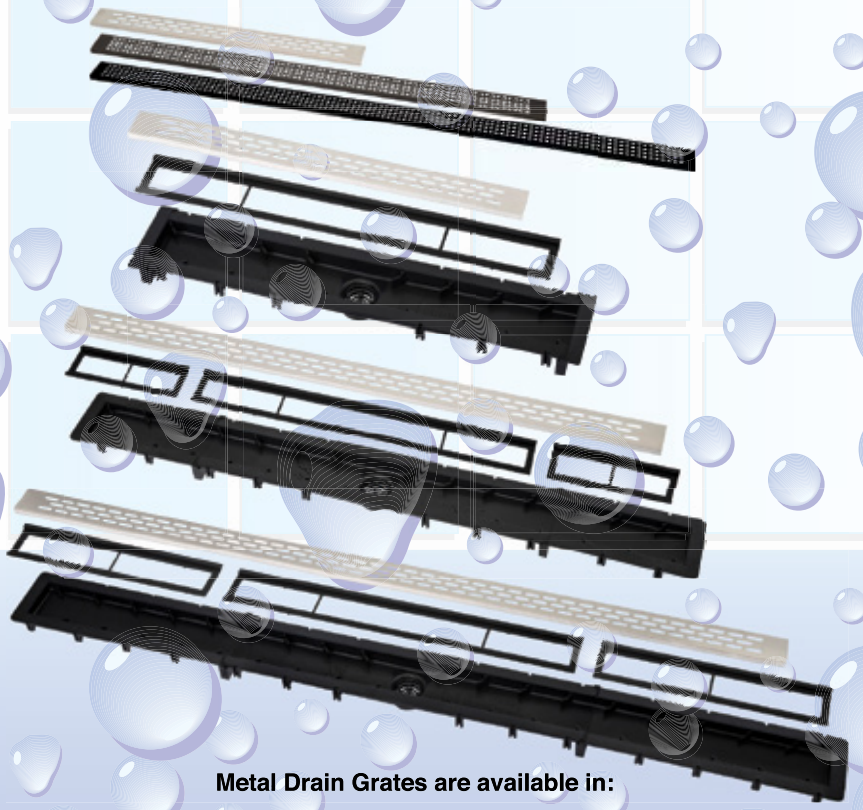
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ABC: embracing inclusion creates needed change in the construction industry



ABC's Total Human Health Initiative fosters inclusion by focusing on wellness of the body, heart, spirit and mind.

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) recently announced its strong support of the second annual Construction Inclusion Week – which took place the third week of October – and the need to champion and foster inclusion, diversity and equity throughout the construction industry.

Created by ABC members, Construction Inclusion Week harnesses the collective power of the construction industry to build awareness regarding the need to improve inclusion, diversity and equity in the industry.



Companies that were more diverse were more innovative, and performed better than others. Photo credit Brian Odwar.



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For more information on Ultracolor Plus Max and its stand-out black and white shades, visit www.MAPEI.com.



"Building inclusive, diverse and equitable workplaces ensures job creators in the construction community offer a robust employee value proposition that is attractive to top talent from all communities," said ABC Director of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Tia Perry. "Recruiting and retaining the best workers in the marketplace will foster more creativity, win more work and deliver the greatest value to the construction user. ABC is proud to be an integral part of this important week."

"Associated Builders and Contractors of New Jersey is proud to support Construction Inclusion Week and a more inclusive construction industry," said Samantha DeAlmeida, president of ABC of New Jersey. "We've recently partnered with the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey to bring our Apprenticeship Education & Training Fund, a U.S. Department of Labor-approved apprenticeship program, to underserved and low-income areas throughout New Jersey, where this type of upskilling program has not existed. By providing inclusive and equitable opportunities for well-paying jobs in these communities, our apprenticeship program helps achieve workforce equity while disrupting generational poverty."

"One of the most important opportunities in front of us is ensuring that authentic and personal conversations happen in the field," said Carolyn

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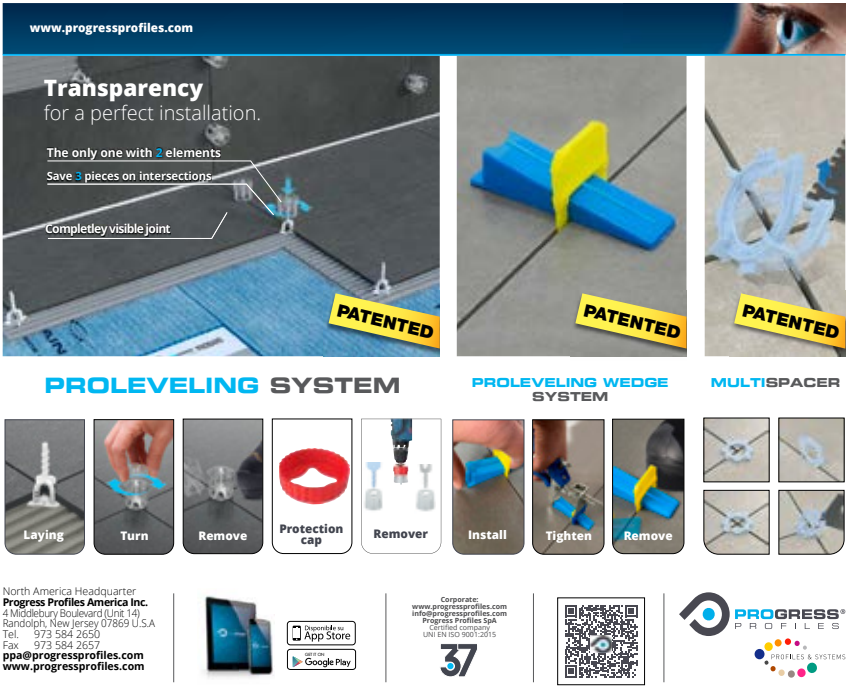
Ellison, managing director of community affairs at Clark Construction Group LLC and a member of ABC's National Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee. "I'm proud that Clark Construction has placed increased focus on fostering engagement and personal connections with our craft workforce – both during CIW and beyond."

The business case for IDE grows stronger every year. Diversity brings new ideas into an organization from various communities, resulting in greater innovation and creativity. Organizations that strive to promote IDE reap many benefits, including:

- Attracting and retaining high-caliber talent: Job-seekers are attracted to employers that demonstrate a commitment to sustaining a diverse workforce.



"Recruiting and retaining the best workers in the marketplace will foster more creativity, win more work and deliver the greatest value to the construction user," said ABC Director of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Tia Perry.



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- Increasing productivity: Employing workers from all backgrounds not only fosters a positive work environment, but by widening the candidate pool, also helps construction companies recruit the most qualified workers. Gallup reports that removing bias from the interview process and hiring based on skills and talent leads to 41% less absenteeism, 70% fewer safety incidents and 59% less turnover.
- Driving innovation and financial results: The Harvard Business Review published a survey that found many tangible benefits of diversity. Companies that were more diverse were more innovative, performed better than others, were 45% likelier to report that their firm's market share grew during the previous year and were 70% likelier to report that the firm captured a new market.
- Promoting total human health: ABC's Total Human Health Initiative fosters inclusion by focusing on wellness of the body, heart, spirit and mind. Health and safety programs for all industries should provide access to resources that apply to the four dimensions of total human health.

