Tile Terminology

**absorption**

Percentage amount of moisture absorbed by weight.

**acid wash**

A treatment applied to the face of a stone to achieve a texture or finish that is distressed. Chemical processes have been replaced by mechanical methods for the texturing of the stone face.

**adhered**

Secured and supported by adhesion of an approved bonding material over an approved backing.

**alkaline**

Pertains to a highly basic, as opposed to acidic, substance; for example, hydrogen or carbonate of sodium or potassium.

**anchor**

A metal fastener used for securing dimension stone to a structure.

**anchorage**

The means by which slabs are attached to a self-supporting structure.

**antique finish**

A finish that replicates rusticated or distressed textures. Produced through mechanical or chemical means to simulate the naturally occurring effects of the aging process.

**apron**

A trim piece under a projecting stone top, stool, etc.

**arris**

An edge or angle where two surfaces meet; for example, moldings and raised edges.

**B**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**back-buttering**

The process of slathering the back of a stone tile with thinset in order to ensure proper mortar coverage. This prevents hollow areas and subsequent future cracking of tiles. Also helpful to ensure a level installation.

**backsplash**

The area located between the countertop and upper cabinets.

**basalt**

A dark-colored, igneous rock commercially known as granite when fabricated as dimension stone.

**base**

The bottom course of a wall, or the vertical first member above grade of a finished floor.

**bed**

1. The top or bottom of a joint, natural bed; surface of stone parallel to its stratification. 2. In granites and marbles, a layer or sheet of the rock mass that is horizontal. Sometimes also applied to the surface of parting between rock sheets. 3. In stratified rocks, the unit layer formed by sedimentation; of variable thickness, and commonly tilted or distorted by subsequent deformation. It generally develops a rock cleavage, parting, or jointing along the planes of stratification.

**bed joint**

A horizontal joint between stones, usually filled with mortar, lead, or sealant.

**belt course**

A continuous horizontal course, marking a division in the wall plane.

**bevel**

A sloped surface contiguous with a vertical or horizontal surface.

**biocuttura tile**

Ceramic tiles are fired in a kiln at temperatures around 2000 degrees Fahrenheit. Biocuttura Tiles are first fired after the green tile is dried and then fired again after the glaze is applied. Also called Double Fired.

**bisque**

When you look at a glazed tile from the side you can see 2 layers. The body of the tile, or largest layer, is called the bisque. The top layer is called the glaze.

**bleed**

Staining caused by corrosive metals, oil-based putties, mastics, caulking, or sealing compounds.

**blending**

The proper positioning of adjacent floor slabs, or tiles, by their predominant color.

**block cutter**

A machine used in the quarrying process for in-line drilling of small diameter holes.

**bond**

1. Overlapping of joints in successive courses. 2. To stick or adhere.

**book match pattern**

A layout in pairs of all stone elements to confirm that the design matches.

**bowing**

A warping or curving of the wall cladding.

**brecciated marble**

Any marble composed of angular fragments.

**brushed finish**

Obtained by brushing a stone with a coarse rotary-type wire brush.

**bullnose**

Convex rounding of a material, to be used in various applications, such as stair tread.

**bush hammering**

A mechanical process which produces textured surfaces that vary from subtle to rough.

**buttering**

Placing mortar on stone units with a trowel before setting them into position.

**butt joint**

An external corner formed by two stone panels with one head.

**C**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**calcite**

A crystalline variety of limestone containing not more than 5% magnesium carbonate.

**calibration**

The first step in the finishing process of a stone tile. Coarse abrasives pads are mounted to the bottom of rotating wheels that under extreme pressure and rotation speed are applied to the face of the stone. This process grinds the stone to a uniform and consistent thickness of ±1 mm tolerance, which is crucial for the installation of tile in a thin-set application. Calibration is applicable only to dense stones that can take a honed or polished finish, such as limestone, marble, and granite tile. The term is often erroneously applied to slates, quartzites, and other cleftface stones, where the precision of the calibration process is not possible. Sawn-back or ground-back techniques are applied to these types of stones, and are correctly called "gauging," which is not as precision-oriented as calibration.

