



The landmark "Americans with Disabilities Act" was enacted in 1990 and became effective in 1992. The focus of this article is on "Title-III, Public Accommodations & Services Operated by Private Entities" and its impact on quarry tile floors, specifically in Sections 1 and 4.

SECTION ONE

"General: (Finish floors) Ground and floor surfaces along accessible routes and in accessible spaces be stable, firm and slip resistant"

Floors covered with kiln fired clay tile are certainly stable and firm when the substrate is constructed according to code, but what about slip resistance? What is meant by the term "slip resistant"? In the simplest sense, a slip resistant surface is one that will permit an individual to walk across it without slipping. (ADA's Title-I11)

1. The ADA specifies but does not mandate a recommended 0.6 C.O.F. on flat surfaces and a 0.8 C.O.F. on ramps.
2. The ADA does not specify a minimum C.O.F. recommendation for wet surfaces because "such factors are not under the control of the designer or builder and would be difficult to measure on the building site." The industry standard has been 0.5 C.O.F., which is still the OSHA requirement.
3. To sum up, ceramic tile can meet and exceed whatever the ultimate standards are for the Civil Rights ADA Part III "Public Accommodations" Section of the Act. TerraTile chooses to manufacture quarry tile that exceeds these recommendations.

NOTE: The method of testing C.O.F. for the industry is set forth in ANSI A137.1 (1988), which indicates the test shall conform to ASTM C-1028-84 (revised 1989).

SECTION 4

"Accessibility Requirements," Paragraph 4.5: "Ground and Floor Surfaces"

The ADA reports that 27 million Americans have some difficulty in walking and are entitled to "ground and floor surfaces along accessible routes and in accessible spaces to be stable, firm and slip resistant." The intent of the ADA is certainly worthwhile and commendable, and the guidelines recommended are important to take into account. In practical application, however, the recommendations may not always be possible to implement. For example, contrary to popular belief "the rougher the surface, the better," is not correct for two basic reasons:

1. Some slippage is in fact, necessary for walking, especially for persons with restricted gaits who may drag their feet slightly.
2. A surface too rough can easily become a maintenance problem. Tile surfaces exceeding 0.8 C.O.F. would require a different cleaning procedure than smoother surfaces.

That said, TerraTile feels that we should be concerned with public accessibility. It is critical that the construction industry work as a group with the ADA Access Board to develop reasonable yet adequate guidelines for "slip resistant" floor surfaces.

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