ABC believes that career opportunities should be made available to all people and in creating and championing conditions where individuals and organizations are limited only by their own potential and desire to succeed. This is the driving force behind the merit shop philosophy and ABC's IDE initiatives. ABC's diversity outreach is led by the association's Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee, which was established in 1999 as a key component of ABC's value proposition to develop people, win work and deliver work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which they work. Visit abc.org/diversity to learn about ABC's IDE strategy. TL

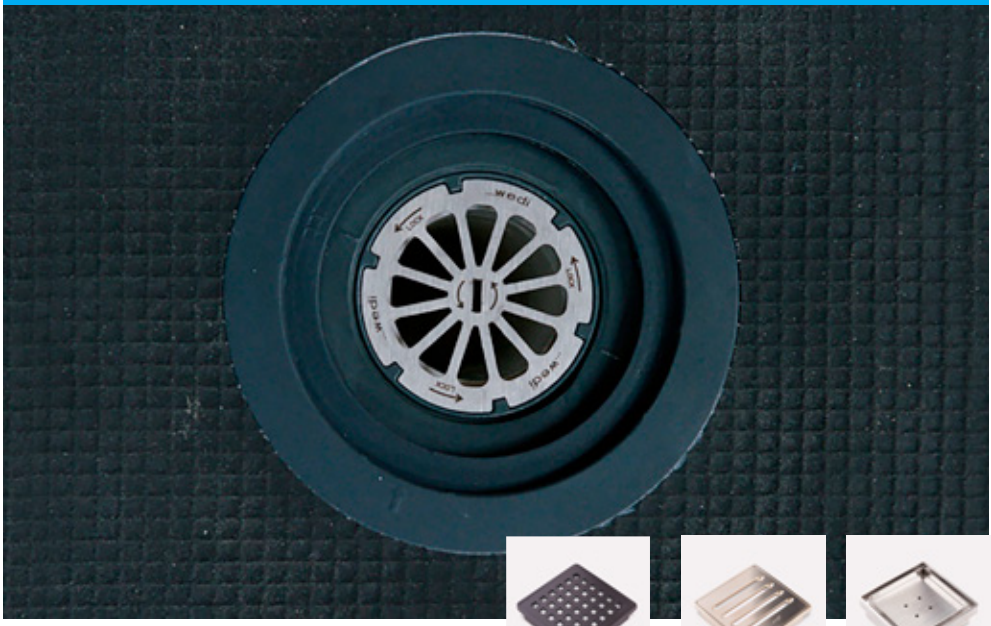


Employing workers from all backgrounds not only fosters a positive work environment, but by widening the candidate pool, also helps construction companies recruit the most qualified workers.

Associated Builders and Contractors is a national construction industry trade association established in 1950 that represents more than 21,000 members. Founded on the merit shop philosophy, ABC and its 68 chapters help members develop people, win work and deliver that work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which ABC and its members work. Visit ABC at abc.org.

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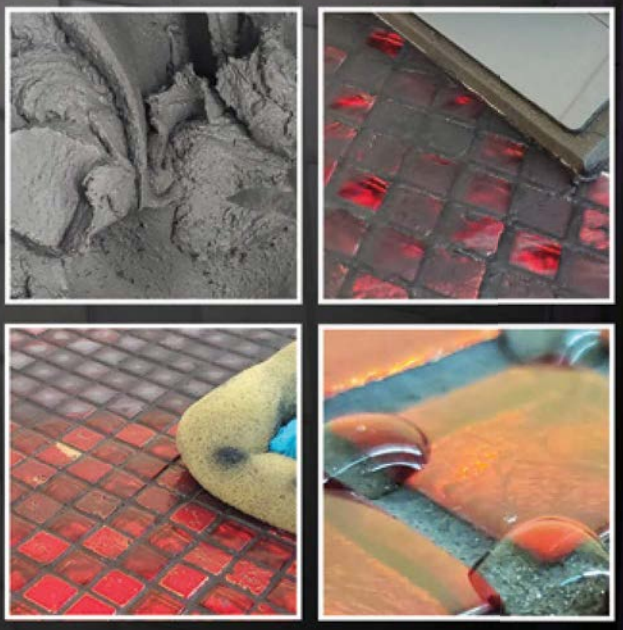
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City of Lights tile design shines with a system from CUSTOM



Corso Atlanta is a new luxury senior living community in Atlanta's upscale Buckhead neighborhood. Sited on nine acres of parkland, Corso's architecture invokes Parisian style with tapered mansard roofs and plenty of dormer windows. Interiors showcase highly-patterned and botanical designs that add French flair to the public areas of the property. A number of shops, dining venues and lounges are available to residents along with a personal level of service in traditional, timeless surroundings.

Over 40 different types of tile – from arabesques and faience to large-format tile (LFT) – were installed here with systems from Custom Building Products. These products were selected by Spectra Contract Flooring, the largest flooring installation contractor in the U.S. One of the first considerations for the team at Spectra was a highly-accelerated construction schedule.





Corso Atlanta is a new luxury senior living community in Buckhead, Atlanta.

Accelerated schedule demand quick-curing products

CUSTOM's Rapid Setting Shower System was crucial to meeting very ambitious deadlines in 300 residential units. These two products work together synergistically, allowing rapid prep of tiled showers in fast-track, multi-family and hospitality projects. Installers were able to float, waterproof and flood test shower pans in just a day.

SpeedSlope Rapid Setting Sloping Mortar was used to create a variety of low entry showers. SpeedSlope is a rapid-hardening, polymer-modified, pre-blended cement mortar for leveling and ramping. Formulated for dimensional stability and exceptional strength, SpeedSlope is ideal for pre-sloping or creating mortar beds to receive waterproofing membranes. Crews mixed a slurry coat and then applied a dry pack mortar bed in the shower receptors. This mortar cures exothermically, generating heat to set up quickly and allowed application of the membrane in just 60 minutes. Its exceptionally fine surface finish required less membrane than rougher surfaces.

The cured shower pans were treated with the second product in the rapid-setting shower system. RedGard SpeedCoat Waterproofing Membrane is a fast-curing, ready-to-use, liquid-applied waterproofing





Top: RedGard® Waterproofing and Crack Prevention Membrane being applied in a shower at Corso Atlanta – a luxury senior living community.

Right: Corso Atlanta bathrooms used CUSTOM's Rapid Setting Shower Systems of products, including RedGard® Speedcoat Waterproofing Membrane

membrane that creates a continuous barrier with outstanding adhesion. SpeedCoat's revolutionary cross-linking moisture cure technology delivers an exceptionally-fast cure time. One coat dries in as little as an hour, and this product actually improves its performance in humid or damp conditions. SpeedCoat excels on freshly-installed mortar beds like the SpeedSlope at Corso.

"Our crews could not believe how quickly these products cured," said Bobby Roan, VP of Sales at Spectra. "SpeedSlope and SpeedCoat were fast drying for a quick installation and we needed that speed."

The homes' shower walls and bathroom floors were prepped for tiling with applications of RedGard Waterproofing and Crack Prevention Membrane. RedGard is an easy-to-use, liquid-applied product that exceeds both ANSI A108.10 and A108.12 as well as ASTM E96 for low vapor permeability in commercial steam showers. This elastomeric membrane creates a durable, monolithic waterproof barrier that can accommodate any size or shape. RedGard achieves an Extra Heavy Duty service rating to protect tile and stone from traffic and impact as well as in-plane substrate movement. It also cured quickly to allow timely tile installation in the 300 bathrooms completed during Phase 1 of construction.





Top: Corso Atlanta Senior Living residential bathrooms were installed with ProLite® Premium Large Format Tile Mortar

Left: MegaLite® Crack Prevention Large Format Tile Mortar was used on all common area floors.

Lightweight mortars make light work of LFT

Much of the tile installed at Corso was a 12" x 24" format from Interceramic's Durabody collection. This material was used on floors and walls in residential bathrooms, in addition to many of the common areas. Beyond that, eclectic tile designs included crackle glass, basketweaves and rustic-looking ceramics, juxtaposing modern and traditional styles. Floral mosaic patterns required a practiced hand to set properly and the bistro manages to have an aged-looking wall just like a Parisian bakery.

