



# Requirements For The Thin Bed Method

## TDS 105

The "thin bed" method refers to installations of tile with adhesives, dry-set mortars, multipurpose thin-set mortars, latex-fortified portland cement mortars and epoxy mortars. Each of these materials is applied with a notched trowel and the adhesive or mortar thickness is approximately 3/32" - 3/16" (2.5mm - 5mm).

The installation of ceramic and stone tile by the "thin bed" method has certain requirements that should be pointed out to Architects and Builders. The finished tile work will reflect the surface conditions over which it was set. Wavy or irregular walls, or uneven surfaces will produce similar surfaces in the finished tile work. If the tile has a glossy or reflective surface, any waves or irregularities will be highlighted.

It is imperative that the Tile Contractor, before commencing work, examines the surfaces to be covered and report to the Architect and/or Owners whether they are acceptable or not. All surfaces which are to receive tile must be structurally sound, rigid (maximum deflection requirements must be met to comply with International Residential Code (IRC) for residential applications, the International Building Code, for commercial applications, or local building code), true and flat/plumb within 1/4" in 10' (3 mm in 3 m).

If the surfaces to be covered are not satisfactory, then it will be necessary to apply an "underlayment" or a leveling coat consisting of portland cement/sand and a latex additive, such as LATICRETE 3701 Fortified Mortar Bed; or, LATICRETE® 3701 Mortar Additive mixed with LATICRETE 226 Thick Bed Mortar. *Never use gypsum based patching materials under ceramic tile or stone.*

The application of the leveling coat or underlayment should be done as a separate application prior to the start of tile work. It is an additional item for which the tile contractor typically receives compensation as an "extra." It is less costly to prepare surfaces properly with a leveling coat or underlayment, than to install tile in "mud" or traditional thick bed portland cement/sand mortar.

Although the General Contractor can arrange to prepare surfaces to receive tile, the Tile Contractor is usually better able to ensure fully compatible materials and procedures are used and to accept full responsibility for the finished work.

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