

Terminology and a glossary of tile & related terms

Term	Definition	Use
Adhesive	Glue used to stick tiles to wall or floor	Common brands RLA, Davco, ASA, Laticrete
Bicottura	Twice fired/double fired	Fire the base once, then glaze and fire again - makes the body much harder
Biscuit	The clay from which a tile is pressed	People often describe a glazed tile as having a red or white biscuit (or bisque.)
Body Tile	Main tile AKA Field tile	Either the plain tile where a decorator or feature tile is used with, or describes the bulk of the tile
Bullnose	Either a round edge or return edge	Usually used on steps, or to finish a top course of tiles
Capping Tile		Usually used to finish a top course of tiles, usually rounded or decorative profile
Cove	Trim with one edge a concave; used to form a junction between the bottom wall course and the floor	Prevents dirt building up in the joint between wall and floor, also provides a harder skirting than glazed wall so prevent damage to walls when cleaning (from mop/brooms hitting)
Crazing	When glazed cracks	Sometimes can be decorative, or may result from age and exposure to the environment
Decorative tile		Anything used for aesthetics only
Extruded Tiles	Raw materials are forced through a mold then cut into shape	E.g. Terracotta
Face	The top of the tile	
Field Tile	Main tile AKA Body tile	Either the plain tile where a decorator or feature tile is used with, or describes the bulk of the tile



Glaze	Thin glassy ceramic coating	matt, Satin, gloss etc can be wall or floor - floor glazed strength measure PEI
Gloss	Glazed tile with high shine finish	See Futuris Series glazed walls
Grout	Material used to fill in joints between tiles	Can be white or coloured, may be modified or epoxy
Impervious Tile	Has water absorption of less than 0.5%	AKA vitrified, or porcelain
Jolly	Tile edges cut at 45 degrees to make a neat external edge	See M15 Helsinki, AKA Mitred Edge
Listello	Pencil tile, feature strip tiles	See CRM series (200x12mm)
Matt Finish	Dull finish to glazed or unglazed tile	See Glennon M15 series, and FM6...
Mesh backed	Mosaics joint together by the factory to form a sheet	To enable easier and neater fixing, mesh can be paper, cotton, fibre, resin...
Mitred Tiles	See jolly	E.g.
Monocottura	Once fired	
Mosaic	Small tiles, supplied on sheets	Can be glass, glazed, unglazed marble etc (Glennon Glass Mosaic & Bauhaus series)
Paper faced	Mosaic tiles sheeted by the factory with paper on the front, which is removed after adhering to the surface	See Glennon glass mosaics, benefit of paper faced sheeting is that tile adhesive can cover 100% of the back of the tile, where mesh backed cannot achieve this, the paper does not go to the edge of the sheet of tiles, so fixers can still line up the joints between the sheets
PEI	Porcelain Enamel Institute	PEI 1-5 (5 being strongest) Measures glaze durability
Porosity	level of water absorption	
Porcelain	Tiles with water absorption levels <.5%, durable tiles may be glazed or unglazed	
Pressed Tiles	Clay is pressed into shape before firing	



Quarry Tiles	Tiles made by extrusion, natural clay tiles with water absorption level <6%	E.g. Terracotta. Other tiles are usually PRESSED
Ramp test	Test using a ramp and oil, inclined and measured by a person walking up the ramp to establish slip resistance	Results either R9 (least slip resistant) to R12 (most resistant) Check HB197 to see recommended rating for particular areas
Rectified	Edges of tile cut back after firing	cut edges, usually very straight, often allows a narrower grout joint, can be on glazed (F725) or unglazed tiles (see Pietra Series)
Skirting tiles	Bottom row of wall tiles	Can be coved or not, can be floor or wall tile, usually used to protect the wall
Spacers	Plastic pieces used to ensure even joint widths	Usually tile Crosses or wedges (standard sizes 1.5mm 3mm and 5mm)
Slip resistant tiles	Tiles manufactured to reduce slipperiness	Can be glazed (usually have grit added to the glaze), or unglazed, unglazed may have a textured surface. In Australia slip resistance is measured by 3 tests. Ramp test, Wet pendulum test, and Wet barefoot test. Standard for measuring slip resistance is AS/NZS 4586:2004
Step Treads	Trim tiles for stairs featuring ribs or abrasive strips to prevent slipping	See 2 examples Glennon ST9 with ribs and Glennon Q10RL512. On commercial projects a contrasting colour steptread needs to be used to highlight the edge and reduce chance of people tripping
Tactile Indicators	Studded tiles used to assist vision impaired people, can be hazard (studs) or directional (ribbed)	AS1428 - part 4 & Building Codes of Australia. General notes: Must be a contrasting colour to its surrounds, used at top and bottom of ramps and stairs. Either 300 or 600mm widths to denote top or bottom of ramp/steps etc - check standard
Terracotta	Unglazed porous tile (has high water absorption)	Usually different shades of Red



Unglazed tile	Hard Fired glazed tile that has colour that runs throughout the body of the tile	
Vitreous (vitrified) Tile	Tiles with water absorption levels <.5%, durable tiles may be glazed or unglazed	
Wall Tiles	Usually glazed as mechanical strength & abrasion & impact resistance not usually a consideration although unglazed also suitable	
Wet Barefoot Test	Australian test to determine slip resistance in areas where people are normally barefoot and water is present	Results from A-C (A lowest, C highest), all suitable for certain areas, normally pools, and pool surrounds or showers. Check HB197 to see recommended rating for particular areas
Wet Pendulum Test	Australian test using a pendulum to determine slip resistance	Results from V - Z, V highest slip resistance to Z lowest. Check HB197 to see recommended rating for particular areas