On large-format tile, the installers used NTCA- and TCNA-approved



Kitchens at Corso Atlanta Senior Living used a variety of CUSTOM Tile Installation systems including ProLite® Premium Large Format Tile Mortar

straight mortar ridges and flat back troweling techniques to maximize wet mortar transfer. Two high-performance, lightweight mortars were specified to install all porcelain and ceramic tile. Both are formulated to weigh 40% less than traditional mortars, so a 30 lb. bag has the same coverage as a standard 50 lb. bag. These mortars exceed A118.15HET for non-sag performance on walls and will not slump under the weight of large-and-heavy tiles on floors.

Tile in residential bathrooms and tile on walls throughout the project was set with ProLite Premium Large Format Tile Mortar in white. This mortar offers exceptional handling and is ideal for all but the most demanding installation challenges. Its lightweight, smooth and creamy formula is especially appreciated when setting tiles on walls. These are some of the reasons that ProLite is the most popular lightweight product in the CUSTOM line up.

Floors in the community's common areas were set with MegaLite Crack Prevention Large Format Tile Mortar in gray. MegaLite is the highest bond strength, most flexible mortar that CUSTOM offers. Its superior strength makes it perfect for assemblies that will be exposed to heavy or wheeled traffic, such as hospitality-type facilities like



This kitchen was installed using CUSTOM's system of products including Prism® Ultimate Performance Cement Grout

Corso, or even exposed exterior tile. ProLite and MegaLite can both be applied up to 3/4" thick on horizontal surfaces, exceeding the ANSI standard.

"The installers' favorite products – as usual – were ProLite and MegaLite," reported Roan. "They really like the handling and how easy these mortars are to carry and use."

Prism Ultimate Performance Cement Grout was chosen for its versatility, color consistency and unique formulation. Calcium aluminate-based Prism is rapid setting, does not effloresce, and will not shade or mottle during installation, regardless of the environmental conditions. This was an important consideration in the high-humidity environment of Atlanta. Fine, rounded aggregates including lightweight glass beads make this ANSI A108.7 grout easy to spread and clean. Color-matched soft movement joints were filled with CUSTOM's Sanded Ceramic Tile Caulk.

ProLite, MegaLite and Prism include recycled content that reduces weight, improves handling and performance, and contributes to LEED certification. All are part of CUSTOM's extensive Build Green Emerald System of sustainable tile installation products.

Corso's designers have recreated a piece of the City of Lights in the middle of Georgia where residents will enjoy beautiful and durable tiled surroundings for many years to come. **TL**



Top: CUSTOM Tile Installation Systems were used throughout the Corso Atlanta including MegaLite® Crack Prevention Large Format Tile Mortar.

Right: Common areas at Corso Atlanta Senior Living used a variety of CUSTOM Tile Installation Systems including MegaLite® Crack Prevention Large Format Tile Mortar.



Tile Contractor: Spectra Contract Flooring, Norcross, GA
General Contractor: Gilbane Building Company, Atlanta, GA
Architect: THW Design, Atlanta, GA
Completed: 2022
CUSTOM Building Products Team: Chip O'Rear, CTC, CCSMTT, LEED AP, Commercial Architectural Services Representative

What's the buzz?

For Ohio's Snowbee Custom Tile, business is sweet

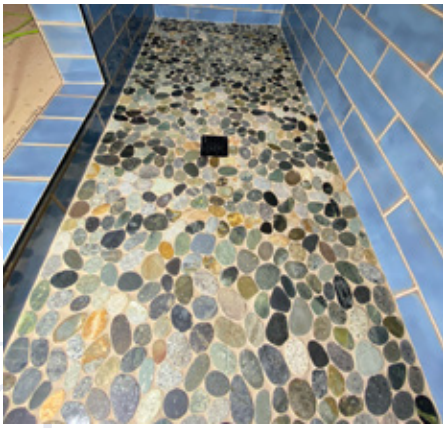
By Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer



Aryk Snowberger (Snowbee), 31 years old, is from Akron Ohio. He graduated from Kenmore High School in 2010 and is a former first responder FF/EMS turned tile pro!

Aryk Snowberger and his wife Rochelle, started Snowbee Custom Tile LLC (www.snowbeecustomtile.net) in Canton, Ohio in January 2021. Not only was this in the middle of the pandemic, Snowberger was battling digestive-related illness most days, and then a long, arduous recovery after surgery.

With the help of brother and apprentice Stephen Panar, Jr., Snowbee tackles high-end residential work, primarily, custom showers, with an artisan approach to tile and a customer-centric approach to business. "We set ourselves apart with our customer service," Snowberger said. "First and foremost, we are customer advocates with a goal of educating on the best practices, standards, etc. I am detail-oriented and highly skilled – and I'm just getting started."



This large blue subway tile shower features an individually hand-set river rock shower pan and custom niche. No stones were cut in this process – full stones were placed everywhere, with no sheet lines. Every stone was purposefully placed, like an artist's brush stroke.



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Snowbee has only been installing tile for two years, but the company's work is spectacular, with individually hand-set river rock shower pans with no cuts, custom glass mosaic inlays, and glass penny tile feature walls. Snowberger learned his craft working over two years for Portage Tile and Marble in Kent, Ohio, as a fourth-generation tile setter.

Despite the trials of a start-up in the midst of a pandemic, Snowberger said, "It was very challenging, but I wanted this badly, and put in the extra work. I'm just glad to be a part of the tile community. 2023 looks to be another very strong year. Professional tile installers are in high demand; we are in a great spot if we put in the hard work!"

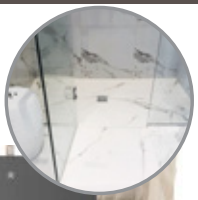


This beautiful Louisville, Ohio shower is entirely glass tile – the floor, walls, and mirrored accents! This project required specialized mortar, and extra attention to changes of plane/expansion joints. Specialized wet saw blades helped keep the process smooth.

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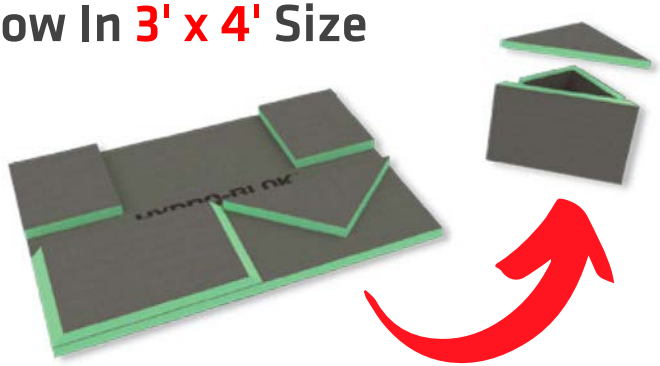
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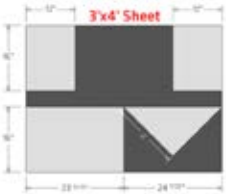


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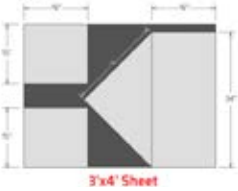
1.5" Building Board Now In 3' x 4' Size



