

CALGARY TILING

Tile Repair & Re-Grouting

Cracked tile replacement, grout removal, re-grouting, and tile repair for Calgary homes

28 Expert Answers from Tile IQ

calgarytiling.com/construction-brain

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How do I repair a chipped edge on a marble tile threshold in my Calgary bathroom doorway?

A chipped marble threshold can often be repaired with marble repair compound or epoxy filler, but success depends on the size and location of the chip. For small chips (under 5mm), a DIY repair is feasible, while larger damage typically requires professional stone restoration or threshold replacement.

Small Chip Repair Process

For minor edge chips, you'll need marble repair compound (available at tile shops like Centura or Rona), fine-grit sandpaper (220-400 grit), and marble polish. Clean the chipped area thoroughly with isopropyl alcohol to remove soap residue and oils. Mix the repair compound according to manufacturer instructions — most are two-part epoxy systems that cure in 15-30 minutes. Apply the compound slightly proud of the surrounding surface using a putty knife, as it will shrink slightly during curing. Calgary's dry winter air (15-20% humidity) actually helps these repairs cure properly, unlike humid climates where moisture can interfere with bonding.

Once fully cured (usually 2-4 hours), sand the repair flush with the surrounding marble using progressively finer grits. Start with 220-grit to shape, then 320-grit, finishing with 400-grit for smoothness. The key is patience — rushing the sanding will create visible scratches in the marble. After sanding, apply marble polish to blend the repair with the existing finish. Quality marble repair compounds can be nearly invisible when properly applied and finished.

When Professional Help is Needed

Chips larger than 5mm, multiple chips, or damage extending into the structural edge of the threshold require professional stone restoration. Calgary stone restoration specialists have diamond polishing equipment and access to professional-grade repair compounds that aren't available to homeowners. They can also re-polish the entire threshold to ensure uniform appearance — something that's difficult to achieve with hand tools.

If the threshold is severely damaged or the repair attempts fail, replacement may be more cost-effective than restoration. A new marble threshold typically runs \$150-400 installed, depending on size and marble type. **Ensure any replacement marble is sealed before installation** — Calgary's hard water and cleaning products can etch unsealed marble quickly, and the threshold location sees frequent water exposure from shower splash and floor cleaning.

Prevention for the Future

Marble thresholds chip most commonly from dropped items (shampoo bottles, tools during cleaning) and from thermal stress. In Calgary's climate, rapid temperature changes from heated indoor air to cold bathroom floors during winter can stress natural stone. Apply a penetrating sealer annually to reduce water absorption and make

the marble more resistant to staining and etching. Avoid acidic cleaners entirely — Calgary's naturally alkaline water combined with acidic bathroom cleaners creates a perfect storm for marble etching.

For DIY repairs under 5mm, expect to spend \$30-50 on materials and 2-3 hours of work. Professional stone restoration runs \$150-300 for threshold repair and re-polishing. If multiple repairs are needed or the damage is extensive, threshold replacement through a tile contractor may be the most practical long-term solution.

Q2

How do I fix a loose tile on my Calgary fireplace surround without damaging the hearth?

A loose tile on your fireplace surround can usually be re-adhered without damaging the hearth, but the repair method depends on whether the tile has completely detached or is just lifting at the edges. The key is working carefully around the heat-sensitive area and using high-temperature adhesives suitable for fireplace applications.

Assessing the Damage

First, determine if the tile is completely loose or just lifting. Gently press around the edges - if it moves or sounds hollow when tapped, the bond has failed. In Calgary's dry winter climate (often 15-20% humidity indoors), the constant heating and cooling cycles combined with extremely low moisture levels cause adhesive to become brittle over time. This is especially common with tiles installed using standard construction adhesive rather than proper high-temperature thinset.

Check if surrounding tiles are also loose by tapping them with a coin - a solid tile sounds sharp and clear, while a loose tile sounds dull or hollow. If multiple tiles are failing, the entire surround may need professional attention, as this suggests the original installation used inappropriate materials for the heat exposure.

Removal and Cleaning

For a completely loose tile, carefully lift it away from the wall. If it's still partially attached, use a thin putty knife to gently work behind the tile, being extremely careful not to chip the tile face or damage adjacent tiles. Remove all old adhesive from both the back of the tile and the wall surface using a scraper or oscillating multi-tool with a scraper blade. Any remaining adhesive will prevent proper bonding of the new installation.

Clean both surfaces thoroughly with denatured alcohol to remove dust, soot, and any residual adhesive. Calgary's dry air means dust accumulates quickly around fireplaces, and any contamination will compromise the new bond.

High-Temperature Adhesive Selection

This is where many DIY repairs fail - using the wrong adhesive. Standard tile adhesives and construction adhesives are not rated for the heat exposure around fireplaces. You need a high-temperature thinset mortar rated for at least 200°F (93°C) continuous exposure. Look for products specifically labeled "fireplace" or "high-heat" thinset. Laticrete 317 or similar high-temperature mortars are available at tile supply stores in Calgary.

Never use mastic (organic adhesive) or standard all-purpose thinset near a fireplace - these will soften and fail when exposed to heat, causing the tile to fall and potentially creating a safety hazard.

Installation Process

Apply the high-temperature thinset to the wall using a 3/16" square-notch trowel, creating even ridges. Back-butter the tile (spread a thin layer of thinset on the back) to ensure 100% coverage - this is critical for fireplace applications where thermal stress is high. Press the tile firmly into place, using a slight twisting motion to collapse the thinset ridges and eliminate air pockets.

Use tile spacers or wooden shims to maintain proper alignment with surrounding tiles. Remove any excess thinset from the joints immediately - it becomes very difficult to remove once it begins to set, especially high-temperature formulations.

Grouting and Curing

Allow the thinset to cure for 24-48 hours before grouting. In Calgary's dry winter air, mist the repair area lightly and cover with plastic sheeting to slow the cure rate - rapid moisture loss weakens the bond. Use a high-temperature grout that matches the existing installation, and again, avoid standard grout near heat sources.

When to Call a Professional

If multiple tiles are loose, if you discover the original installation used inappropriate materials throughout, or if the tile is part of a complex pattern where alignment is critical, hire a professional tile setter experienced with fireplace work. Fireplace surrounds require specific knowledge of thermal expansion, appropriate materials, and safety clearances that vary depending on your fireplace type and manufacturer specifications.

