Cultured Wall Panel Installation Guide

GENERAL:

1. Wall panels can be installed on existing tubs as in remodeling jobs, in new construction or remodeling on cast iron fixtures and/or enameled steel or fiberglass tubs. The critical area is the seal between the tub and the wall. This is the area where the trouble starts and failures occur. Particularly in a remodel job, the tub may be sound but the wall has failed and the replacement may fail rather easily if not installed properly.

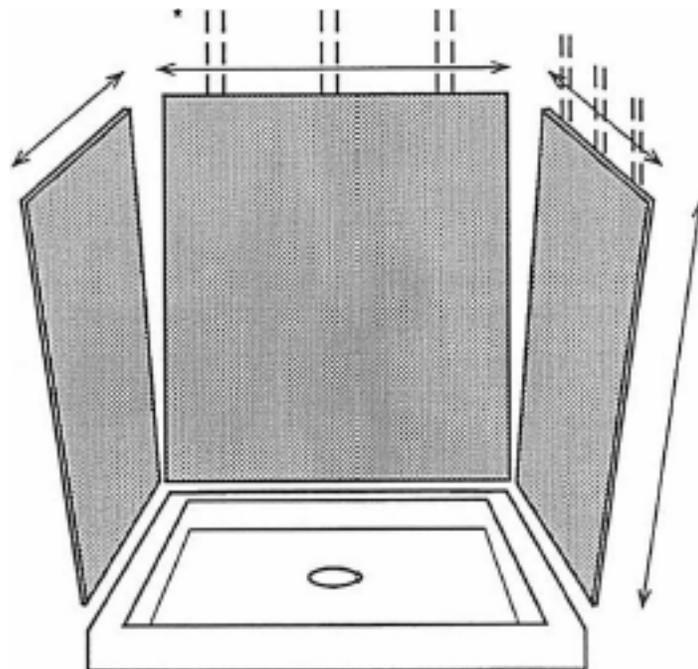**TUB SURROUNDS AT LEAST FIVE FEET ABOVE EXISTING TUB:**

1. Clean the surface of all dirt, paint, wax, grease or other wall finishes.

2. Marble panels can be installed over existing tile provided the tile is sound, except for a few places where it has failed. These places should not be more than one square foot and should be separated by at least 1-foot. The tile should be roughed with a grinder and cleaned thoroughly with a strong solvent.

    Note: If you are installing onyx panels make sure that the walls are light in color because of the translucency of this material.

3. Examine the panel. Do not remove the protective film yet. Determine where the finished edges are to be placed. They will have a slightly rounded edge versus a very sharp or ground edge - that is an unfinished edge. Determine whether the finished edge goes on the left, right, top, or bottom and orient the panel accordingly. If any adjustments must be made to size the panel, make sure not to cut the finished edge. Make all your cuts on the edge that is going against the wall.

4. Make a level-line on the walls. Next, draw a vertical line approximately in the center of where the panels go. You can now measure to each corner and determine if the corners are out of square. Cut the back panel accordingly. The back panel should fit easily into place. A tight fit is not necessary, the end walls will cover a small gap up to 1/4" in the corners.

5. Make a stud schedule - If you're installing any recessed accessories you must know where the studs are.

6. Dry fit the back panel. If it fits without binding, is level at the top, and fits tightly and evenly to the tub then its ready to glue. Clean the back of the panel with alcohol or acetone, make sure the wall is clean. Apply adhesive in small "gobs" across wall approximately 6 to 8 in. apart. One click of the caulking gun and you are ready to move to place another gob. A 4 x 8 ft panel should use at least two tubes of silicone, one and a half tubes for a 3 x 8 ft panel. Once the panel is aligned, push it against the wall. Next, pull the panel off the wall to make sure the silicone has adhered to both the wall and the panel. Place the panel into position and press firmly into place. If the panel begins to slip, hold it in place with masking tape.

    DO NOT BEND THE PANEL TO CONFORM TO A BOWED WALL. THE RESILIENCY OF THE PANEL WILL BREAK THE BOND OF THE ADHESIVE TO THE WALL

7. The next panel to be installed is the wall where the faucets are. Place masking tape on the finished side of the panel approximately in the location for the plumbing fixtures and mark the hole centerlines. You need a 1-inch hole at the top for 1/2" pipe, and a 4" to 5-1/2" hole where the shower lever controls are, or if it's a two-handed shower then you just need the same size holes as the shower head. Use a hole saw if possible, to make these holes. Be careful when drilling, especially after the pilot bit is through the panel and before the hole saw grips. The torque of an 80-tooth hole saw will spin you around. If a hole saw is not available, scribe a circle at each hole location of the diameter required and drill a series of 1/4" holes around this circle. Saw or file between the holes to remove the plug. Use the rasp or coarse file to smooth the inside of the hole. Any saw marks may cause stress cracking later on.

8. Dry fit the panel, making sure that the panel fits tight across the tub and that the outside edge is plumb. You may have to sand or grind the edge that fits in the comer to achieve this. The back panel and side panel should meet at the same height in the comer. If it fits then you are ready to glue. Place a small gob of adhesive on the wall, clean wall and panel, press into place, pull back and press firmly into place.

* denotes studs

9. The last panel of the surround is the easiest one to install, since there are no holes in the wall. Simply scribe the panel to ensure proper fit. Next clean it off, silicone it, put it in place and you are finished.

10. If the wall panels are going to the ceiling, you must measure very carefully to allow for skewed walls.

11. Inside comer molding must be used if the corners are not tight to ensure a watertight fit.

SHOWER WALLS:

1. Installing shower walls to the glass or door trim is practically the same as a tub surround. The panel should be set in silicone and fit tightly at the bottom against the shower base. The top of the panel should be level. The side panels should meet the back panels evenly at the top. Holes for plumbing should be cut with a hole saw.

2. Installing panels that go to the ceiling is a little harder unless molding, either edge trim or inside corner is provided for the job. Measurements must be more accurate and panels may have to be cut to achieve the same skewness of the walls.

WAINSCOTING:

1. This is as easy as installing splashes; measure, cut to fit, have finished side up and glue to wall. Can be topped off with cap or edge trim.