Medium Corner Bench



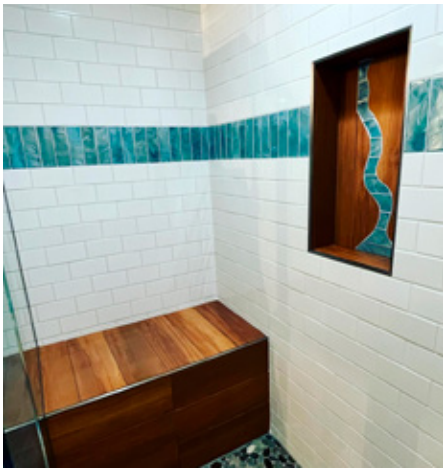
Large Corner Bench

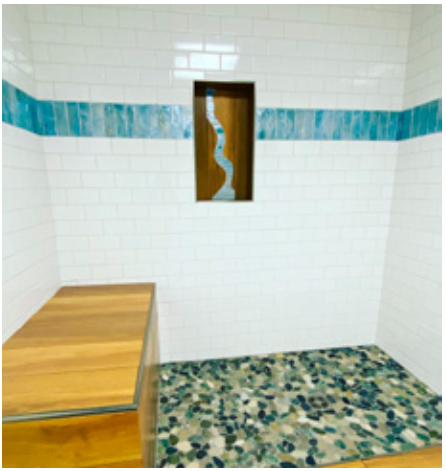


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Snowberger has been an NTCA member for less than a year, but adhering to industry standards has always been important to him. "I want myself and my brand to be associated and aligned with the NTCA for many reasons, including demonstrating to customers that Snowbee is aligned with a professional organization, raising their confidence in the company. Snowberger also values the continuing education, and following and knowing standards that come with NTCA membership.





This is in the same Louisville, Ohio house, where the homeowner wanted a slice of coastal North Carolina at his Ohio home. Snowbee gave him a individually-set stone floor, custom porcelain "shiplap" bench and a beautiful one of a kind glass river inlet niche for this maritime vibes shower.

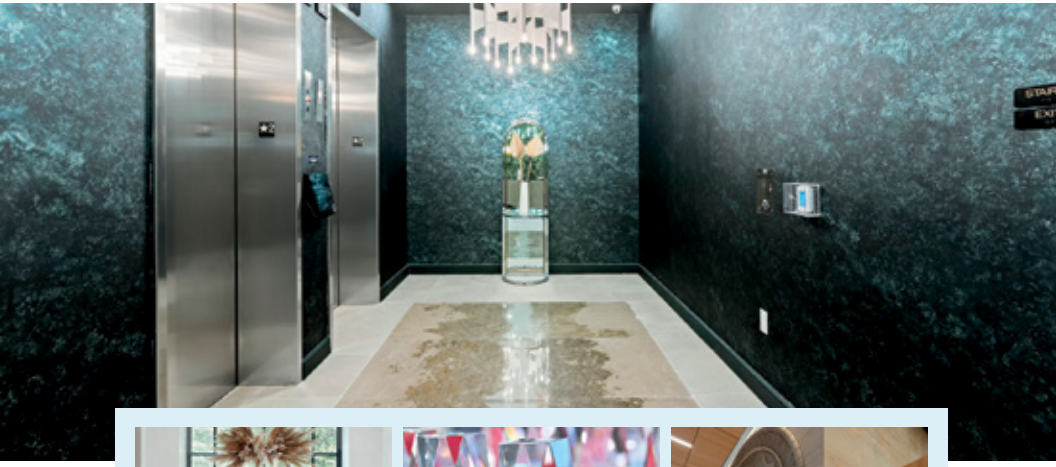


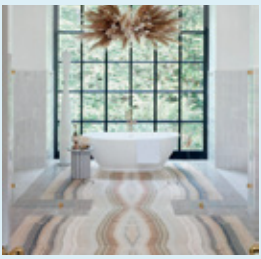


"This is maybe my best work yet!" Snowberger said. This travertine bathroom was for friends Josh and Jordan McCants who run Adonis Kitchen and Bath in Akron. The large custom shower features a $150/sq. ft. plastic-faced inlay and paper-faced square glass mosaic. "It took a ton of layout work and prep to achieve the end product!" he said. The result was a beautifully picture-framed inlay with travertine pencil liner and chair rail.

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He said, "The greatest value of NTCA is knowledge – knowledge is power. I wouldn't be in this position without knowledge. I don't know it all, and that is where the NTCA Technical Team shines! I use it in my business to help me stay educated, which helps me better serve my customers."

Snowberger is enthusiastic about attending the new "Mind Your Business" program for new NTCA members, taking place this month. This Schluter program focuses on the *business* of running your business. The two-day workshop takes place at Schluter's Dallas facility with Schluter covering hotel and meals and Dal-Tile LLC covering airfare.

The excitement of building the business into a family endeavor galvanizes Snowberger. "My greatest joy is being respected by my peers, having success, and a feeling of brotherhood," he said. "It feels good to be really competent at it. It's changed my entire life. I worked very hard for this, and my wife and kids were by my side. Now we all benefit, grow as a team and have more time together. It's truly become a family business, and sharing my success and passion with my wife and kids is so rewarding." TL

Below: This was Snowbee's third shower ever, completed for a beautiful farmhouse in Tallmadge, Ohio. It featured Snowberger's first mitered bench, with veins book matched and wrapped throughout. He used white thinset only, with lots of sealer and extra care for this labor of love.





Above: This stylish Portage Lakes, Ohio master bath sports a massive, thin brick porcelain feature wall and shower, including a custom hand-mitered and polished niche that took over a day to craft, and custom floating quartz shelves. "This one was all about the layout to achieve a true brick look pattern complete with 3/8" grout joints," Snowberger said. "The porcelain bricks were free-hand mitered one by one, with full and half tiles everywhere." Snowbee used premium cementitious grout and lots of sealer to keep it looking fresh for years to come.

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ONE-TO-ONE



With Bart Bettiga, NTCA Executive Director/ TileLetter Publisher

IN MEMORIAM

Pedro Riaza's

impact on the U.S. tile industry and Coverings

In the One-to-One column, NTCA Executive Director Bart Bettiga interviews industry leaders about pertinent topics.

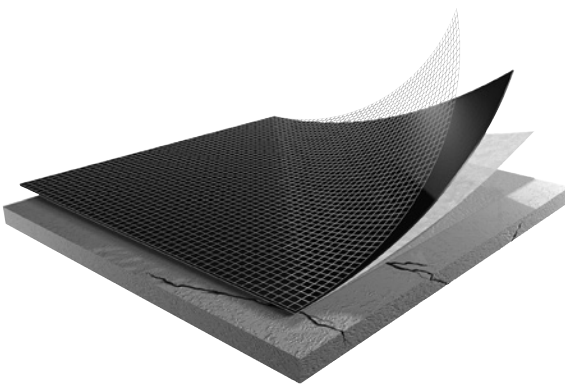
One of the highlights for me each month is my "One-to-One" interview with industry leaders and influencers. For the past few years, I have talked candidly with people from all aspects of the trade, addressing challenges, trends, technology and more. Our guest list is a Who's Who of the tile industry and 2023 promises to feature some interesting and engaging leaders.



Pedro Riaza

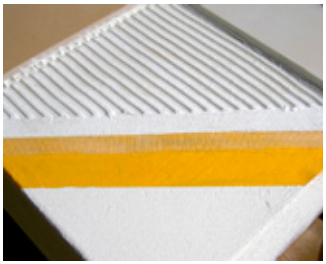
While attending the Coverings Board of Directors Meeting in Florence, Italy, last month, I received word from the Spanish Ceramic Tile Manufacturers' Association (ASCER) that Pedro Riaza, former General Secretary of the association, had passed away that morning. Pedro was a long-standing member of the Coverings Board of Directors and most people on the board knew him well. We had worked side by side with Pedro and his colleagues at ASCER on many projects and initiatives, and we were saddened by this news. Our meeting was abruptly halted, and we took time to stand and have a long moment of silence honoring his legacy and impact on our industry. We also mourned the loss of a friend.





