

# absolute black granite

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We have 16" X 16" absolute black granite tile on the first floor of our home. The granite shows every footprint and speck of dust and drop of water and usually looks filthy. I have seen commercial sites where the tile has a waxed look and seems to repel stains. Our tile was professionally sealed and looks amazing when you spray Pledge orange glow on it...but then it is an ice skating rink (slippery) Helen Gregos greekchicago@hotmail.com If you are anywhere near Chicago we will pay you check this out in person!

Dear Helen:

I live in New Jersey. The last time I checked, it was kinda far from Chicago! L

œ The granite shows every footprint and speck of dust and drop of water and usually looks filthy. œ

It should not do that at all.

œ I have seen commercial sites where the tile has a waxed look and seems to repel stains. œ

I don't have the luxury of going into details, but trust me: you do **NOT** want that! Not only does it look like wax, but you have no idea of the amount of maintenance that's involved. Your floor should be as close to maintenance-free as they come.

œ Our tile was professionally sealed œ

And there is where, most likely, the problem stems from. Black œgraniteœ cannot be technically sealed, and if one pretends to seal it anyway by smearing some useless (under the circumstances) impregnator (what you call sealer) onto them, it may create serious problems like the one you're experiencing. To help you understand what I mean, read this:

**DEFINITION OF SEALER FOR STONE** For starters, when referred to stone the word sealer is wrong. Well, technically it is not, but the reason why I said that's wrong is because sealers for stone are totally different from any other sealer that most people are familiar with. A sealer is perceived like a topical coating of sorts that's meant to protect the surface of the sealed object from traffic and spills, to produce a finish (polished, or matt, or satin) and to fill all little nicks, fissures and other surface imperfections.

A sealer for stone is none of that â€“ **None!**

And that is why I said that the word sealer is wrong when referred to stone. The right word is **impregnator**.

An impregnator is a below-the-surface (of the stone) sort of sealer. It's a product made of two major components: a resin of sorts that could be silicone, siloxane, silane, ester epoxy, aliphatic fluorochemicals, acrylics, etc., plus a carrier, that could be a petroleum-based solvent or simply water. The resin is dissolved by and within the carrier.

What does an impregnator do, and how does it work?

The only thing that an impregnator does is reducing dramatically the natural absorbency rate of the stone by somehow filling the spaces between the single molecules of minerals composing the stone, which are known as **pores** - End of the list of performances. This reduction of absorbency rate (or porosity) of the stone will make so that possible staining agents that may get spilled on the stone will be kept at bay on the surface of the stone for a period of time much longer than if the stone was not sealed.

The way it works is that the solution goes inside the stone, the carrier (solvent or water) evaporates and the resin stays in and cures, thus partially clogging the pores of the stone.

**The most important phase of the application of an impregnator is the total and thorough removal of its residue that was not absorbed by the stone from its surface, before it has a chance to dry, so that at the end of the sealing job the surface of the stone is as bare as it were before the sealing procedure was started.**

The immediate, obvious consequence of that is we're not talking about a *coating*, but rather an *application*.

Next, the question is: how does an impregnator go inside the stone?

Quite simply, by being absorbed by it.

So far we've learned a couple of important things: 1. That a sealer for stone only help preventing deeply imbedded stains by delivering a reaction time, which is how much time you'll have to blot the staining agent off of the stone surface before it begins to sink in. (The better the quality of the impregnator in relation to the stone to be sealed, the longer the reaction time will be.) 2. That because of the way it was designed and works it cannot â€“ and in fact does not â€“ offer any protection or improvement whatsoever to the stone surface.

Next, we have now to talk about the natural absorbency of stone.

This side of single-crystal rocks (i.e.: gemstones), every multi-mineral stone is somehow porous. However, while there are stones that absorb liquids like sponges, there are stones that are naturally so dense that no liquid is thin enough to be absorbed by them. The latter types of stones â€“ which are quite a few â€“ can't be technically sealed, because no impregnator will ever stand a chance of being absorbed by them. On the other hand, since they won't absorb any liquid, it is pretty intuitive that they will never get stained.

What is interesting noticing is that while certain stones have an absorbency rate that indicates their ability to absorb liquids (above 0.2%), in fact they don't absorb anything due to their dramatically increased surface tension once polished. For example, travertine is rated at 0.4% to 1.0%. In its rough form it does absorb liquids, though slowly; but if you polish it, it effectively will not absorb a single drop of anything. In fact, nobody ever reported any stain on a polished piece of travertine. (In its hone-finished form, however, travertine may â€“ and just *may* â€“ absorb something.)

In conclusion, only a certain number of stones can be sealed and, more importantly, the performance of an impregnator is only limited to the reduction of the stone natural absorbency rate if it is â€“ even when polished â€“ above the 0.2% cut off point.

How does the average consumer know if their stone could be possibly sealed without that kind of information? It is quite simple and down to earth: spill some water in a couple of spots of the stone to be tested, let it dwell for 10 minutes or so, wipe it dry and observe if the areas under which the water has been sitting have become (temporarily) any darker than the rest. If so, if the stone is installed in an environment where staining spills are likely (i.e.: a kitchen) the application of a good-quality impregnator is recommended. If not, or if the stone is to be installed where the likelihood of spillage is minimal or nil altogether, it would be a totally useless exercise that will only help to put the kids of the impregnator's maker and its distributors through college.

I really don't know which black "granite" you have, but, typically, the absorbency rate of black "granite" varies from 0.01% to 0.15%, which is always well below the cutoff value of 0.2%.

Now that we know all that, if the "professional" that "sealed" your black "granite" were able to remove every bit of the residue of the stuff that he smeared on your tiles (which is not really easy to do), nothing would have happened, other than you having spent money for absolutely nothing. But if for any chance, as I suspect, he was not able to remove the entire thing, then you will have the problems that you're experiencing.

"looks amazing when you spray Pledge orange glow on it...but then it is an ice skating rink (slippery) "

Pledge, huh! Oh man!... Any other amazing stone care tip that you would like to share with me?... To make sure, that is also a big contributing factor to the way your floor looks now.

What to do?

Have the "professional" who "sealed" your floor come back. (Please don't tell me that he was the one who suggested you to use Pledge!...) Inform him (please, be gentle now: it will most likely come as a traumatic shock to him) that your stone is not even remotely related to granite, that is too dense to be sealed, and you demand him to remove " at no charge " whatever it is that's sitting on your stone. Asking also for your money back for the "sealing job" would be only fair.

One thing is for sure: if marblecleaning.org could have its ways, things like this one would never happen.

May I ask you now to please read and e-sign our Statement of Purpose at:  
<http://www.marblecleaning.org/purpose.htm?>

Ciao and good luck,

Mauri zio Bertoli