**cantera**

A volcanic, quartz-based stone with qualities similar to adoquin, but not as dense. Quarried in Mexico.

**caulking**

Closing a joint by sealing with an elastic, adhesive compound.

**ceramic tile**

A thin surfacing unit composed of various clays fired to hardness. The face may be glazed or unglazed.

**cladding**

An exterior veneer stone covering.

**clast**

An individual grain or constituent of a rock.

**cleavage**

The ability of a rock mass to break along natural surfaces; a surface of natural parting.

**cleavage plane**

Plane or planes along which a stone may likely break or delaminate.

**chiseled edge**

A process of mechanically chipping the tile edge, thus giving the stone a rustic, aged appearance.

**cleft finish**

Rough-surfaced stones such as slates that are cleaved or separated along a natural seam are referred to as natural cleft. These types of stones were formed as a result of metamorphic foliation.

**COF**

Most manufacturers will have a rating system that is based on or supported by the American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM). Many times you can find these ratings on the tile sample or in the product catalog. One rating system measures Slip Resistance, which is measured by its Coefficient of Friction (COF). The higher the COF the more slip resistant the tile. This is important when selecting a floor tile for areas that get wet, such as your shower or bathroom floor. Other ratings listed by the manufacturer might include: scratch resistance, moisture absorption, chemical resistance and breaking strength.

**color body porcelain tile**

Technically-advanced glazed porcelain. The porcelain body and surface glaze are colored with the same pigments. The result is a glazed tile with consistent color throughout the body. The tile is fired in a kiln at approximately 2,000 degrees, creating a hard, non-porous, impermeable tile with a water absorption rate of 0.5% or less.

**contractor**

Company or person that erects and installs fabricated dimension stone.

**coping**

A flat stone used as a cap on freestanding walls.

**cove molding**

A concave molding, typically found at the sloped or arched junction of a wall and ceiling.

**cross-cut**

A process of end-cutting blocks of stone which yields a less-linear, more rounded, "wavy" pattern.

**cure time**

The time required for the thin-set below the tile to become hard and set.

**cushion**

A resilient pad placed between adjoining stone units and other materials to absorb or counteract severe stresses.

**cut stone**

Finished, dimensioned stone ready to set in place.

**D**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**deco**

A decorative accent piece.

**diamond sawed**

Finish produced by sawing with diamond-toothed circular or gang saw.

**dowel**

A short piece of nonferrous metal or slate fixed into a mortice or sinking in the joints of adjoining stones to prevent movement.

**dressing**

The shaping and squaring of blocks for storage and shipment. Sometimes called "scabbing."

**dry seam**

An unhealed fracture in stone which may be a plane of weakness.

**dual finish**

Two finishes, such as thermal and polished, on one piece of stone.

**E**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**eased edge**

When referring to a slab material, the square edge profile normally has softened edges as opposed to sharp square edges for added safety.

**Ecolabel**

The European Ecolabel is a voluntary scheme, established in 1992 to encourage businesses to market products and services that are kinder to the environment. Products and services awarded the Ecolabel carry the flower logo, allowing consumers - including public and private purchasers - to identify them easily.

**EMAS**

The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a management tool for companies and other organizations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance.

**epoxy resin**

A flexible, usually thermalsetting resin made by the polymerization of an epoxide; used as an adhesive.

**erection**

The process of setting vertical dimension stone into place.

**etched**

A decorative surface pattern created by a variety of methods, most often with abrasive chemicals or sandblasting.

**exposed face**

The visible side of any stone element.

**extrusion**

Extruded tiles are formed by forcing the clay material through a mold for the desired shape versus pressing the tile.

**F**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**fabricated**

Used in reference to dimension stone, it means manufactured and ready for installation.

**fabricator**

At the fabricator's facility the natural stone slabs are customized for specific installations.

**field tile**

When creating a pattern with different ceramic tiles, the more prominent tile that is throughout the largest areas is called the "field tile".

**filling**

A trade expression used to indicate the filling of natural voids in stone units with cements or synthetic resins and similar materials.