Calgary Climate Considerations

Calgary's extreme temperature swings and dry air accelerate the aging of fireplace tile installations. Even with proper materials, expect to inspect and potentially re-seal grout joints every 2-3 years. The combination of heat cycling and low humidity makes fireplace surrounds one of the more maintenance-intensive tile applications in Calgary homes.

Need help finding a tile professional experienced with fireplace work? Calgary Tiling can match you with contractors familiar with high-temperature installations through the Calgary Construction Network.

Q3

What's the best way to remove and replace a single damaged subway tile on a Calgary kitchen backsplash?

Removing and replacing a single subway tile is a manageable DIY repair that most Calgary homeowners can handle with the right tools and patience. The key is working carefully to avoid damaging surrounding tiles, especially in Calgary's dry winter climate when grout becomes more brittle.

Start by removing the grout around the damaged tile using a manual grout removal tool, oscillating multi-tool with a grout blade, or a grout saw. Work slowly and keep the tool angled away from adjacent tiles to avoid chipping their edges. Calgary's low winter humidity (15-20% indoors) makes grout harder and more brittle, so it may come out in larger chunks than expected. Remove all grout from the four sides of the damaged tile before attempting to extract it.

Once the grout is cleared, carefully break out the tile using a hammer and cold chisel or a rotary tool with a cutting disc. Start from the center and work outward to avoid putting pressure on surrounding tiles. Wear safety glasses — tile fragments can be sharp. After removing the tile pieces, scrape away the old thinset from the wall surface using a putty knife or chisel. The substrate should be clean and level before installing the replacement tile.

For the replacement tile, use a high-quality polymer-modified thinset rather than pre-mixed mastic, even for this small repair. Apply thinset to the back of the new tile (back-buttering) with a small notched trowel, ensuring full coverage. Press the tile into place, checking that it's flush with surrounding tiles. Use tile spacers or wooden shims to maintain consistent gaps while the thinset cures.

Calgary's extreme dryness affects small repairs significantly — thinset and grout cure too quickly in low humidity, which can weaken the bond. Lightly mist the substrate before applying thinset, and consider covering the fresh repair with a damp cloth for the first few hours to slow the cure rate. Wait 24 hours before grouting to ensure the thinset has properly set.

When grouting the repair, use unsanded grout for subway tile (which typically has 1/8-inch joints) and work it into all four sides of the new tile. Clean excess grout immediately with a barely damp sponge, working diagonally across the tile face. In Calgary's dry climate, mist the fresh grout lightly and avoid over-cleaning, which can pull grout out of the joints before it fully cures.

This repair requires basic tools — grout removal tool (\$15-25), replacement tile (usually \$2-5 per piece), small bag of thinset (\$8-12), and matching grout (\$5-10). The total material cost is typically under \$50, making it much more economical than hiring a professional for a single tile replacement.

Consider hiring a professional if you're uncomfortable with power tools, the damaged tile is part of a larger pattern that requires precise alignment, or if removing the damaged tile reveals substrate problems like water damage or loose drywall that needs repair before retiling.

How do I repair a chip in a porcelain floor tile in my Calgary home without a visible patch?

Small chips in porcelain floor tile can often be repaired nearly invisibly using porcelain repair compound or ceramic touch-up paint, but success depends on the chip size, tile finish, and your patience with colour matching.

The most effective repair method uses a two-part porcelain repair kit specifically designed for ceramic and porcelain surfaces. These kits include a filler compound that hardens to match porcelain's density, plus colour-matching pigments. Clean the chipped area thoroughly with degreasing cleaner, then mix the compound with pigments to match your tile's exact colour and apply it slightly proud of the surface. Once cured (usually 24 hours), sand it flush with 220-grit sandpaper and polish with progressively finer grits up to 400. For textured tiles, you can recreate surface texture using a small brush or sponge while the compound is still workable.

Calgary's extremely dry winter air actually helps this repair method because the low humidity (15-20% indoors) allows the repair compound to cure slowly and evenly without moisture interference. However, the same dry conditions mean you need to work quickly during application since compounds can skin over faster than in humid climates. Mix small batches and keep the repair area slightly damp during curing.

Colour matching is the biggest challenge with porcelain repair. Porcelain tiles often have subtle colour variations, veining, or speckled patterns that are difficult to replicate perfectly. Take a high-resolution photo of your tile in natural light and bring it to a tile shop or paint store that can help match colours. Some repair kits include multiple pigment colours that you blend to achieve the right shade. Test your colour match on a hidden area first, like under an appliance or in a closet.

For chips larger than a pencil eraser or chips on the tile edge where foot traffic occurs, replacement is usually the better long-term solution. Large repairs rarely hold up under Calgary's seasonal humidity swings and foot traffic, and they become more visible over time as the repair compound wears differently than the original porcelain surface.

When to call a professional: If you have multiple damaged tiles, if the chip exposes the tile body significantly, or if your tile has a complex pattern that's impossible to match, a tile contractor can often source replacement tiles from the manufacturer or find close matches from current product lines. Professional tile setters also have access to commercial-grade repair compounds and colour-matching systems that aren't available to homeowners.

The repair will never be completely invisible under close inspection, but a well-executed porcelain repair can be nearly undetectable from normal viewing distance, especially on textured or patterned tiles where slight colour variations blend naturally with the overall design.

How do I remove and replace a damaged mosaic tile sheet in my Calgary shower floor?

Removing and replacing a damaged mosaic tile sheet in a shower floor requires careful work to avoid damaging the waterproof membrane underneath, but it's manageable for a careful DIYer with the right approach and tools.

The key challenge with mosaic tile repair is that the small individual tiles are mounted on mesh backing, so you're dealing with dozens of tiny pieces rather than a single large tile. In Calgary's hard water conditions, mosaic shower floors often develop issues with efflorescence (white mineral deposits) or grout deterioration that necessitates partial replacement.

Start by carefully removing the grout around the entire damaged sheet. Use a manual grout removal tool or oscillating multi-tool with a grout blade — avoid aggressive hammering that could crack adjacent tiles or damage the waterproof membrane below. Calgary's typical shower installations use either Schluter Kerdi membrane or a liquid-applied membrane like RedGard under the tile, and puncturing this membrane creates a leak path that can cause thousands in damage behind the walls.

Once the grout is removed, use a thin putty knife or chisel to carefully pry up the mosaic sheet. The mesh backing should come up as one piece if the thinset bond isn't too strong. If individual tiles are breaking away from the mesh, remove them one by one. Scrape away the old thinset from the substrate, being extremely careful not to gouge or puncture the waterproof membrane. Any damage to the membrane must be patched with compatible membrane material before proceeding.