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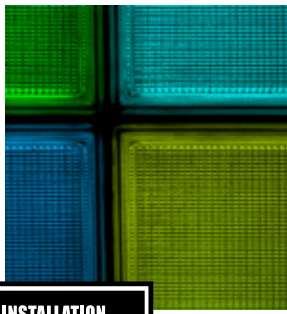






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Pedro retired from ASCER in 2019, after more than a quarter century as General Secretary. His leadership and counsel assisted a half dozen presidents of the association during that span. He was decisive in managing outstanding challenges for companies in the sector. He helped to resolve dumping disputes that the Spanish and European industry faced, and he advanced and championed sustainable and energy efficient use processes such as cogeneration.



Pedro Riaza served as General Secretary of ASCER for a quarter of a century

Personally, I have Pedro to thank for introducing me to Enrique Forcada and Javier Rodriguez of QUALICER, a leading Spanish Technical Congress on ceramic tile manufacturing and installation held every two years in



Pedro Riaza hosted several meetings of the Coverings Board of Directors in Spain. Here he explains the history of Santiago De Compostela to Sandy Bettiga of the NTCA.

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Castellón, Spain. This introduction has allowed NTCA to participate in the conference on many occasions and has led to strengthening our relationship with international installation associations and leaders. NTCA has brought contingents of our members to this event, and we have been able to promote the *NTCA Reference Manual* to several countries because this relationship was cultivated. We have Pedro Riaza to thank for that.

Pedro's participation on the Coverings Board representing Tile of Spain benefitted all of the sponsoring associations that oversee this important trade show in North America. He regularly reminded many of us on the board that our role was to represent the best interests of the show while serving in this position, to take off our proprietary "hats" in order to find consensus, and keep the show relevant and impactful.

The industry remembers Pedro

"I first met Pedro in 1993 when I became Executive Director of the Ceramic Tile Distributors Association (CTDA)," said Rick Church, who remains in that position still. "Pedro was, at that time, the number two staff person at ASCER and clearly the next person in line to become Deputy Secretary. Pedro was a trained attorney and a very bright and strategic thinker. He was a fierce advocate for Spanish tile and the members of ASCER. Occasionally, that fierceness led to challenging discussions around the Coverings Board table. However, when the meeting was over, Pedro was a friend to all. He wanted to get to know people on a personal level and always asked about family – even those he had never met. ASCER was lucky to have Pedro as their leader for many years and the Spanish tile industry lost a great advocate. RIP Pedro."



Pedro Riaza attending World Ceramic Tile Forum in the Ukraine.

"For over thirty years, Pedro Riaza has been a colleague and friend with whom I have worked," said Luciano Galassini, consultant and former Deputy Director of Confindustria Ceramica (Ceramic Tiles of Italy). "We have worked together, traveled together, we have debated on different issues, and held innumerable meetings and enjoyable conversations on the most diverse subjects. Even when we held different views, our mutual respect never wavered.

"He has played a very important role in representing the Spanish tile industry," Galassini added. "During the time he served, the association has grown significantly and has become a major player in the tile

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industry. He was able to interpret at best and effectively play a key role in all contexts where the industry was at play: on standards, trade, shows, forums and more. Through his work, he contributed to the advancement of the entire tile industry which extended its breadth and capacity to improve its cooperation worldwide. And he did this by serving for three decades in the Coverings Board of Directors, in the European Ceramic Tile Federation (CET), in the ISO tile committee, and in the World Ceramic Tile Forum. I'm missing a friend; the tile industry has lost a highly-respected figure."

As Executive Director of the NTCA since 2002, I have been fortunate to work with Pedro and get to know him on a personal level. My condolences go to his family and friends he has impacted in Spain and all over the world as we mourn his passing, but celebrate a life well lived. TL



Riaza received posthumous accolades from friends and colleagues in the tile industry on the occasion of his passing.

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Carving a career path from educator to open-shop tile finisher – and beyond

By Lesley Goddin,
Editorial Director and Senior Writer

Rising Stars is a feature that focuses on emerging talent in our industry. And generally, that talent is on the under-40 end of the spectrum.

But in this feature, we meet a woman who is an apprentice for NTCA Member Columbia River Tile & Stone, Inc., that serves the Portland, Ore., area. Owner Jeff Occhipinti says of Patricia "Trisha" Guinn, that she "is an integral part of our team. She is unique in that she came to us in her early 50s. She also has completed the brick masons finishers program and brings the skills and knowledge from that experience to our team."



Patricia Guinn's path to tile apprenticeship started as a an elementary school teacher, journeying through a private catering and business prep company, working as a mason trades finisher with the union and choosing to take the tile finisher program at Columbia River Tile and Stone. Today, she is in the tile setter program.

Guinn's path to tile apprenticeship was a meandering one. After reaching a burn-out point in California as an elementary school teacher in 2013, she started a private catering and business prep company in Southern Oregon. Life brought some curve balls, and she moved to Portland in 2018, where she faced decisions about her career path.

"I knew that I didn't want to go back into teaching or any other career that I could achieve with the college degree that I had," Guinn said. "So I enrolled in a pre-apprenticeship training program called Constructing Hope. This program introduced me to a wide variety of career options in the construction trades fields."



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Joining the Union

After completing the program, she joined BAC 1, the Bricklayers and Allied Crafts Union, and worked as a mason trades finisher. “After two-and-a-half years in the bricklayers union, I began to realize that I wanted to stay in the trades but desired to find something that was more fulfilling than building apartment complexes all over the Portland Metro area,” she said. “I wanted to find an area of the mason trades that was more artistic and fulfilling.”

While working on a major stone project for a tile and marble company, she listened to tile setters talk about their experiences and started to get curious about pursuing this trade. She asked the union to place her on the list of candidates for tile finishers to gain experience and eventually move into the tile setters apprenticeship program.

“This was right at the beginning of the COVID 19 shutdowns, so many job projects were being put on hold, and I was told that gaining a position as a tile finisher was a slim prospect because of these shutdowns and because most of the union tile companies were not taking on new hires,” she said.

She tried cold calling, to no avail. While working for a fireplace and chimney repair company, she took a break from the union and started searching for open-shop tile companies in the area.

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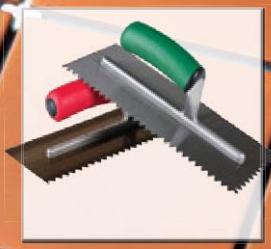


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Helper ad leads to new career

"I came across an advertisement for a tile setter helper for Columbia River Tile and Stone," she said. "I reached out to Jeff, scored an interview, and now here I am! I left the union and moved into residential tile work, and I have been working with Jeff and Co. at Columbia River since June 2021. It turned out to be



Guinn (f.r.) with colleagues at Columbia River Tile and Stone: (l. to r.): Alex Nex (setter); Adam Cole; Julio Burback; Patrick Lynch (setter apprentice).



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a great decision and I am very happy working for a residential tile company."

The Columbia River Tile Trades (CRTT) Apprenticeship Program has been a big draw for Guinn. Union opportunities for advancement were slim and she was told it could take up to five years to become a brick or stone mason.

"I did not have the time or patience for that," she said. "When Jeff explained the CRTT apprenticeship program to me, it seemed like a great way to learn much more than I had previously and it offered me a chance to move up much more quickly! I was also excited about the online learning opportunities that I could pursue on my own time, along with the once-a-month classes that we would be attending."



"When Jeff explained the CRTT apprenticeship program to me, it seemed like a great way to learn much more than I had previously and it offered me a chance to move up much more quickly!" Guinn said.

