



NATIONAL TERRAZZO & MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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800.323.9736

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PINHOLES IN A TERRAZZO FINISH

Pinholes are commonly defined as spheres or bubbles that have half or more of their shape revealed and are normally filled by the grouting process. They are reasonably defined as 1/16 or less in size. Micro-voids are defined as spheres or bubbles that have only the upper half removed. These create a smaller appearance and are more difficult to fill as the resin cannot displace the air in the bubble effectively. Therefore, these microspheres may not be completely filled, more likely closed with a skin coat of resin. Use of abrasives may open these again.

Pinholes are the result of air that has been incorporated into the system during the mixing process. This same condition exists in concrete and other resin-based floors but the air pockets are not significantly exposed since the surface is not ground. However, when the terrazzo is ground to reveal the marble chips, the pinholes are exposed.

A grouting process is used in an attempt to fill as many holes as possible. Various processes are used but basically, a resin coat is applied to fill these voids. After the grout has cured, the floor is polished to again expose the aggregate.

During polishing, these holes are impossible to see while the floor is wet but become noticeable as it dries.

The number and size of the micro-voids will depend but not limited to a number of factors including the installation temperature, the type and size of the aggregate blend, the viscosity and color of the resin.

It should not be construed that the appearance of pinholes indicates a lack of integrity or a loss of performance; it is the nature of the product. Relative to industry standards for such conditions, when such pinholes appear to a minor extent in various areas of the floor installation, they would be considered normal.

It is not uncommon for there to be random mini-pores about the diameter of a standard wire paper clip or the head of straight pin. Pinholes and micro-voids are inherent in terrazzo flooring surface.

With a regular maintenance program, sealers will ordinarily fill and significantly close the majority of finer pinholes.

Note: All evaluations are to be made looking straight down from a standing position without extraordinary magnification.

Terrazzo is an in situ created product by human craftsmanship and the installer must endeavor to meet the standards for the entire project. However, the terrazzo should not be arbitrarily rejected for relatively minor non-compliance. This is especially true if the overall functional and aesthetic values were satisfied.

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