For the replacement, use a high-quality polymer-modified thinset suitable for wet areas — something like Laticrete 254 Platinum or Mapei Kerabond/Keralastic. In Calgary's dry winter conditions (15-20% humidity indoors), thinset can skin over quickly, so work in small sections and don't spread more thinset than you can tile in 10-15 minutes. Apply thinset with a 3/16" square-notch trowel, ensuring full coverage under the mesh backing.

Position the new mosaic sheet carefully — once it's down, repositioning is difficult without lifting and starting over. Use a grout float or rubber mallet with a beating block to ensure the sheet sits level with adjacent tiles and that all individual pieces are properly embedded. Check that the sheet aligns with the slope to drain — shower floors must maintain proper drainage, and a high spot will create standing water and potential mold issues.

Wait 24-48 hours before grouting to ensure the thinset has fully cured. Use a high-quality grout suitable for wet areas — epoxy grout is ideal for shower floors because it resists Calgary's hard water staining and won't develop efflorescence. If using cement grout, choose a polymer-modified version and seal it after curing. In Calgary's dry

climate, mist the fresh grout lightly and cover with plastic sheeting for 72 hours to prevent too-rapid moisture loss during curing.

This repair requires patience and precision, but it's within reach of a careful DIYer. The critical success factors are protecting the waterproof membrane, achieving proper thinset coverage under the mesh backing, and maintaining the floor slope to drain. If you discover membrane damage during removal, or if multiple sheets need replacement, consider hiring a professional tile setter who can assess the overall condition of the shower waterproofing system.

Need help finding a tile professional for a more extensive shower floor repair? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced local installers through the Calgary Construction Network.

Q6

What's the cost per square foot to regrout a Calgary bathroom floor versus a full retile?

Regrouting a Calgary bathroom floor typically costs \$3-8 per square foot, while a full retile runs \$8-18 per square foot installed — making regrouting roughly half the cost of replacement when the existing tile is in good condition.

Regrouting Cost Breakdown

For a standard 50 square foot bathroom floor, expect to pay \$150-400 for professional regrouting. This includes removing the old grout (which is labour-intensive and dusty), cleaning the joints thoroughly, and applying new grout. The wide cost range depends on grout joint width, tile type, and grout condition. Narrow joints on rectified porcelain take longer to clean out than wide joints on standard ceramic. If the existing grout is extremely hard or epoxy-based, removal costs increase significantly.

Calgary's dry winter climate affects regrouting timing — the 15-20% indoor humidity from November through March means new grout cures too quickly without proper moisture management. Professional tile setters mist fresh grout lightly and cover it with plastic sheeting for 72 hours to prevent weak, crumbly grout that fails within months. DIY regrouting in Calgary winters often results in grout that looks good initially but cracks and crumbles by spring.

Full Retile Cost Comparison

Complete bathroom floor retiling costs \$8-18 per square foot installed, depending on tile choice and substrate condition. A 50 square foot bathroom floor runs \$400-900 for ceramic tile, \$600-1,200 for standard porcelain, and

\$800-1,500+ for large-format porcelain or natural stone. These costs include tile removal (\$2-5 per square foot), substrate preparation, anti-crack membrane installation (essential over Calgary basement slabs due to frost heave), new tile, and grouting.

When Regrouting Makes Sense

Regrouting is cost-effective when the tile itself is sound but the grout has failed due to normal wear, staining, or cracking. This is common in Calgary bathrooms where hard water leaves mineral deposits in grout joints, or where the original grout was installed during dry winter conditions without proper curing protection. If less than 10% of tiles are cracked or loose, regrouting can extend the floor's life by 5-10 years at half the cost of replacement.

When Full Retile is Necessary

Several conditions make regrouting a waste of money. If more than 15% of tiles are cracked, loose, or hollow-sounding when tapped, the substrate has likely failed and full removal is required. Water damage behind the tile — common when bathroom floors weren't properly waterproofed at wet areas — requires complete removal to address the underlying problem. Lippage between tiles (uneven surfaces) can't be fixed with regrouting. Most importantly, if the floor lacks an anti-crack membrane over a concrete slab, it will continue cracking regardless of new grout until the underlying movement issue is addressed with proper membrane installation.

Calgary-Specific Considerations

Calgary basement bathroom floors over concrete slabs are particularly prone to grout failure due to seasonal frost heave movement. Simply regrouting without addressing the underlying slab movement with an uncoupling membrane like Schluter DITRA will result in the same cracking pattern within 1-2 seasons. In these cases, the additional cost of full retiling with proper membrane installation (\$2-4 per square foot for the membrane) is justified to prevent repeated grout failure.

Professional vs DIY

Regrouting is more DIY-friendly than full retiling, but Calgary's climate requires specific techniques. Professional regrouting includes proper moisture management during curing and typically comes with a 1-2 year warranty on the grout work. DIY regrouting can save \$2-4 per square foot in labour costs but risks poor curing in Calgary's dry conditions.

Need help finding a tile professional to assess whether your bathroom floor needs regrouting or full replacement? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced local contractors for free estimates.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Eshine Cleaning Services
- Calgary Custom Concepts
- Canadian Closet
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD

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How do I repair a tile floor in a Calgary entryway where the grout has been eroded by road salt?

Road salt erosion is extremely common in Calgary entryways and can usually be repaired by removing the damaged grout and re-grouting with a salt-resistant epoxy grout, but the underlying cause — inadequate sealing and harsh winter conditions — must also be addressed.

The combination of Calgary's road salt, sand, and freeze-thaw slush creates one of the harshest environments for tile grout. Standard cement-based grout is porous and vulnerable to salt penetration, which causes the cement binder to break down over repeated winter seasons. Once salt gets into grout joints, it crystallizes during drying cycles and physically pushes the grout apart from the inside.

Assessment and Preparation

First, determine how extensive the damage is. If only the surface grout is eroded but the grout below is solid, you can scrape out the loose material to a depth of two-thirds of the grout joint and re-grout over the sound base. However, if the grout is soft or crumbly throughout its depth, you'll need to remove it completely with a manual grout removal tool or oscillating multi-tool with a grout blade. Be extremely careful not to chip the tile edges during removal — Calgary's winter-tracked debris often contains sharp sand that has already stressed the tile edges.