**finish**

Final surface applied to the face of dimension stone during fabrication.

**firing**

The fifth step in the manufacturing of ceramic tile. The tiles are fired in the kiln at temperatures around 2000 degrees Fahrenheit.

**fissure**

A hairline opening in the face of stone demonstrating stones natural characteristics; a lineal or non-directional void in the face and crystalline structure of stone that typically is very thin and irregular. See: Dry Seam.

**flagstone**

Thin slabs of stone used for paving surfaces such as walks, driveways, and patios. They are generally fine-grained bluestone, other quartz-based stone, or slate, but thin slabs of other stones may also be used.

**flamed**

An aggressively-textured finish, achieved by exposing certain types of stones to intense flame.

**fleuri cut**

To cut quarried marble or stone parallel to the natural bedding plane.

**fluting**

Shallow, concave, parallel grooves running vertically on the shaft of a column, pilaster, or other surface.

**G**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**gang saw**

A mechanical device, also known as a "frame saw," used to cut stone blocks to slabs of predetermined thickness.

**gauged & ungauged**

Refers to slate cleft out of blocks into tile. Gauged slate is ground or sawn to produce a more uniform thickness. Ungauged slate is hand-cleft and can have variations in thickness up to 5/8 of an inch.

**glazed porcelain tile**

A colored, liquid glaze is applied to the surface of a porcelain body. The tile is fired in a kiln at approximately 2,000 degrees. The glazing process defines the color and surface texture and produces a hard, non-porous, impermeable tile with a water absorption rate of 0.5% or less..

**glazing**

The fourth step in the manufacturing of ceramic tiles. Glazing liquid is prepared from a glass derivative called frit and colored dyes. The glaze is applied by either a high-pressure spray or is poured directly onto the tile.

**granite**

A visibly granular, igneous rock; generally ranging in color from near-white through the spectrum of golds, pinks, greens and blues, to grays and blacks. Granite consists primarily of quartz, mica and feldspar. Granites are the hardest architectural stone, making them ideal for counter tops and high-traffic areas.

**grout**

The material used to fill the joints between tiles.

**guillotine cut**

Cutting a stone tile, most often slate, by the guillotine method offers a ragged and chipped edge.

**H**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**head**

The exposed surface of the jointed end of any given piece of stone with a gauged dimension not more than the minimum thickness of the material specified. Also known as "return head."

**honed finish**

A smooth, satin (but not shiny) finish on the stone.

**I**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**igneous**

Any of the various volcanic rocks, solidified after the molten state, such as granite.

**impervious tiles**

Tiles that have less than .5% moisture absorption. These tiles are frost proof and can be used in exterior areas or on the outside of building facades.

**impregnation**

Applying a chemical containing stain inhibitors that penetrates below the surface of the stone.

**incise**

To cut inwardly or engrave, as in an inscription.

**J**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**joint**

The space between tiles that is filled with grout.

**jointing scheme**

Architectural drawing detailing dimensions, location, and configuration of stone units and joints as related to structure.

**K**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**kerf**

A slot cut into the edge of a stone with a saw blade for insertion of anchors.

**L**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**large format**

Generally refers to tiles at least 16" x 16" in size.

**LEED**

The acronym stands for Leadership in Energy and Environment Design. The LEED Green Building Rating System was established by the U.S. Green Building Council. The system defines standards for environmentally responsible, healthier, and more profitable structrues. Points are awarded to new construction and major renovation in five categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality.

**limestone**

A sedimentary rock composed principally of the mineral calcite (calcium carbonate), the mineral dolomite (double carbonate of calcium and magnesium), or some combination of the two. Limestone is generally softer and less dense than granite and more homogeneous in appearance.

**liners**

Structurally sound sections of stone cemented and doweled to the back of thin stone units to give greater strength, additional bearing surface, or to increase joint depth.

**lintel**

A horizontal beam or stone over the opening of a door or window that carries the weight of the wall above it.

**lippage**

A condition where one edge of a stone is higher than adjacent edges, giving the finished surface an uneven appearance.

**listelle**

An accent tile in a rectangular format generally used as a linear design element.