Today, a typical day for Guinn is 7:30-4:30 Monday through Friday, plus occasional overtime. She is on the jobsite with a setter she assists in whatever way that they need for the day, such as mixing mortar, cutting tile, assisting in floor and wall prep, demo, grouting and caulking, or setting up the saw and tools for the day. "We attend classes one Friday a



Columbia River Tile and Stone's Julio Burback working with Guinn.

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month and I spend a couple of hours each weekend taking online classes," she added. The CRTT apprenticeship program employs NTCA University courses as part of its educational component.

Gumption and strong work ethic makes the grade

Guinn said she brings punctuality, strong work ethic, attention to detail and meticulousness, organizational skills, creativity, perseverance and gumption to her job, and has felt a lot of acceptance in the trades.

"I've never looked at being a woman in the trades as a barrier to overcome," she said. "I have found that if you show up, work hard, don't make excuses, be willing to learn and have a good attitude, most people don't care if you are a man or a woman, or how old you are for that matter. At graduation time from Constructing Hope pre-apprenticeship program, I was the only person, male or female, out of a group of 29 graduates that was already accepted into a union and had a job lined up! I realize that this is my second career in my life and that I am older than most people coming into the trades, but I am grateful for the opportunity and I believe that the skill set that I bring with me from my previous career as an educator, and just life experience in general, is of benefit overall."

Last month, Guinn begun the setter year 1 classes. "I am excited to have begun the setter classes and the new opportunities for hands-on learning as well as the new responsibilities I am being given on the job site," she said. "I am also dabbling in teaching myself to make mosaic projects at home, so this is an exciting time for me. The finisher classes were great, but now I am looking forward to moving toward what I really want to do – set tile." TL



Last month, Guinn began the setter apprenticeship program and is experimenting with making mosaics at home.

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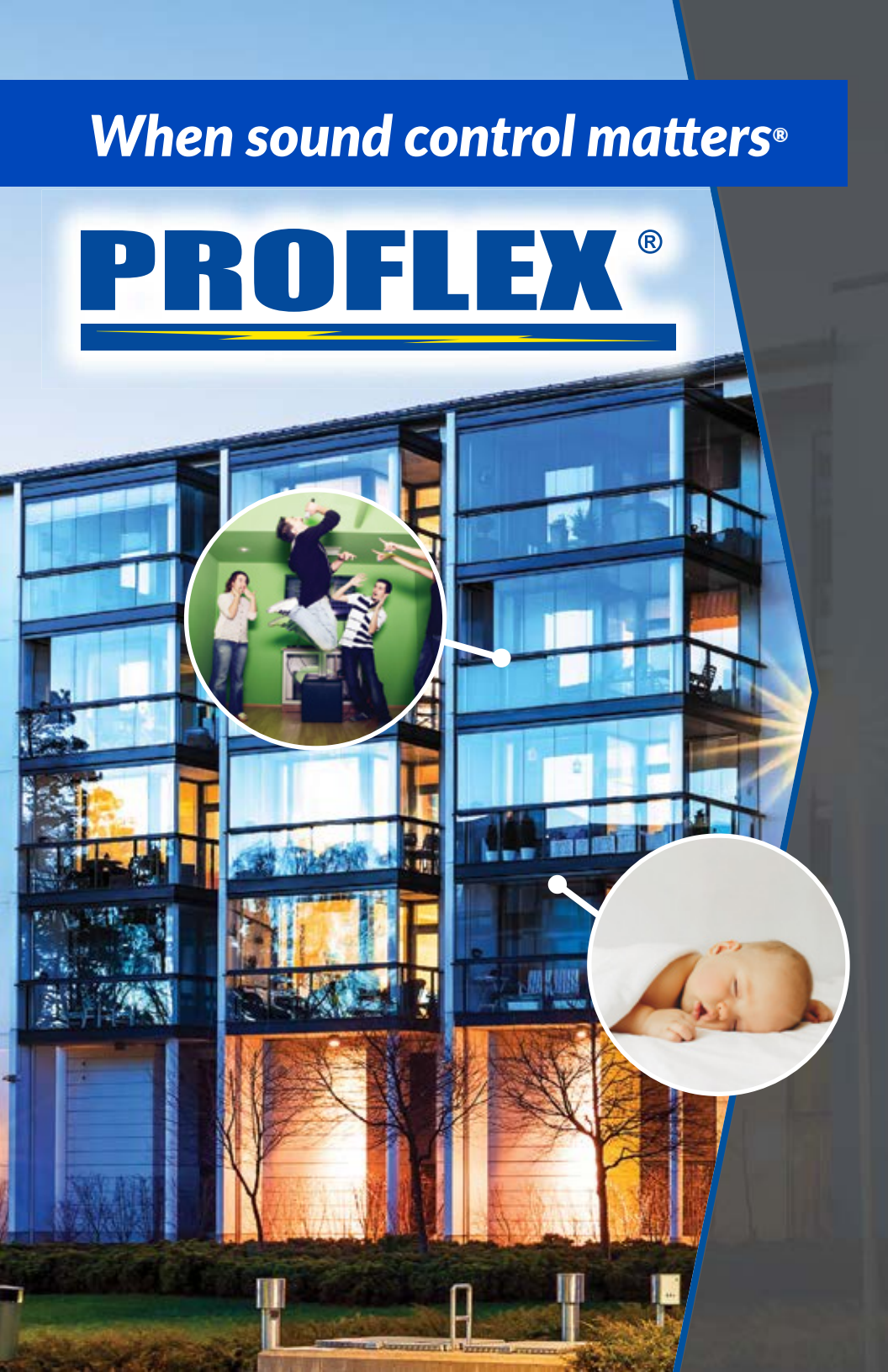
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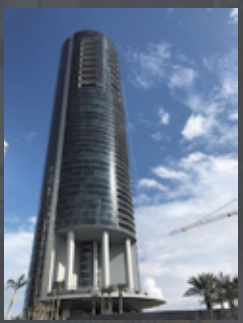
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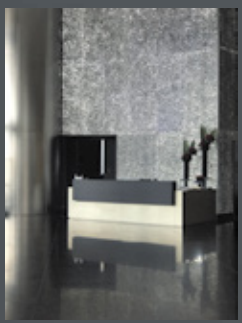


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Standards-based methods of installing tile in curbless shower receptors





By Scott Carothers, CTEF Director of Certification and Training

Curbless shower stalls in specific installations have been considered ADA compliant when they meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, later revised and renamed the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, which set minimum requirements for facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individual with disabilities.

The popularity and use of curbless showers has grown tremendously and has created new opportunities for consumer selection and new markets for the tile mechanics who install them.



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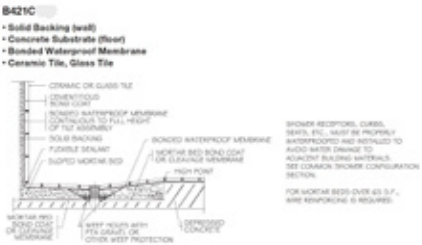
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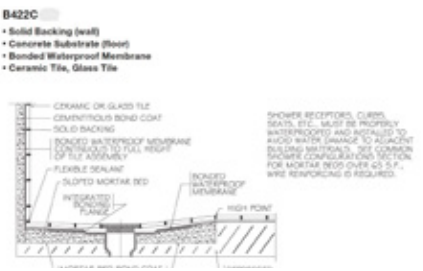
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The TCNA Handbook for Ceramic, Glass and Stone Tile Installation has two details that are specifically designed and known as "Curbless Shower Receptors": B421C and B422C. These two methods are very similar except for drain type, which we will explore later in this article. These two details share many commonalities including solid backing (wall), concrete substrate (floor), bonded waterproof membrane, and ceramic or glass tile. According to these details, both recommended uses are for construction of a show-



TCNA Handbook *detail B421C provides a curbless shower receptor utilizing as clamping ring drain and a bonded waterproof membrane. (Courtesy of Tile Council of North America)*



TCNA Handbook *detail B422C provides a curbless shower receptor utilizing a bonding flange drain and a bonded waterproof membrane. (Courtesy of Tile Council of North America)*



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er without a curb and require a depressed concrete slab (provided by other trades) to accommodate a sloped mortar bed at the rate of 1/4" per foot toward the drain.