Clean the joints thoroughly with a shop vacuum and damp cloth to remove all salt residue and loose debris. Salt crystals left in the joint will continue to cause problems even with new grout. In Calgary's hard water, you may also see white efflorescence (mineral deposits) that should be cleaned with a mild acidic cleaner before re-grouting.

Grout Selection for Salt Resistance

For a Calgary entryway exposed to road salt, **epoxy grout is your best long-term solution**. Unlike cement-based grout, epoxy grout is non-porous and chemically resistant to salt penetration. Brands like Laticrete SpectraLOCK or Mapei Kerapoxy offer excellent salt resistance and come in colors to match your existing grout. Epoxy grout costs \$40-60 per bag versus \$8-15 for standard grout, but it will outlast cement grout by decades in a salt-exposed entryway.

If budget requires cement-based grout, use a high-performance polymer-modified grout like Laticrete PermaColor or Custom Prism, and plan to seal it with a penetrating grout sealer annually. However, understand that cement grout in a Calgary entryway will require maintenance every 3-5 years regardless of sealing.

Installation Considerations

Calgary's dry winter air (15-20% humidity) affects grout curing, so work in sections and mist the fresh grout lightly every few hours for the first 24 hours. Cover the grouted area with plastic sheeting to slow the cure rate — grout that dries too quickly becomes weak and porous. Maintain the room temperature above 10°C during installation and curing.

Remove grout haze immediately during installation with a damp sponge, as dried haze on tile in Calgary's dry climate becomes extremely difficult to remove. For epoxy grout specifically, clean tools and tile surface within 30 minutes of application — epoxy becomes nearly impossible to remove once it sets.

Prevention and Maintenance

The key to preventing future salt damage is creating a barrier system. Place high-quality entrance mats both outside and inside the door to capture salt and moisture before it reaches the tile. In Calgary, this means a coarse scraper mat outside and an absorbent mat inside, both large enough that people take multiple steps on them.

Apply a penetrating sealer to both the tile and grout annually before winter. Natural stone tiles in entryways should be sealed twice yearly due to Calgary's harsh conditions. Consider switching to a color-matched flexible sealant (rather than grout) at the junction between the tile floor and wall base — this joint sees the most thermal movement and salt concentration.

When to Call a Professional

If the grout damage extends under the tiles or you see loose tiles, the thinset bond may also be compromised by salt penetration. This requires professional assessment and potentially full tile removal and reinstallation with a waterproof membrane. Similarly, if your entryway has natural stone that's showing salt staining or surface erosion, a professional stone restoration specialist can determine if refinishing is possible or if replacement is necessary.

For extensive re-grouting (over 100 square feet) or if you're switching to epoxy grout, consider hiring a professional. Epoxy grout has a short working time and requires experience to achieve a smooth, consistent finish.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Royland Stucco
- Jk Stucco
- Makki Abatement
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- WestAim Construction Ltd.

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Q8

Can epoxy injection fix a cracked tile on a Calgary bathroom wall without removing it?

Epoxy injection cannot reliably fix a cracked tile on a bathroom wall and is not recommended for this application. While epoxy injection works well for structural concrete crack repair, tile cracks require complete tile replacement to ensure proper waterproofing and prevent future water damage.

Why Epoxy Injection Fails for Bathroom Wall Tile

Cracked tile on a bathroom wall creates a pathway for water to penetrate behind the tile, where it can cause mold, rot, and structural damage over time. Even if epoxy injection could fill the visible crack (which is difficult on a vertical surface), it cannot restore the tile's waterproof integrity or address the underlying cause of the crack. The crack likely extends through the entire tile thickness, and epoxy cannot reliably seal the back side where water infiltration occurs.

Additionally, **Calgary's extreme humidity swings** — from 15-20% in winter heating season to 60-70% in summer — cause substrate movement that will likely reopen any epoxy-filled crack within months. The chinook temperature fluctuations that can swing 20-30 degrees in hours create thermal stress that epoxy repairs cannot accommodate long-term.

The Right Way to Fix a Cracked Bathroom Wall Tile

Remove the cracked tile completely and replace it with a new one. This involves carefully chipping out the grout around the damaged tile, removing the tile without damaging adjacent tiles, cleaning the substrate, applying fresh thinset, setting the new tile, and re-grouting. For a single tile replacement, expect to pay **\$150-\$300** including the tile, materials, and professional labor.

When to Investigate Further

If the tile cracked without obvious impact damage, investigate the cause before replacing it. Common causes in Calgary bathrooms include substrate movement (especially over wood framing that expands and contracts with humidity changes), inadequate waterproofing allowing moisture behind the tile, or structural deflection in the wall. If multiple tiles are cracking, the substrate or waterproofing system may need attention before any tile replacement.

DIY vs Professional Replacement

A handy homeowner can replace a single wall tile if they have the right tools (grout removal tool, tile chipper, notched trowel) and take care not to damage surrounding tiles. However, if the crack suggests waterproofing failure or if you discover moisture damage behind the tile during removal, this becomes a professional job requiring proper waterproofing membrane installation.

Need help finding a tile contractor for proper repair? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced professionals who understand Calgary's climate challenges and proper bathroom waterproofing techniques.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Besademolition
- Makki Abatement
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Q9

How do Calgary tile contractors handle lippage repair on existing large format tile floors?

Lippage repair on existing large-format tile is one of the most challenging problems Calgary tile contractors face, and unfortunately, there's often no perfect fix without partial or complete removal. The reality is that lippage — where adjacent tiles sit at different heights creating an uneven surface — becomes exponentially more noticeable with large-format tiles, and once the thinset has cured, your repair options are limited and expensive.

Understanding the Lippage Problem in Calgary

Large-format porcelain (24x24, 24x48, or larger) magnifies every imperfection in both the substrate and the installation. What might be an acceptable 1-2mm height difference between 12x12 tiles becomes a glaring trip hazard and visual flaw with 36x36 slabs. In Calgary's dry climate, thinset cures quickly — sometimes too quickly for installers to make adjustments — which can lock in lippage before it's noticed.

The root causes are usually substrate issues (an uneven subfloor that wasn't properly levelled), wrong thinset (standard all-purpose instead of large-format thinset), insufficient back-buttering, or rushed installation without proper checking. Calgary's housing stock includes many homes with concrete basement slabs that have settled unevenly over time, creating substrate conditions that make large-format tile installation particularly challenging.