**M**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**manufactured stone / agglomerate stone**

This is a synthetic stone made from natural stone chips suspended in a binder such as cement, epoxy resins or polyester. Some of the most popular types of manufactured stone products are those made mostly of quartz. The natural quartz gives the product depth and radiance while at the same time strength and consistency. Manufactured Stone is strong, it has four times the flexural strength of granite, so there's less chance of chipping or cracking. It's also called Agglomerate Stone. The most well known agglomerated stone is poured-in-place terrazzo, used in building for thousands of years.

**marble**

A metamorphic rock possessing a distinctive crystalline texture. Marble is composed principally of the carbonate minerals calcite and dolomite, singly or in combination. Marbles are typically softer than granite, and are available in a wide spectrum of color and veining.

**metamorphic rock**

Rock altered in appearance, density, crystalline structure, and in some cases, mineral composition, by high temperature or intense pressure, or both. Includes slate derived from shale, quartz-based stone from quartzitic sand, and true marble from limestone.

**modular**

Tiles of different sizes that can work together in a pattern.

**moisture absorption**

As the density of the tile increases, the amount of moisture that tile can absorb becomes less. Tile density means that, as the weight or the density of the tile increases, it becomes a stronger tile. Tile density and moisture absorption have an indirect relationship to each other. What this means is that as the density of the tile increases the moisture absorption rate becomes less. Tile density and moisture absorption is important for you to understand when selecting tile for different applications.

**moldings**

Decorative stone deviating from a plane surface by projections, curved profiles, recesses or any combination thereof.

**monocuttura**

Glazed tile produced by the single-fired method in which the raw tile body and glaze undergo a single pass through the kiln.

**mosaics**

In addition to standard tile styles and sizes, decorative inserts, medallions and mosaics that are used to create intricate patterns and beautiful borders are also available. Tile size 2"x2" and smaller are usually referred to as mosaics and are often used with different colors to create a pattern or decorative inset. Some of these smaller tiles also come in different shapes, such as hexagon.

**N**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**natural stone**

A product of nature. A stone such as granite, marble, limestone, slate, travertine, or sandstone that is formed by nature, and is not artificial or manmade.

**nominal size**

Tile is usually referred to by its nominal size, not its actual size. During the firing process, ceramic tile will shrink, on average, by about 10% in size. For example a 12" by 12" floor tile will actually measure 11-7/8 inches square. Currently, the most popular ceramic floor tile are the larger sized tiles such as 13" by 13", 16" by 16" and 18" by 18" sizes.

**non-vitreous tiles**

Tiles that absorb 7% or more moisture. They are suited for indoor use only.

**O**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**ogee**

A stone molding with a reverse curved edge: concave above, convex below.

**onyx**

A semi-precious sedimentary gemstone of calcite variety with an extremely fine crystal formation. Onyx is valued for its translucent quality and can be backlit for dramatic effect.

**P**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**palletizing**

A system of stacking stone on wooden pallets. Stone delivered palletized is easily moved and transported by modern handling equipment. It generally arrives at the job site in better condition than unpalletized material.

**panel**

A single unit of fabricated stone veneer.

**parging**

Applying a coat of mortar to the back of stone units, or to the face of the backup material.

**parapet**

1. A low wall to protect the edge of a terrace, roof, or balcony. 2. The portion of wall above the roof of a building.

**patina**

When the surface of a material has changed in color or texture due to age or exposure to various elements, it is referred to as patina.

**patinato**

Refers to a wire-brushed finish, which gives a rustic look.

**paver**

A single unit of fabricated stone for use as an exterior paving material.

**paving**

Stone used as a wearing surface, as in patios, walkways, driveways, etc.

**pedestal**

In classical architecture, the support for a column or statue, consisting of a base, dado, and cap.

**PEI rating**

This rating is established by the Porcelain Enamel Institute to rate the resistance of glazed ceramic tile to visible surface abrasion. Commonly referred to as "abrasion resistance", this is probably the most commonly used industry rating for wear.

**pillowed**

A tile finish that features softly rounded edges, thus giving the tile a pillowed look.

