



Installation of Uncoupling Membranes using TEC® Mortars and Grouts

DATE

November 2025

GUIDANCE

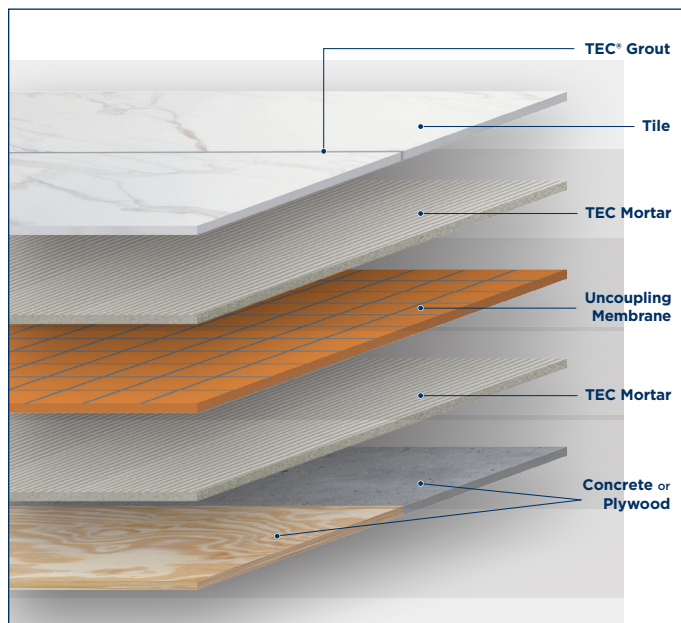
When installing uncoupling membranes and extruded foam waterproof tile board there are many considerations. One of the most important is what mortar to use with these products and what type of warranty is available based on the products used. This bulletin will outline which products can be used in this application and how you are still covered by TEC's system warranty when you install qualifying TEC mortars and grouts with uncoupling membranes and extruded foam waterproof tile boards.

Uncoupling Membranes

Most uncoupling membranes require the usage of mortar to bond the scrim to the substrate and again to set the tile over the uncoupling membrane. In TEC literature this is referred to as "setting and tiling under and over uncoupling membranes". If this feature is listed on the product data sheet, then the product is approved and appropriate to use to install uncoupling membranes and set tile. Additionally, if the product lists uncoupling membranes as a suitable substrate, then it can be used to set tile over uncoupling membranes.

Many of TEC's mortars can be used for this application. For the most up to date information, please refer to the Product Data Sheet of the mortar being installed for further installation information. Under no circumstances should a premixed mortar or a mastic be used with an uncoupling membrane.

During installation it is critical to follow published directions of the uncoupling membrane manufacturer. This includes things like trowel notch size, substrate requirements, and mortar cure time.



Extruded Foam Waterproof Tile Board

Extruded foam waterproof tile boards (or foam boards) are lightweight tiling substrates that have built-in waterproofing characteristics. Most commonly found in showers, these boards are multi-functional and can be used in applications like countertops, tub surrounds, backsplashes and much more. Manufacturers of

foam boards have a variety of ways to ensure their installations are waterproof if needed. Be sure to follow specific manufacturer instructions when installing.

Some manufacturers allow mortar to be used to wet shim the wall. Wet-shimming is when the studs are prepared by applying dollops of mortar before the foam board is set over it. This mortar is used to create a "flat" and "plumb" substrate. TEC does not endorse the method of wet-shimming to install, level, and plumb foam board. Over time as the studs expand and contract all mortars will eventually begin to degrade which will leave the foam board unsupported. Mortar is designed to bond the tile to the substrate, it is not designed to act as a patch or as a shim for improperly prepared substrates.

Most of TEC's mortars are compatible with waterproof tile boards. This means that they can be used to install tile over the foam board. If you are unsure if the mortar you are using is compatible check the Product Data Sheet. If "Extruded Foam Waterproof Tile Board" is listed, then you are good to install over foam board!

WARRANTY

A very common question relating to uncoupling membranes and foam boards is what kind of warranty is offered if TEC mortar is used with another manufacturers uncoupling membrane. TEC offers two types of system warranties when installing uncoupling membranes: an Uncoupling Membrane System Limited Warranty and a Premium Bond System Limited Warranty.

The Uncoupling Membrane System Limited Warranty lists premium mortars that were specifically formulated with uncoupling membranes in mind. As such, a lifetime warranty is offered when a TEC mortar and grout are used.

Rest assured that if the mortar you are using is not listed on the Uncoupling Membrane System Limited Warranty it is likely covered by the Premium Bond System Limited Warranty. This warranty offers more options for mortars to install uncoupling membranes and foam boards. In order to qualify for the warranty the products being used just need to be applied per the Product Data Sheet and list Uncoupling Membranes under suitable substrates. To use the same mortar above and below the uncoupling membrane look for "Approved for setting and tiling under and over uncoupling membranes". Under no circumstances should a premixed mortar or a mastic be used with extruded foam board.

The Premium Bond System Limited Warranty offers 15 Year, 20 Year, 25 Year, and Lifetime terms depending on the mortar and grout used. This offers you more choice in what mortar makes the most sense for your installation!

Questions?

Call the Technical Support Hotline at 1-800-832-9023.

This Technical Bulletin has been prepared in good faith based on information available at the time of publication. It is intended to provide users with information about and guidelines for the proper use and application of the covered TEC brand product(s) under normal environmental and working conditions. Because each project is different, TEC Specialty Products LLC cannot be responsible for the consequences of variations in such conditions, or for unforeseen conditions. The owner or owner's representative is responsible for determining acceptability of the product prior to installation.

Limited Warranty

The TEC product(s) covered by this Technical bulletin are sold subject to a Limited Warranty and related terms. TEC Specialty Products disclaims the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose and all incidental and consequential damages arising out of the sale, purchase or use of this product. For Limited Warranty details visit [tecspecialty.com](https://www.tecspecialty.com).

To learn more, visit [TECspecialty.com](https://www.tecspecialty.com)



TEC Specialty Products LLC | 1105 South Frontenac Street, Aurora, IL 60504-6451