Repair Options Calgary Contractors Use

Grinding and Polishing is the least invasive approach for minor lippage (under 2mm). Contractors use diamond grinding equipment to carefully level the high spots, then polish the surface to restore the tile's finish. This works best on unglazed porcelain or natural stone where the material is consistent throughout. The challenge is matching the original surface texture and sheen — polished porcelain that's been ground may have a different appearance than the factory finish. Expect \$8-15 per square foot for professional grinding and polishing.

Strategic Removal and Reinstallation involves removing only the most problematic tiles and reinstalling them properly. This requires an experienced contractor who can remove tiles without damaging adjacent ones — a tricky process with large-format installations where tiles are often tightly butted. The contractor must also have matching tile in stock, as dye lots can vary significantly. Partial removal and reinstallation typically runs \$25-40 per square foot including new tile, thinset, and grout matching.

Complete Removal and Reinstallation is often the most cost-effective long-term solution for severe lippage across a large area. Calgary contractors typically charge \$4-8 per square foot for large-format tile removal (it's labour-intensive and requires careful disposal), plus the full cost of new installation. While expensive upfront, this approach addresses the underlying substrate issues and ensures a professional result that won't require further repairs.

Calgary-Specific Considerations

Calgary's extreme temperature swings and chinook winds create additional substrate movement that can worsen existing lippage over time. Tiles that were marginally acceptable when first installed may develop more pronounced height differences as the building materials expand and contract. This is particularly common in homes with concrete slabs over unheated crawl spaces or basements where frost heave affects the substrate seasonally.

The dry winter air in Calgary also affects repair work — any new thinset or grout used in repairs must be protected from rapid moisture loss during curing. Professional contractors will mist repair areas and cover them with plastic sheeting for 72 hours to ensure proper curing in Calgary's 15-20% winter humidity.

When to Hire a Professional

Lippage repair on large-format tile requires specialized equipment, experience with substrate evaluation, and access to matching materials. DIY grinding can easily damage expensive porcelain, and improper removal

techniques often crack adjacent tiles, turning a localized problem into a room-wide disaster. Calgary contractors experienced with large-format installations understand how to assess whether the underlying substrate issues need addressing before any surface repairs are attempted.

Most importantly, a professional can determine whether the lippage is cosmetic or structural. If the substrate has ongoing movement issues — common in Calgary due to frost heave and seasonal settling — surface repairs may be temporary fixes that fail within a year or two.

Find local tile contractors through the Calgary Construction Network who have experience with large-format tile repairs and can assess whether your specific lippage issues require grinding, partial replacement, or complete reinstallation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Venkor Group Inc
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Durable Decks
- Turnbull masonry

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Why is the caulk in my Calgary shower constantly cracking and what's the right fix?

Caulk cracking in Calgary showers is primarily caused by our extreme dry winters (15-20% humidity) and rapid chinook temperature swings that cause substrate movement, combined with using the wrong caulk type or applying it over failed grout joints.

The most common cause is **Calgary's bone-dry winter air** sucking moisture out of standard acrylic or latex caulk faster than it can cure properly. When caulk loses moisture too quickly, it shrinks and cracks within months of application. This is compounded by our chinook winds creating rapid temperature and humidity fluctuations that cause wood framing and drywall behind your shower to expand and contract repeatedly throughout winter.

The second major cause is using caulk to fix a grout problem. If the grout joints in your shower corners are cracking or failing, applying caulk over them is a temporary band-aid that will fail again. Water gets behind the caulk through the failed grout, and the caulk loses adhesion and cracks. Many Calgary homeowners get stuck in a cycle of re-caulking every 6-12 months because they're not addressing the underlying grout failure.

The right fix starts with identifying whether you have a caulk problem or a grout problem. Shower corners, where walls meet walls and where walls meet the tub or shower pan, should be caulked with flexible sealant — never grouted. These are "change of plane" joints that need to flex with building movement. However, the field tile joints on your shower walls should be grouted, not caulked. If those grout joints are cracking, you need to remove the failed grout, re-grout properly, and then caulk only the corners.

For the actual caulk repair, use 100% silicone caulk rated for wet areas — not acrylic, not latex, not "paintable" caulk. Quality brands like GE Supreme Silicone, DAP 100% Silicone, or Tremco Spectrem perform much better in Calgary's climate extremes. Remove all old caulk completely using a caulk removal tool and clean the joint with rubbing alcohol before applying new caulk. In Calgary's dry climate, mist the joint lightly with water before caulking to slow the cure rate and prevent shrinkage cracking.

Professional installation is worth considering if you're dealing with widespread grout failure, need to re-waterproof areas behind the tile, or if the caulk keeps failing despite proper materials. A tile professional can assess whether the cracking indicates movement in the substrate that needs to be addressed before any cosmetic repairs. Shower re-caulking runs \$200-400 professionally, while fixing underlying grout or waterproofing issues ranges from \$800-2500 depending on the scope.

The key is using the right material for Calgary's climate and addressing root causes rather than repeatedly applying temporary fixes over failed joints.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Besademolition
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- Wise Abatement

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Q11

Is it worth regrouting a Calgary bathroom or is it more cost-effective to retile the whole space?

Regrouting is worth it if the tile is in good condition and properly bonded, but full retiling is often the better long-term investment in Calgary's harsh climate. The decision comes down to the age and condition of your existing tile, the extent of grout problems, and whether underlying waterproofing meets current standards.

When Regrouting Makes Sense

If your bathroom tile is less than 10-15 years old, the tiles themselves are crack-free and well-bonded, and you're dealing with surface-level grout issues like discoloration, minor cracking, or mildew staining, regrouting can extend the life of your installation for \$3-8 per square foot. This works particularly well for floor tile where waterproofing isn't as critical, or wall tile that's purely decorative (not in the shower area). Calgary's extremely dry winters cause grout to cure too quickly if not properly misted during installation, leading to weak, crumbly grout that needs replacement every 5-7 years rather than the typical 10-15 years in more humid climates.

The Hidden Waterproofing Problem

The bigger issue in Calgary bathrooms is that most tile installations older than 10-15 years lack proper waterproofing behind the tile. If your shower was tiled with just cement board and no continuous waterproof membrane (Schluter Kerdi, RedGard, or Laticrete Hydro Ban), water has been migrating through the grout and cement board for years, potentially causing rot and mold behind the walls. Regrouting over a non-waterproofed substrate is like putting a band-aid on a structural problem — you'll get 2-3 more years before water damage forces

a complete tear-out anyway.