Requirements

The ANSI A118.10 bonded waterproof membrane, sheet or liquid-applied, must be continuous, including changes in plane, and extend continuously from the drain to the full height of the tile assembly. Also, the floor and wall waterproofing must continue outside the immediate shower area one foot beyond the high point of the floor, but not beyond the tiled area. Additional waterproofing of the floor and/or walls outside the shower area may be needed to effectively contain and evacuate shower water and splash water to protect the adjacent building materials. The building design professional must specify all areas to be waterproofed and indicate membrane termination points.

In areas where shower water and splash water are not effectively evacuated, a secondary drain may be required due to the curbless design. Here again, if required or desired, the building design professional must specify the type and location of the secondary drain along with the appropriate waterproofing details.

The high point of the shower must be outside the shower area as seen in the accompanying B421C and B422C details and beyond the shower opening, door, or curtain to enable the control of the shower and splash water. The location of the high point of the floor is especially critical when a secondary drain is not utilized.

Preparations by other trades

The depressed concrete slab is provided by other trades and must extend beyond the shower area to allow the finished floor to effec-



A linear drain with a tileable grate is shown installed next to the wall for a clean crisp look. (Courtesy of Basilica Tile of Virginia)

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tively contain the water, which is often difficult to do within a curbless shower design.

Drain types and size

The B421C drain is set into the sloped mortar bed and includes the drain body, the clamping ring which contains weep holes, with a 4" round or square strainer. This drain is better known as a part of the water in/water out system. A drain flange membrane is properly sealed with the manufacturer's sealant between the drain body and the underside of the membrane to protect against a sewer backwash. The flange membrane is attached to the shower waterproof membrane per the manufacturer's recommendations for a watertight seal. Pea gravel or a weep protector is placed around the drain to eliminate the mortar from clogging the drainage system.

The B422C drain, also known as the bonding flange drain, is set into the sloped mortar bed and includes a bondable surface on its face to provide a water-tight connection to the shower waterproofing product per the manufacturer's specifications. This drain is normally 4" and available with either a round of square drain strainer.

Linear drains offer a whole new dimension to the design of the shower floor. These drains are available in various widths and lengths depending on the shower size, and can be placed in the center of the shower floor or installed next to the vertical wall, creating a totally new look. The metal drain grate – available in many colors and finishes – may have a slotted or circular drain hole configuration or a unique feature that provides a tileable grate with a narrow slot around the perimeter of the drain.

Creative use of linear drains is gaining popularity by placing them between the shower receptor and



This image shows the installation of a linear drain between the shower receptor and the bathroom floor as installed by CTI #1000, Vladimir Blashchishchin of Hawthorne Tile.

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the bathroom floor. Using this technique, all of the shower water is pitched toward the door opening. The installer must be certain the drain is the exact size of the opening so that water cannot make its way past the drain edges and onto the undrained bath floor.

Tile installation

Traditional shower receptors utilizing a center drain, with all sides sloping at 1/4" per foot to the drain, are restricted to the use of 1", 2", or 3" mosaics or 4" tiles in order to reduce potential lippage. This method has been used for many years and continues to be highly successful.

An artistic tile installation can be provided by an "envelope cut" regardless of tile size. In this installation, the tile is cut in a straight line from the outside corner of the shower receptor to the corresponding side of the shower drain.

However, linear drains have opened a whole new arena of design opportunities while incorporating the use of much larger tile sizes. With these drains located in the center of the shower receptor, large format tiles (15" or larger) can be sloped from the perimeter (high points) at the required 1/4" per foot slope to drain.

With the linear drain located at the wall line, a single slope using large-format tile from the high point of the curbless shower, at the prescribed rate, can be achieved. This method effectively eliminates "bird baths" or low spots in the shower pan and yields a sleek modern look.



This shower receptor uses a conventional square drain and larger tile sizes which are installed using the creative envelope cut method which connects the corners of the shower perimeter with the corner of the drain. (Courtesy of Hawthorne Tile)



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Creative variations for curbless showers

Both the B421C and B422C details are designed to be installed in a depressed concrete slab, but when it comes to wood floor construction, these methods can't be used since the cutting of floor joists is not permitted by the building code. In order to gain the needed slope to drain, there are new techniques being used that remove the wood subfloor, normally 23/32", from the top surface of the joist, cutting it to fit between the joists, providing a recessed situation. This system requires the use of wood blocking attached to the sides of the joists or manufacturer's products, which are attached to the top of the joist in order to support the subfloor panels. Since there are no current standards or *Handbook* methods for these systems, always read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

ACT tests

The Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT) program provides study materials and hands-on testing that provide the successful tile installer with industry-recognized certification. The B421C and B422C curbless shower receptor certifications are the latest additions to the ACT offerings. More information may be obtained by going to the ACT website at www.tilecertifications.com.

As always, select the materials and installation methods that are supported by the ANSI standards, the *Handbook* details, and follow the manufacturer's recommendations. This, coupled with hiring qualified labor that is skilled in doing it the right way the first time, will result in a long-lasting installation and a happy customer. TL



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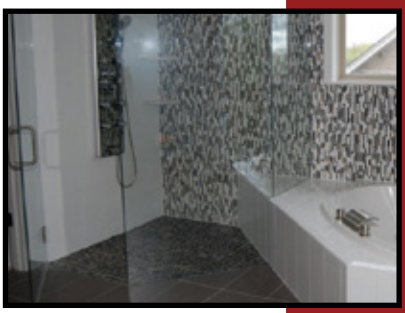
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*SOUND TESTING ON 6” SLAB WITH A DRYWALL CEILING.



Leading the next generation of trade professionals

By Heather Carter

When 20 students from the Sierra Nevada Job Corps' Building Construction Technology Program walked into the NTCA workshop at Floor & Decor in Reno, Nevada, on May 19, NTCA Training Director Mark Heinlein was enthralled by their attentiveness, participation and overall excitement for the tile trade. The students had excellent questions, were eager to learn more and were actively engaged throughout the entire workshop, prompting Heinlein to cater his "failures" session to the group of young adults, which was "very successful and educational for them," according to Heinlein.

"The students all had some level of experience with education in various trades, with some currently working as tile apprentices," Heinlein said. "I walked them through the hands-on courses and they were very involved. They had terrific questions and were engaged, even much more than our usual installers. It was really neat to see."

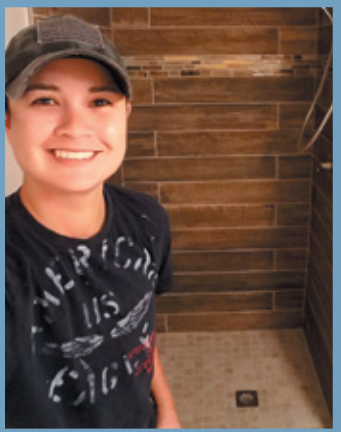
Of the 15 specialty programs offered at the Sierra Nevada Job Corps Center, the majority of students that attended the NTCA workshop were part of the Building Construction Technology Program, which is offered by the Home Builders Institute (HBI).



