



# NATIONAL TERRAZZO & MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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## COLOR PIGMENTS IN CEMENT TERRAZZO

To achieve a colored cement matrix for use in terrazzo, it is necessary to add a pigment, usually mineral oxide. At a certain dosage level, adding more pigment will not increase the color intensity and can affect the integrity of the cement. Many pigments can be added at increased dosages and will not affect the integrity of the cement and will produce brighter colors.

Other pigments must be kept at low dosages to protect the integrity of the cement. Check with your pigment supplier to obtain proper dosages. Always bear in mind that gray Portland cement is not color controlled and, therefore, the results may not be uniform even with the addition of pigment. While better in color consistency, even white Portland cement can vary in shade from one production batch to another that is beyond the control of the terrazzo contractor. Some pigments can make this color difference more pronounced.

Care must be taken to add the same amount of water per batch to achieve consistent color from batch to batch. Temperature, humidity, and aggregate moisture content can vary from one day to the next and is beyond the control of the terrazzo contractor. Often, pigment will make this color difference more pronounced if procedures are not followed consistently.

Certain blue and other deep tone pigments can work well for both interior and exterior applications. Check with the supplier for formulations.

Carbon black pigments will normally produce a deeper shade with gray Portland cement. However, higher dosages of Black Iron Oxide can be used. Reiterating, gray Portland cement is not color controlled thus can lead to diverse aesthetics regardless of pigments.

Special cement additives are available which can reduce the amount of mix water added which can usually help to create much darker colors. Check with supplier for recommendations.

The use of harsh cleaning products and exposure to strong sunlight and ultraviolet (UV) rays will sometimes affect the pigmented cement binder in terrazzo. Always check with the Associate Member supplier for dosage, resistance to UV and resistance to cleaning agents.

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