Calgary Climate Factors

Calgary's chinook winds create rapid humidity swings that stress grout joints more than in stable climates. Our freeze-thaw cycles, while primarily affecting outdoor installations, also impact bathroom tile through thermal expansion and contraction as heated indoor air meets cold exterior walls. If your bathroom shares an exterior wall (common in Calgary's housing stock), thermal movement may have compromised grout integrity beyond what simple regrouting can fix.

Cost Comparison Reality

Regrouting a typical Calgary bathroom (60-80 square feet of tile) costs \$300-600 for materials and labor. A full retiling of the same space runs \$2,500-6,000 depending on tile choice and complexity. However, factor in that regrouting typically lasts 3-5 years in Calgary conditions before needing attention again, while a properly waterproofed retiling with quality porcelain should last 20-25 years. The math often favors retiling when you consider the long-term cost per year and the peace of mind that comes with modern waterproofing.

When to Retile Instead

Choose full retiling if your tile is more than 15 years old, if you see any loose or hollow-sounding tiles, if there's no waterproof membrane behind shower tile, if you're dealing with recurring mold or mildew despite cleaning, or if the grout has failed multiple times. Also consider retiling if you're planning other bathroom updates — coordinating plumbing, electrical (heated floors), and tile work saves money compared to doing them separately.

Professional Assessment

Have a tile contractor tap-test your existing tile with a rubber mallet. Hollow sounds indicate failed bonding that regrouting won't fix. They can also assess whether proper waterproofing exists behind shower walls — this often requires removing a small section of grout to inspect the substrate.

Need help finding a tile contractor to assess your bathroom? Calgary Tiling can match you with local professionals who understand Calgary's unique climate challenges and can provide honest guidance on whether regrouting or retiling makes more sense for your specific situation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Jk Stucco
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.

- Mike's Restoration Service
- The Original Workshop
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd

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Q12

How much does it cost to remove and reset sunken tiles in a Calgary shower floor?

Removing and resetting sunken tiles in a Calgary shower floor typically costs \$800-\$2,500 depending on the size of the affected area and whether underlying waterproofing needs repair. However, sunken tiles usually indicate a more serious problem with the shower pan slope or waterproofing membrane that may require a complete shower floor rebuild.

Understanding Why Shower Floor Tiles Sink

Sunken or loose tiles in a shower floor are almost always caused by one of three problems: inadequate thinset coverage during original installation, water penetration behind the tiles causing substrate deterioration, or improper shower pan slope that allows water to pool and weaken the bond. In Calgary's hard water conditions, mineral buildup can also accelerate grout deterioration around floor tiles, allowing water to migrate behind the tile and compromise the installation.

The most concerning scenario is when water has penetrated behind the tiles and damaged the waterproof membrane or substrate beneath. This is unfortunately common in older Calgary showers where cement board was used without a proper waterproof membrane, or where the membrane was damaged during installation. Once water reaches the substrate, it can cause rot in wood subfloors or deterioration in concrete, creating a soft spot that allows tiles to sink under foot traffic.

Repair Scope and Costs

For a **simple reset of 3-5 loose tiles** where the substrate and waterproofing are sound, expect \$300-\$600. This involves carefully removing the affected tiles, cleaning old thinset, applying new large-format thinset with proper coverage, and re-grouting. The challenge is finding matching tile if your shower is more than a few years old.

Partial shower floor reconstruction affecting 15-30 square feet runs \$800-\$1,500. This typically involves removing a section of floor tile, repairing the shower pan slope with new mortar bed, applying waterproof membrane

to the repair area, and retiling. The difficulty is blending the repair seamlessly with existing tile and ensuring proper drainage slope.

Complete shower floor rebuild ranges from \$1,500-\$3,500 and is often the most cost-effective long-term solution when multiple tiles are sinking. This involves removing all floor tile, rebuilding the shower pan with proper slope (minimum 1/4-inch per foot toward the drain), installing a continuous waterproof membrane like Schluter Kerdi or RedGard, and retiling the entire floor. While more expensive upfront, this prevents recurring problems and water damage.

Calgary-Specific Considerations

Calgary's extreme seasonal humidity swings put additional stress on shower installations. During winter heating season, indoor humidity drops to 15-20%, causing rapid moisture loss from grout and potentially creating gaps that allow water penetration. Professional tile setters in Calgary often recommend epoxy grout for shower floors specifically because it's non-porous and won't deteriorate from Calgary's hard water and dry climate cycling.

The age of Calgary's housing stock also matters. Homes built before 2000 often have shower pans that don't meet current waterproofing standards. If your shower floor tiles are sinking and the home was built before modern waterproofing membranes became standard, budget for a complete rebuild rather than attempting spot repairs.

When Professional Help is Essential

Any shower floor tile repair requires professional installation. Unlike wall tiles where gravity helps during installation, shower floor tiles must be set with perfect slope and complete thinset coverage to prevent water pooling and future sinking. More importantly, disturbing shower floor tiles risks damaging the waterproof membrane beneath, which can lead to catastrophic water damage behind walls.

A qualified tile installer will perform a moisture test and inspection to determine whether the waterproofing is intact before beginning any repair work. If water has penetrated the membrane, attempting a surface repair will only mask the problem temporarily while water damage continues behind the scenes.

Find local tile contractors experienced with shower repairs through the Calgary Construction Network directory at calgaryconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=tiling for proper assessment and repair of your sunken shower floor tiles.

How do I remove a broken tile in my Calgary entryway without cracking the surrounding tiles?

Removing a single broken tile without damaging surrounding tiles requires careful technique and the right tools. The key is working slowly with a grout removal tool first, then using controlled chiseling motions to break out the damaged tile piece by piece.

Start by removing all grout around the broken tile using a manual grout removal tool (looks like a small saw with a carbide blade) or an oscillating multi-tool with a grout removal blade. This is the most critical step — you need to completely isolate the broken tile from its neighbors. Work the tool along all four edges of the tile, removing grout to the full depth. Don't rush this step. Any remaining grout connections will transfer stress to adjacent tiles when you start chiseling.

Once the grout is completely removed, use a hammer and cold chisel to break out the tile in small pieces. Start at the center of the broken tile and work outward. Place the chisel at a 45-degree angle and tap gently with a hammer — you want controlled fractures, not heavy blows that could shock the surrounding tiles. If the tile is large format (12x12 or bigger), score it first with a tile cutter or angle grinder to create controlled break lines. Remove pieces gradually rather than trying to pop out the entire tile at once.

