



NATIONAL TERRAZZO & MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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CEMENT COLOR & SHADE VARIATIONS

It is important to understand the nature of Portland cement and what to expect in a new cement terrazzo floor.

Gray Portland cement is relatively economical and works well in terrazzo; but because it is not color-controlled in manufacturing, it is virtually impossible to fully control the shading in the field during terrazzo installation. These variations are more pronounced when used in conjunction with an aggregate or an aggregate blend that is monotone in color. It is best used when an economical floor is desired, and a color blend of at least 50% white aggregate with the remaining aggregate a distinct contrast in color. Even with this, day-to-day pours can sometimes be distinguished.

White Portland cement is more color-controlled in manufacturing. This type of cement works especially well when pigments are desired to achieve a particular matrix color. Therefore, white Portland cement is recommended in most cement terrazzo installations. When field conditions are controllable, white Portland cement terrazzo should be reasonably consistent after it is completely cured.

Both white and gray Portland cement can be affected by field conditions beyond the installer's control. These include temperature and humidity during curing and variations in aggregate moisture content. For instance, an area installed during winter months is likely to vary from an adjacent area installed during warmer months. It is important that areas likely to be subject to intense scrutiny, such as building lobbies, be installed in one phase if possible.

As the cement terrazzo cures and is well maintained, it will usually mellow into a more consistent appearance regardless of the color of the cement.

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