



Royal Care Services, Inc.

The Natural Stone Care Experts

Restoration, Preservation, Maintenance

Marble • Travertine • Granite • Limestone

THE 10 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING IMPREGNATOR PENETRATING SEALER FOR STONE

#1: Why is it so important to protect natural stone? To preserve the longevity of a natural stone installation it is very important to protect it with a proper sealer. All natural stone are porous. As long as we have an absorption factor, stone will stain and deteriorate over time, from regular use of tap water in the routine cleaning, contains salts, minerals and chlorine which are all detrimental to natural stone. In addition spills from oil, food, beverages can penetrate entirely and discolor the stone.

#2: What is the purpose of impregnating / penetrating sealer? Impregnator or penetrating sealers are designed to penetrate below the surface of the stone and either deposit solid particles in the pores of the stone, or coat the individual minerals below the surface. Penetrating sealers work by restricting water, oil and dirt from entering the stone or tile. Properly applied, a good impregnator sealer will not affect the texture or the appearance of the stone. For all polished and smooth surface, an impregnator is mandatory since sealers, which are surface coats, will not bond and will be easy abraded.

#3: What does sealing or impregnating stone really mean? In the stone industry, sealing and impregnating are often confused. The main objective of an impregnator is to protect the inside of natural stone from staining. Impregnator will keep the acid out of the stone but not off the top surface. Sealers on the other hand will provide protection on the surface and resist better stains but they do change the appearance (create shine and darker tone of color) and they will require frequent stripping and reapplication.

#4: Does an impregnator sealer provide stain proof to the stone? No. Most penetrating sealers are designed to be either water or oil resistant, not water or oil proof. If a liquid is left on the stone long enough, it will eventually penetrate and stain the stone. Penetrating sealers are designed to give you time to clean up the spill before staining occurs. Nor are they designed to prevent acid etching that happens from lemon, vinegar, tomato and other acidic foods and drinks. Any acid will etch the surface of most marble, travertine and limestone, whether sealed or unsealed.

#5: Does an impregnator sealer prevent oil penetration? Most sealers will prevent water and oil penetration, but it is very difficult to stop hot cooking oil from penetrating into the stone, because it can melt the resin in the stone.

#6: How does impregnating sealer work? Impregnators come in different names: silicone, silane, siloxane, fluropolymer, etc which is mixed together with a carrier (either water or solvent). The carrier rides the resin and silicone into the stone as a liquid form. The carrier evaporates out of the stone and leaves the silicone resin. The silicone and resin then begin to cure into a solid form, thus forming a fluid repellent membrane in the pores of the stone. This all happen within five to 10 minutes. However, complete curing time is usually 12 to 24 hours due to moisture content in natural stone.

#7: Is it enough to maintain the stone just by applying impregnator? No. Impregnators penetrating sealers are preventive measures that provide extra protection to the stone. Natural stone still needs to be maintained (by the homeowner) with proper stone care products after it has been sealed. Penetrating sealer will last longer and work better when the stone is properly cared for. In addition, periodic maintenance done by a professional which will include: cleaning, polishing, sealing and repairs is definitely recommended. The sealers ease and help to maintain and is only one step of the process.

The 10 most asked questions regarding impregnator penetrating sealer for stone (continued)

#8: How often should an impregnating sealer be reapplied? Impregnating sealers will not last forever. Over time, the sealer loses its strength and bonding to the stone and eventually evaporates away. In these terms, a stone sealer can be compared to car wax on an automobile, which eventually evaporated off the paint. The sealers lose their ability to protect, as they get older, it can wear off from high traffic and wrong cleaning procedures. Some sealers are better than others, and some will last longer. However in high traffic areas (shower, kitchen or dining room floor) the sealer will not last more than a year.

#9: Why does the impregnating sealer quickly wear in a high traffic area? In a high traffic floor area, the impregnator wears as the stone surface wears down, because the foot traffic opens the pores. The reason is because impregnators only penetrate approximately 1/6 inch (1.6mm) or less. Since stone vary in their porosity, the sealer will penetrate more in some stones than in others.

#10: How do I know if an impregnating sealer was applied sufficiently? You will not be able to tell if a penetrating sealer was applied (if applied properly just by looking at it. However a good way to measure the strength of an impregnator sealer is to apply moisture to the surface and to see if the color underneath the water darkened within five minutes. If the stone darkens, these means that moisture has penetrated, and a fresh coat should be applied. It is important to remember that if the moisture does not bead up on the surface, it does not necessarily mean that the impregnator / sealer is not working. Beading usually occurs with a new application of sealers. As the sealer ages, the beading action is reduced.