For porcelain tile common in Calgary entryways, expect this to take patience. Porcelain is extremely hard and doesn't break easily. You may need to drill multiple holes in the tile with a masonry bit to weaken it before chiseling. Keep your chisel work aimed toward the center of the broken tile, never toward the edges where you could catch an adjacent tile.

Calgary's dry winter air actually helps with this repair because any thinset adhesive under the old tile will be brittle and easier to scrape away. Use a putty knife or chisel to remove all old thinset from the substrate before installing the replacement tile. The substrate should be clean and level.

When installing the replacement tile, use a high-quality thinset appropriate for your tile type — large-format thinset for porcelain 12x12 and larger, standard thinset for smaller ceramic. Back-butter the replacement tile (spread thinset on the back) in addition to combing it onto the substrate to ensure full contact. Use tile spacers to maintain consistent gaps with surrounding tiles.

This is a manageable DIY repair for most homeowners if you work slowly and have the right tools. The grout removal step is the most time-consuming but also the most important. If you encounter resistance or hear cracking sounds from adjacent tiles, stop and consider hiring a professional — it's better to pay for expert removal than to crack multiple tiles trying to save one.

Need help finding a tile professional if the repair becomes more complex? Calgary Tiling can match you with local contractors through the Calgary Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Canadian Closet
- Wise Abatement
- Mike's Restoration Service
- Makki Abatement
- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC

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Q14

Can I patch just one section of a mosaic tile floor in my Calgary bathroom if some pieces have fallen off?

Yes, you can patch a small section of mosaic tile, but success depends on finding matching tile and whether the underlying issue that caused the failure has been addressed. If only a few individual mosaic pieces have popped off from one sheet area, this is typically a manageable repair for a careful homeowner.

The key challenge will be finding matching mosaic tile. Mosaic patterns, colors, and finishes change frequently, so unless your bathroom was tiled recently or you have leftover material, exact matches can be difficult. Bring a loose piece to tile suppliers in Calgary — sometimes they can special-order discontinued patterns or suggest close alternatives. If you can't find an exact match, consider creating an intentional accent pattern or border using a complementary mosaic to make the repair look deliberate rather than patched.

Before patching, determine why the original mosaic failed. Mosaic pieces typically fall off due to substrate movement, moisture infiltration behind the tile, or inadequate thinset coverage during the original installation. In Calgary bathrooms, the most common cause is seasonal movement in wood-framed floors that weren't properly isolated with an anti-crack membrane. If the subfloor feels bouncy or soft, or if you notice other loose areas, the patch will likely fail again without addressing the underlying deflection.

For the repair itself, scrape away all old thinset and grout from the affected area down to the substrate. Use a high-quality thinset suitable for your substrate — if patching over cement board or an existing membrane, a polymer-modified thinset works well. Apply thinset with a 3/16-inch square-notch trowel, press the new mosaic sheet firmly, and ensure full contact. The trickiest part is blending the grout lines seamlessly with the existing installation.

Calgary's dry winter climate affects small repairs significantly. At 15-20% indoor humidity, grout cures too quickly and becomes weak and crumbly. Mist the new grout lightly with water and cover the repair area with plastic sheeting for 72 hours to slow the cure rate. Use non-sanded grout for mosaic installations since the joints are typically 1/8-inch or narrower.

Consider hiring a professional if the failed area is larger than 2-3 square feet, if multiple sections are showing signs of failure, or if the repair is in a high-visibility area where blending needs to be perfect. A skilled tile setter can often source closer tile matches through trade suppliers and has the experience to make repairs nearly invisible. For a small patch repair, expect to pay \$200-500 depending on the complexity and tile sourcing requirements.

Need help finding a tile professional for a larger repair? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced installers who specialize in mosaic work and bathroom repairs.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Durable Decks
- Mike's Restoration Service
- Keystone Exteriors
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Bracha Concrete & Coatings Inc.

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Q15

Why does grout keep falling out of my Calgary bathroom shower joints and how do I fix it for good?

Grout falling out of shower joints is almost always caused by water getting behind the tile due to inadequate waterproofing, combined with Calgary's extreme dry climate causing rapid moisture loss during grout curing. This creates a cycle where water infiltration weakens the grout bond while our 15-20% winter humidity causes grout to cure too quickly and become brittle.

The most common cause is that your shower was tiled without a proper waterproof membrane behind the tile. Many older Calgary bathrooms and some recent budget installations use only cement board (like Hardiebacker) as a tile substrate, but cement board is NOT waterproof — it's water-resistant at best. Water migrates through cement board over time, gets trapped behind the tile, and creates hydrostatic pressure that pushes grout out of the joints. In Calgary's freeze-thaw cycles, this trapped moisture can even freeze and expand, accelerating grout failure.

Calgary's extreme winter dryness compounds the problem. When indoor humidity drops to 15-20% from November through March, grout loses moisture too rapidly during the initial cure, preventing proper hydration of the cement. This creates weak, chalky grout that crumbles within months. Professional tile setters in Calgary know to mist fresh grout lightly and cover it with plastic sheeting for 72 hours, but many DIY installations and rushed jobs skip this critical step.

Poor grout mixing and application also causes premature failure. Grout mixed too wet, applied in extreme temperatures, or cleaned too aggressively before it's fully cured will never achieve proper strength. Using the wrong grout type — sanded grout in narrow joints under 3mm or unsanded grout in wide joints over 3mm — creates stress cracks that allow water penetration.

To fix this permanently, you need to address the waterproofing, not just re-grout. If grout is falling out in multiple areas, especially around the tub or shower pan, the problem is likely behind the tile. A proper fix involves removing the failed tile, installing a continuous waterproof membrane like Schluter Kerdi, RedGard, or Laticrete Hydro Ban, then retiling with appropriate thinset and grout. This typically costs \$3,000-\$6,000 for a standard tub surround but prevents the \$15,000-\$30,000 structural damage that water infiltration causes over time.

For isolated grout failure in an otherwise sound installation, remove all loose grout with a manual grout rake or oscillating tool, clean the joints thoroughly with isopropyl alcohol, and re-grout with a high-quality polymer-modified grout. In Calgary's dry climate, mist the old grout lines lightly before applying new grout to prevent rapid moisture loss. Cover fresh grout with plastic sheeting for 72 hours and maintain room temperature above 15°C during curing.

