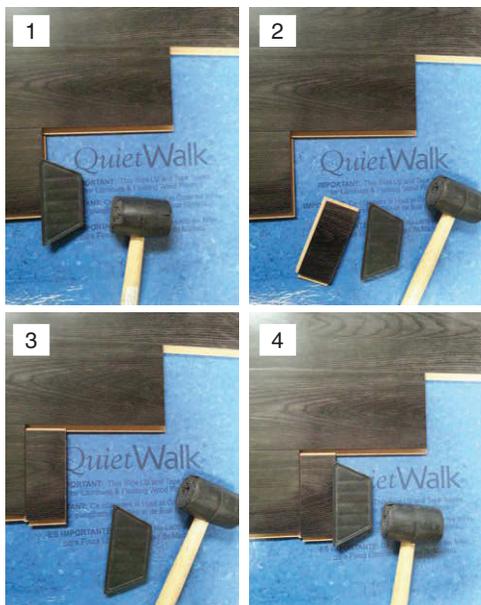


Not All Laminates Install the Same; Protect the ‘Factory Edges’



Laminates have a variety of fitment or assembly methods, each directly related to the design of the manufacturer’s locking system or product thickness. Terms such as glueless, lock-and-fold, angle-angle and tap-and-lock are used to define how products are generally installed. In many instances laminate products less than 10mm thick are flexible enough to install by hand whereas thicker (10-15mm) products are more rigid, often requiring the use of hand tools like tapping bars and blocks. Of course the end-user must defer to the manufacturer’s written product instructions in regards to proper installation techniques and tools.

Laminates surfaces are very tough and durable; however, laminate edges are

susceptible to chipping during assembly. Therefore, care must be taken when using tapping blocks and other related tools. Tapping blocks are used to help protect laminate edges during assembly (**pic 1**). Oftentimes a tapping block may not properly fit a thicker laminate or protect its edge. When this happens a handy trick is to cut a scrap piece of the same flooring and fit it in-between the tapping block and the leading factory edge of the laminate (**pics 2-3**). This method can help protect the factory edge, and during assembly when the scrap piece of flooring gets worn or damaged simply replace it with another one (**pic 4**). As with all installation techniques, it’s best to test an area to ensure damage-free results.

CTEF TILE TIP

Ceramic Tile Education Foundation

Fix It, or You May Not Get Paid

The quality of the tile work you see on the surface is only as good as what is underneath. This seems to be a simple statement, but if the appropriate prep work is not completed the final appearance may not be acceptable.

On most jobs the substrate (whether it be wall or floor) is supposed to be “tile ready.” But as most of us know, they are not. The key to a successful installation includes reviewing the jobsite conditions prior to starting work to determine what needs to be done and who will pay to make it right. At this point, be sure you have a signed change order in hand from the general contractor, project manager or homeowner before proceeding. This way, at the end of the job the installer gets paid for all the extra work that has been done.

Many times tile is specified to be installed on walls made of concrete block. Even if the block mason did a really good job, the wall may have high and low spots that need attention. If the mason was not as skilled, the prep work can be increased significantly. Either way, the surface must be flattened in



order to produce a quality tile installation. With the vast array of patch products on the market, correcting these problems can be easily accomplished in a relatively short period of time. And once the surface is flat, installing the tile is much easier.

Another factor which can turn what appears to be an acceptable wall tile installation over concrete block into one that is not acceptable is known as “wall wash lighting.” This occurs when the light fixtures are placed directly along the wall or very close to the wall. The light shining across the wall surface can create shadows on any part of the wall that is not completely flat. As seen in the photo, the lighting casts a shadow on the tiles that are not in line with the ones around it. This situation is not acceptable and most times will require the work to be removed and replaced.

Remember these tips:

1. Find out what needs to be fixed.
2. Submit your price for the work in a written change order and get approval.
3. Fix the surface.
4. Install the tile and get paid for all that you provide.
5. If wall wash lighting is specified, submit a written request to the architect asking the light fixtures be moved away from the wall at least 24”.