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– Melissa Swan, Owner, Tilevita, LLC and NTCA Trainer



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As the tile industry strives to attract younger individuals to enter the trade, organizations like the Sierra Nevada Job Corps are acting as conduits for people who aren't necessarily interested in pursuing the traditional college path, but are still looking to establish a career.

One-on-one attention to support success

The Sierra Nevada Job Corps is part of Job Corps, the largest free residential education and job training program for adults ages 16 to 24. The federally-funded government program under the U.S. Department of Labor has 160 centers all over the country that are designed to help educate disenfranchised individuals, guide them in their career, and better equip them to become contributing members of society.

Located on a 46-acre lot just north of Reno, Nevada, next to the airport, the Sierra Nevada Job Corps Center services the entire state of Nevada. Of the 15 specialty programs offered at this center, the majority of students that attended the NTCA workshop were part of the Building Construction Technology Program, which is offered by the Home Builders Institute (HBI). The tag line for HBI is "Building Careers. Changing Lives."

"The program is completely self-directed. The young adults have



Keith Barnett, now an NTCA Trainer, addresses the group.



20 students from the Sierra Nevada Job Corps' Building Construction Technology Program attended the NTCA's "Failures: Could It Be Me?" workshop at Floor & Decor in Reno, Nevada, on May 19.

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SCRATCH-RESISTANT
Dents, scrapes, and cuts often seen in other materials aren't the same danger for ceramic tile.

STAIN-RESISTANT
Your life is bound to see many messes—ceramic tile doesn't stain easily!

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LOWEST LIFE CYCLE COST
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to want to be here," explained Business Relations Specialist at Sierra Nevada Job Corps, Leslie Mix. "In our center, we have 15 trade programs, which are broken down into 'soft' trades and 'hard' trades. The Building Construction Technology program falls in the 'hard' trades, where the students learn everything from how to lay tile to how to paint and plaster."

With individualized tutoring, small class sizes and specialized counseling, the center has a vested interest in each student's success and "making sure they get his right," according to Mix. "The students get a lot of one-on-one attention to make sure they are successful," she said. "They are totally taken care of all the way through the process. It is so amazing. This is a government program that works in spades. They've done studies that have shown for every dollar that Congress puts into Job Corps, two dollars goes back into the economy."

Securing the future

Xander, an 18-year-old who is currently in the Building Construction Technology Program at Sierra Nevada Job Corps, began his journey in September 2021. While he enjoys all aspects of construction, he has completed some



NTCA Training Director Mark Heinlein was enthralled by the students' attentiveness, participation and overall excitement for the tile trade.



All of the individuals in the Sierra Nevada Job Corps will ultimately transition into the real world, where they will become functioning members of society in need of employment – and excellent tile apprentices for growing tile companies.

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additional training for tile because of how appealing it is.

"Out of all of the trades offered by Job Corps, I lean more towards tile setting and the architectural part of it. I've become really good at tiling, since that's one of the first things I did when I got to Job Corps," he said. "They try to make the environment here as construction-like as possible, like you're out in the actual workforce as a contractor working for a company."

With a pending graduation date of January 2023, Xander hopes to segue into construction, whether it be working as a tile contractor or in another related trade, to establish a successful career for himself. "I went through school, but I've never been good at it," he said. "I didn't think I would make it if I didn't secure my future now."

The next generation of tile professionals

To assist the NTCA in its goal of educating younger individuals and subsequently lining up the next generation of tile professionals, NTCA Ambassadors like Terry Hall are currently volunteering their to time to furthering the education processes in regions all over the country.

Hall, who is a Technical Representative at ARDEX Americas that is based out of Sacramento, Calif., attended the NTCA workshop with the students of the Sierra Nevada Job Corps and volunteered to lend his expertise in any way possible to aid the program.

"I offered my services on an occasional basis throughout the year to make a trip to the center and do whatever I can to help teach the students in whatever category they'd like, whether it be thinsets, grouts, caulking for self-leveling or patching. I'm happy to help in any way I can," Hall explained. "ARDEX would supply the materials, such as product and tools. It's what we do. We want to educate people."

All of the individuals in the Sierra Nevada Job Corps will ultimately transition into the real world, where they will become functioning members of society in need of employment. If any NTCA members in Nevada or the surrounding states are looking for tile apprentices or employees of any kind, there are an array of professionals-in-training that are actively looking for opportunities – some that even hope to become the next generation of tilers.

As the HBI's tag suggests, by building careers, the industry can help change lives. Investing in these young people is just one way to go about doing just that.

If you are interested in recruiting any members of the Sierra Nevada Job Corps Building Construction Technology Program, please contact the Sierra Nevada Job Corps at 775.789.1000 to see how you can make a difference today. TL

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Emser Tile won two 2022 Vendor of the Year awards by both the Bath & Kitchen Business Group (BKBG) and Do It Best Corporation in the "Cabinets, Flooring and Major Appliances" category.

LATICRETE has launched its Brand Promises campaign, a company-wide initiative that builds upon the company's legacy of research and development of innovative installation products, systems and solutions. The Brand Promises serve as a call-to-action and highlight the company's six strategic areas of focus: developing innovative solutions, committing to sustainability, enabling iconic design, fostering trust for life, providing the best installer experience, and serving customers as family. These promises are the cornerstone of the company's mission.

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Louisville Tile Distributors (LTD) acquired 100% interest in Mid America Tile last month. Mid America Tile is an Elk Grove Village, Ill.-based wholesale tile distributor and importer specializing in ceramic, porcelain, glass, metal, and natural stone tile. Family-owned and operated since 1961, Mid America Tile brings a recently renovated showroom with office space and 71,000 sq.ft. warehouse to expand LTD's geographic footprint as LTD's 13th branch office.

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MAPEI Corporation's Planitop® concrete-based 3D construction ink/mortar, produced in partnership with Black Buffalo 3D Corporation – which provides large-scale 3D construction printers – has been granted official AC509 certification by the International Code Council Evaluation Service (ICC-ES), signifying that the products comply with code requirements for "bearing, nonbearing, and shear walls up to 40' in height."



Photo No. 3
Wall Flexure Test Setup - 13 ft Specimen



Photo No. 4
Wall Static In-Plane Shear Test Setup



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Starnet welcomes Nationwide Tile as a new member. Headquartered in Lowell, Mass., Nationwide Tile provides professional commercial tile and flooring services across the U.S. Founded in 2002, Nationwide Tile has established a reputation as trusted advisors for manufacturers, distributors, construction professionals, and end users.

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Ege Seramik introduces the Luna Collection of 4" x 4" pressed and glazed porcelain tiles offered as hexagon mosaics. Available on 12" x 16" dot-mounted sheets, the mosaics feature virtually any ink-jet printed graphics and designs. Perfect for backsplashes and shower floors.

Daltile launches Perfit Mosaix – pre-cut 18" high mosaic sheets – designed to better fit the dimensions of backsplashes, and eliminating the need for top and bottom cuts. The collection features natural stone, or stone combined with glass mosaics in 24 unique combinations.



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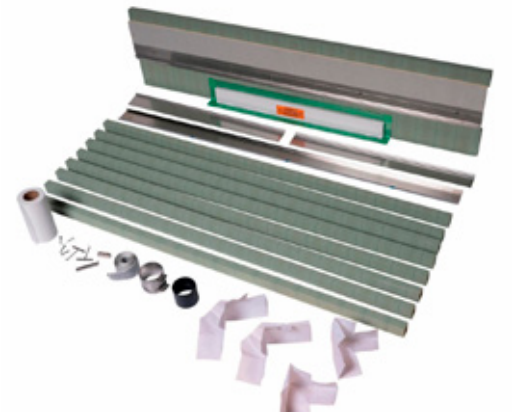
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