

# SLATE TILE F.A.Q.

## What is slate?

Slate is a fine-grained, foliated metamorphic rock that is created by the alteration of shale or mudstone by low-grade regional metamorphism. Slate is composed mainly of clay minerals or micas depending upon the degree of metamorphism to which it has been subjected. The original clay minerals in shale alter to micas with increasing levels of heat and pressure. Slate can also contain abundant quartz and small amounts of feldspar, calcite, pyrite, hematite and other minerals. Most slates are gray in color and range in a continuum of shades from light to dark gray. Slate also occurs in shades of green, red, black, purple and brown. The color of slate is often determined by the amount and type of iron and organic material that are present in the rock.

## Is your slate suitable for the floor?

Slate is popular for a wide variety of uses such as flooring and flagging because of its durability and attractive appearance.

## What do both sides of the slate look like?

Slate has natural cleft on one side from the split face and machined (calibrated) on the back to manage thickness.

## How much does the thickness of slate tile vary?

Thickness of Slate varies from edge to edge since the surface is defined by natural cleft, having high & low points. Typically, thickness variation can be between 1/8" to 1/4" depending on the format size. Slate tile is usually installed with a medium-bed mortar, which allows for the variation on adjoining tile edges to be minimized

## How much extra material should be considered for install?

It is recommended to order an additional 10% to 15% to allow for wastage due to thickness variation, cuts to fill corners and style of installation. Typically, a 10% extra should be considered for square setting and 15% for diagonal setting or even more if special designs are to be considered.

## How much do the dimensions of each slate tile vary?

Though the sizes are given in imperial units, Slate tile is cut to international metric sizes. Hence the actual cut size can be as follows: 12"x12" = 300mm x300mm, 16"x16" = 400mmx400mm & 24"x24" = 600mmx600mm

## Is slate resistant to damage?

Slate (and any other natural stone that we offer) is highly resistant to damage, as long as it is applied to a solid substrate. If the sub-floor prior to the slate installation is flexible (for example, a thin plywood sub-floor), the slate could crack like any other tile. It is therefore very important to have an adequate substrate prior to installation. Slate is porous so moisture management/waterproof membrane should be used when installed in washrooms and shower areas. Please consult a professional installer for recommendations.

## What trowel size do you recommend for installing slate tiles?

Use at least a 3/8"x1/2" notch trowel for the 12"x12" tiles and a 1/2"x1/2" notch trowel (or larger) for the 16"x16" and 24"x24".

## Can I install Slate tiles outdoors?

Slate can be installed outdoors on floors & walls but not recommended for **freeze and thaw** conditions.

## How much breakage should I expect with an order?

It is not unusual to have 2% - 3% of the tile broken to some degree (e.g. chipped edges). Any amount up to 10% is still considered acceptable. These damaged tiles can be used for the cuts you will need to make. If breakage is above 10%, we would ask you to have it noted on the logistics receiving document and take photos. Please make a claim with us within 10 days of receiving the order.

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## Can slate tile be installed outside on sand?

Slate tiles should not be installed on sand bed for it will crack & brake if not properly supported. Slate should be set on a solid substrate with mortar. However, Slate pavers can be set on sand bed and Slate pavers from BuildDirect are 1 ¼" thick and designed to take the load.

## Can I install my slate tiles on wood?

The only wood surface that is recommended for the installation of tiles is exterior grade plywood.

## Which type of mortar should I use to install slate on exterior grade plywood?

Use a mortar that complies with the ANSI A118.4 (latex or acrylic modified mortar).

## How wide should my grout joints be?

It's a matter of personal taste, but traditionally slate tile has been installed with wide grout joints to compensate for the thickness variation. 3/8" to ½" grout line is recommended depending on the format size.

## What type of grout should I use?

Use a sanded grout for 1/8" to 1/2" joints and saltillo grout for joints widths over 1/2"

## Do I need to seal slate?

Slate is porous and can get stained. It is recommended to seal so satins can be easily extracted.

## Is there a PEI rating for slate tile?

PEI refers to ratings set by the Porcelain Enamel Institute. These ratings were developed for the Ceramic and Porcelain tile industries. There is therefore no PEI rating for slate. However, slate is very hard and durable and can be used where a long-wearing product is required.

## When I receive my shipment, what is the first thing to do when I am ready to install?

Be sure to check all contents of the pallets prior to installation. Any claim will be void if the natural stone has been installed.

With all natural stone applications, it is highly recommended that the installer avoid choosing tile for an installation on a "one pallet at a time" basis; the best method is to open boxes in all pallets from the start. Each tile from each box will be varied from pallet to pallet and an installation should incorporate the contents of all pallets evenly during an installation. This method will more effectively address the issue of color variation, which is a reality when working with any natural stone product. Please contact your sales rep with any questions.

## How does buying slate floor tile from BuildDirect work?

BuildDirect is a wholesaler with proprietary Internet technology and toll-free customer service to provide incredibly low prices on top quality building products. We fill slate orders in two ways. The first is selling pallet multiples out of warehouses around North America. The second is shipping container orders directly from select manufacturers and delivered to your job site.

## How much slate tile does a container hold?

Container quantities of slate tile range from 5,000 sq. ft. to 8,000 sq. ft. depending on the tile size and destination. Slate pavers will have a maximum of around 2,500 sq. ft. A BuildDirect sales representative will be happy to help you with the container quantities permitted into your area.

## How do I obtain slate tile samples?

Slate samples can be ordered directly from our website. The sample pieces are approximately 4"x 4".



For more information on this product or to order samples call 1-877-631-2845 or visit our website at [builddirect.com](http://builddirect.com)