**pitched stone**

A rough stone face or edge, cut with a pitching chisel.

**polished finish**

A high-gloss finish attained by machine-grinding and buffing the stone.

**porcelain**

Porcelain tile is made up of 50% feldspar and is fired at a much higher temperature than regular ceramic tile. This makes porcelain tile much harder and more dense than other tile products. Because of its highly durable make-up, porcelain is more resistant to scratches and can withstand temperature extremes. Also, because porcelain is non-porous, it's very stain resistant, has very low water absorption ratings (Less than 0.5%) and thus can be used for interior and exterior applications as well as heavy-use and commercial areas. Finally, because porcelain's color goes all the way through, small scratches or chips are less noticeable.

**porosity**

The amount and size of the pores in a stone. Travertine is very porous and granite is not.

**pressing**

The third and most common step in the manufacturing of ceramic tile. The clay is pressed or formed into a tile shape. These pressed tiles are called green tiles at this stage.

**producer**

Company or person that quarries and supplies dimension stone to the commercial market.

**Q**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**quarry**

The location of an operation where a deposit of stone is extracted from the earth through an open pit or underground mine.

**quarry block**

Generally, a rectangular piece of rough stone as it comes from a quarry, frequently dressed (scabbed) or wire-sawed for shipment.

**quartz**

A silicon dioxide mineral that occurs in colorless and transparent or colored hexagonal crystals or in crystalline masses. One of the hardest minerals that compose stones such as sandstone, granite, and quartzite.

**quartz-based stone**

A stone that may be either sedimentary in formation (as in sandstone, or metamorphic, as in quartzite). Definitions of the classes of stone which form the quartz-based stone group are explained in ASTM C119.

**quartzite**

A highly hardened, typically metamorphosed member of the sandstone group. Quartzite contains a minimum of 95% free silica. Quartzite can look similar to slate, but is actually harder and denser. Also available in slabs.

**R**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**random slab**

A trimmed slab with a width and length that is not preset, but variable within certain limits.

**rake**

An angular cut on the face of a stone.

**rebated kerf**

An additional cut that countersinks a kerf from the back edge of the kerf to the back edge of another piece of stone for the purpose of additional anchor clearance. It is not a gauged cut. If used for a bearing surface, it must be shimmed to allow for tolerance in the cut.

**rectified edge**

Rectification is a process wherein finished tiles are ground on each side to a precise final dimension.

**red body**

The color of the body is determined by the color of the clay used by the manufacturer. The body of a red body tile will be red in color. The quality of the tile is more related to the quality of the manufacturer rather than the color of the body.

**reinforcement**

A fabrication technique, often called "rodding," that refers to the strengthening of unsound marble and limestone by cementing rods into grooves or channels cut into the back of the stone unit. Another method of reinforcement is the lamination of fiberglass to the back of tile units.

**relief**

Carving or embossing raised above a background plane, as in a bas-relief.

**resin**

A chemical product, clear to translucent, used in some coating processes.

**return**

The right-angle turn of a molding.

**reveal**

The exposed portion of a stone between its outer face and a window or door set into an opening.

**rift**

The most pronounced direction of splitting or cleavage of stone. Rift and grain may be obscure, as in some granites, but are important in both quarrying and processing stone.

**rock (pitch) faced**

Similar to split faced, except that the face of the stone is pitched to a given line and plane, producing a bold appearance rather than the comparatively straight face obtained in split face.

**rubble**

A term applied to dimension stone used chiefly for walls and foundations, consisting of irregularly squared pieces, partly trimmed or squared, generally with one split or finished face, and selected and specified with a size range.

**S**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**sandblasted**

A finishing process of blasting the surface of stone with sand, which yields a rough, porous finish.

**sanded grout**

There are two types of grout commonly used in home installations; Portland cement based, and epoxy based. Both of these grout compounds may have sand added to provide additional strength to the tile joint. Sanded grout is recommended for tile joints 1/8th of an inch and larger.

**sandstone**

A sedimentary rock composed mostly of mineral and rock fragments. Sandstone contains a minimum of 60% free silica. Sandstone is a soft, loose-knit stone that has a natural, rustic look.

**sanitary cove base**

A ceramic floor tile trim that has a rounded finished top like a bullnose to cover up the body of the tile.

**saw-cut refined finish**

Saw-cut refined offers a matte finish. After initial cutting, the stone is processed to remove the heaviest saw marks but not enough to achieve a honed finish. You can purchase granite, marble and limestone this way, typically on a special order basis.

**sawed edge**

A clean-cut edge generally achieved by cutting with a diamond blade, gang saw, or wire saw.

**sawed face**

A finish obtained from the process used in producing blocks, slabs, or other units of building stone. It varies in texture from smooth to rough, and is typically named for the type of material used in sawing, e.g. diamond sawn, sand sawn, chat sawn, and shot sawn.

**sealant**

An elastic adhesive compound used to seal stone veneer joints.

**sealing**

1. To make a veneer joint watertight with an elastic adhesive compound. 2. Application of a treatment to retard staining.

**sedimentary**

Rocks formed of sediments laid down in successive strata or layers. The materials of which they are formed are derived from preexisting rocks or the skeletal remains of sea creatures.

**semi-vitreous tiles**

Tiles that absorb from 3% to 7% moisture. They are applicable for indoor use only.

**setter**

An experienced journeyman who installs dimension stone.

**setting**

The trade of installing dimension stone.

**setting space**

The distance from the finished face of a stone unit to the face of the backup material.

**shade variation**

Shade variation is inherent in all fired ceramic products and certain tiles will show greater variation within their dye lots. Shade variation is usually listed on the back label of each sample with a low, moderate, high or random rating.

**shell stone**

A sedimentary stone found in Florida and Central America, sharing characteristics of limestone, with fossils and shells embedded in its body. Shell stone is a relatively soft, porous stone that retains less heat than denser stone. Often used in exteriors near pools.

**shim**

A piece of plastic or other non-corrosive, non-staining material used to hold joints to size.

**shop drawing**

A detailed fabrication and installation drawing showing dimensions and methods of anchorage.

**slab**

Large, thin, flat pieces of stone cut from large blocks of stone. Usually 2 centimeters (¾ inch) or 3 centimeters (1-¼ inch) thick, slabs are often fabricated into kitchen counter tops or used as cladding on vertical surfaces.

**slate**

A micro crystalline metamorphic rock commonly derived from shale. Slate is primarily composed of mica, chlorite and quartz. Slates are predominantly available in cleft-finished tiles; ideal for use in exterior, non-freeze settings.

**soapstone**

A talc-rich stone with a "soapy" feel, used for hearths, tabletops, kitchen countertops, farmhouse sinks, chemical-resistant laboratory tops and stove facings. It is known for its heat, chemical and stain-resistant properties. It is highly recommended to use a stone enhancer and sealer on soapstone.

**spandrel**

1. The triangular area between an arch and a wall, or between two arches. Often decorated. 2. In modern high-rise construction, the blank wall panel between the top of one window and the bottom of the one above it. Can be made of stone, metal, or glass.

**splay**

A beveled or slanted surface.

**split**

Division of a rock by cleavage.

**split-faced stone**

Stone on which the face has been broken to an approximate plane.

**spot or spotting**

The mortar applied to the back of dimension stone veneer to bridge the space between a stone panel and the backup wall. Used to plumb a wall.

**square foot**

The unit of measure that most tile is sold by.

**stacked bond**

Stone that is cut to one dimension and installed with unbroken vertical and horizontal joints running the entire length and height of the veneered area.

**stone tile**

The typical natural stone floor tile sizes are 12"x12", 13"x13", 16"x16" and 18"x18".

**substrate**

The process for installing a ceramic floor begins with the preparation of the tile foundation, or what's called the substrate. Common materials used as tile substrates in home installations include concrete, plywood, and drywall.

**T**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**template**

A pattern for a repetitive marking or fabricating operation.

**terrazzo**

A flooring surface of marble or granite chips in a cementitious or resinous matrix, which is ground and finished after setting.

**texture**

Surface quality of stone independent of color.

**textured finish**

A rough surface finish.

**thinset**

Today, many tile installers have opted for the industry accepted and more efficient thinset method, where the tile is adhered directly onto a backer board that is nailed to a plywood or concrete substrate using a much thinner layer of mortar.

**threshold**

A flat strip of stone projecting above the floor between the jambs of a door. Also known as a "saddle."

**through body porcelain tile**

A solid porcelain tile consisting of no surface glaze. The color pigments are consistent throughout the body of the tile - top to bottom. The tile is fired in a kiln at approximately 2,000 degrees, creating a hard, non-porous, impermeable tile with a water absorption rate of 0.5% or less.

**tile**

A thin modular stone unit, generally less than ¾" thick.

**tile density**

Tile density means that, as the weight or the density of the tile increases, it becomes a stronger tile. Moisture absorption means that, as the density of the tile increases, the amount of moisture that tile can absorb becomes less. Tile density and moisture absorption have an indirect relationship to each other. What this means is that as the density of the tile increases the moisture absorption rate becomes less. Tile density and moisture absorption is important for you to understand when selecting tile for different applications.

**tolerance**

Dimensional allowance in the fabrication process.

**translucence**

The ability of many lighter-colored marbles and onyxes to transmit light.

**travertine**

A type of crystalline or micro crystalline limestone with a distinctive layered structure. Some layers contain pores and cavities which create an open texture. Depending on the product selected, pores in travertine may be filled or unfilled. Travertine is available in warm, earth tones, making it one of the most popular stones for interior and exterior flooring.

**tread**

A flat stone used as the top walking surface on steps.

**trim**

The framing or edging of openings and other features on the interior or exterior of a building, including baseboards, picture rails, cornices, and casings.

**tumbled finish**

A weathered, aging finished created when the stone is tumbled with sand, pebbles, or steel bearings.

**tumbled stone**

Marble, travertine, and slate tumbled in a solution of water, sand and river rock, producing tiles with an old-world, weathered look.

**U**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**undercut**

Cut so as to present an overhanging part.

**unglazed**

Unglazed tiles are a solid color all the way through and do not have a top layer of glaze. This is often referred to as through-body construction. They have no additional surface applications and are typically more dense and durable than glazed tile. Thus they are more suitable for interior and exterior applications and have good slip resistance. They come in various surface treatments and textures.

**unsanded grout**

There are two types of grout commonly used in home installations; Portland cement based, and epoxy based. Both of these grout compounds may have sand added to provide additional strength to the tile joint. Unsanded grout is typically used in joints that are smaller than 1/8th of an inch.

**V**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**vein**

A layer, seam, or narrow irregular body of mineral material different from the surrounding formation.

**vein-cut**

A process opposite of cross-cutting, where the vein in the stone is shown as a linear pattern.

**vitreous tile**

A tile with less than 3% water absorption. These tiles are usually frostproof and ideal for most wet areas such as pools and spas.

**W**

[Back to top](http://www.arizonatile.com/resources/glossary.aspx)

**wainscot**

An interior veneer of stone covering the lower portion of an interior wall.

**wash**

The slope on the top of a stone unit intended to shed water.

**water-jet finish**

A surface treatment performed by using water under extreme high pressure.

**waxing**

The practice of filling minor surface imperfections such as voids or sand holes with melted shellac, cabinetmaker's wax, or certain polyester compounds. In the dimension stone industry, it does not refer to the application of paste wax to make surfaces shinier.

**weathering**

Natural alteration by either chemical or mechanical processes due to the action of constituents of the atmosphere, soil, surface waters, and other ground waters, or by temperature changes.

**weep holes**

Openings for drainage in veneer joints or in the structural components supporting the veneer.

**white body**

The color of the body is determined by the color of the clay used by the manufacturer. The body of a white body tile will be white in color. The quality of the tile is more related to the quality of the manufacturer rather than the color of the body.

**wire sawing**

A method of cutting stone by passing a twisted, multistrand wire over the stone. The wire may either be immersed in a slurry of abrasive material or be fitted with spaced industrial diamond blocks.

**wyth**