Consider upgrading to epoxy grout for shower floors and high-wear areas. Epoxy grout is completely waterproof, stain-resistant, and doesn't require sealing — ideal for Calgary's hard water conditions. It costs 2-3 times more than cement grout but lasts decades without maintenance.

This level of waterproofing and grout work requires professional installation to ensure the membrane is properly detailed at corners, penetrations, and transitions. A failed DIY shower repair often costs more to fix than hiring a

professional tile setter initially.

Need help finding a tile contractor experienced with Calgary shower waterproofing? Calgary Tiling can match you with local professionals who understand our climate challenges.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Venkor Group Inc
- Jk Stucco
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd
- Royland Stucco

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What's the price to replace a few cracked tiles in a Calgary kitchen without disturbing the rest?

Replacing a few cracked tiles in a Calgary kitchen typically costs **\$150-\$400 for professional repair, or \$50-\$100 in materials if you tackle it yourself**. The final cost depends on tile type, how many tiles need replacement, and whether you have matching tiles available.

Professional tile repair runs \$75-\$150 per tile for standard ceramic or porcelain, including removal, substrate prep, and installation. If you need 3-4 tiles replaced, expect \$225-\$600 total. The higher end applies when the contractor needs to source matching tile, work around appliances, or deal with difficult removal situations. Many Calgary tile contractors have a minimum service call fee of \$150-\$200, so replacing just one tile often costs the same as replacing three or four.

Material costs for DIY repair are much lower — \$20-\$40 for a small bag of thinset, \$15-\$25 for grout, plus \$10-\$30 for basic tools if you don't have them. The challenge is finding matching tile. If your kitchen was tiled recently, check with the original installer or tile supplier first. For older installations, bring a removed tile piece to Calgary tile suppliers like Centura, Olympia Tile, or local showrooms for the closest match possible.

The removal process is the trickiest part of the repair. Use a manual tile removal tool or oscillating multi-tool to cut through the grout joints around the cracked tile, then carefully chisel out the tile without damaging adjacent pieces. Calgary's dry winter air makes old grout brittle and easier to remove, but also means the remaining grout may have shrunk slightly, creating small gaps that need filling during the repair.

Substrate preparation is critical even for small repairs. Once the tile is removed, scrape away all old thinset down to the substrate surface. Any high spots or old adhesive residue will prevent the new tile from sitting flush with surrounding tiles. In Calgary homes, kitchen floors are typically plywood over joists or concrete slab — both substrates are stable for small tile repairs.

Installation technique for replacement tiles requires back-buttering — apply thinset to both the substrate and the back of the tile for maximum coverage and bond strength. Use a notched trowel sized appropriately for your tile thickness, and work the tile into place with slight twisting motions to achieve full contact. The new tile should sit perfectly flush with adjacent tiles — any lippage will be immediately visible in a kitchen floor.

Grout matching can be challenging, especially if the original grout has aged or been stained by kitchen spills. Even "matching" grout may look different when fresh compared to aged grout. Some Calgary tile setters recommend cleaning and regrouting the entire visible area rather than trying to patch-match grout color, especially in high-visibility kitchen areas.

When to hire a professional: If you're dealing with natural stone tile, large-format porcelain (24x24 or larger), or if the cracked tiles are part of a larger pattern failure that suggests substrate movement, call a professional. Also, if you don't have matching tiles and need help sourcing them, a tile contractor's supplier relationships can save significant time and frustration.

DIY-friendly scenario: Replacing 2-3 standard ceramic or small-format porcelain tiles in a straight-lay pattern is manageable for a careful homeowner with basic tools and patience. The repair can be completed in a weekend, with most of the time spent on careful removal and allowing proper cure time for thinset and grout.

Need help finding a tile professional for your kitchen repair? Calgary Tiling can match you with local contractors who specialize in tile repair and restoration work.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Allure Residential & Commercial inc
- Ardco Construction
- Amar Homes Inc
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD

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Q17

What causes Calgary bathroom tile to delaminate from the wall and how do I fix it permanently?

Tile delamination in Calgary bathrooms is almost always caused by inadequate waterproofing, substrate movement, or improper thinset application — all of which are amplified by Calgary's extreme humidity swings and temperature fluctuations from chinook winds.

The most common culprit is **moisture infiltration behind the tile**. Many Calgary bathrooms were tiled using only cement board as a "waterproof" backing, but cement board alone is not waterproof — it's water-resistant at best. Water vapor migrates through cement board and grout joints, saturating the substrate behind the tile. When this moisture freezes during Calgary's cold snaps or expands during chinook-driven humidity swings, it pushes the tile

away from the wall. This is why you'll often see delamination starting around tub edges, shower corners, or anywhere water exposure is highest.

Substrate movement is the second major cause, particularly in Calgary's wood-framed homes. Chinook winds can swing indoor humidity from 15% to 40% within hours, causing wood framing to expand and contract. If tile was installed directly over drywall or cement board without an uncoupling membrane, this movement transfers directly to the tile, breaking the thinset bond. Additionally, many Calgary homes have settling or seasonal movement that creates stress points where walls meet tubs or shower pans.

Wrong thinset application compounds these problems. In Calgary's dry climate, thinset can skin over (form a surface crust) within minutes of application, especially in winter when indoor humidity drops to 15-20%. If tiles are pressed into skinned-over thinset, they appear to bond but actually have minimal adhesion. Professional Calgary tile setters work in small sections and mist the substrate lightly in winter to slow thinset curing.

Permanent Repair Process

Complete removal and proper reinstallation is the only permanent fix — spot repairs over failed waterproofing will fail again within months. Remove all loose tile and scrape the wall down to the substrate. If you find black mold, soft drywall, or rotted framing behind the tile, you have a moisture infiltration problem that requires addressing the source before retiling.

Install a continuous waterproof membrane such as Schluter Kerdi, RedGard liquid membrane, or Laticrete Hydro Ban over the entire shower area. This membrane must be continuous — no gaps, holes, or seams that aren't properly sealed. The membrane extends from the shower pan up to at least 6 inches above the highest shower head, and completely around tub surrounds. This is non-negotiable for any wet area in Calgary.

Use the correct thinset for your tile type. Large-format porcelain (popular in Calgary bathrooms) requires large-format thinset applied with a 1/2-inch square-notch trowel and back-buttered on each tile for 95% coverage. Standard ceramic wall tile can use all-purpose thinset with a 3/16-inch square-notch trowel. In Calgary's dry climate, mist the substrate lightly before applying thinset and work in sections small enough to complete before the thinset skins over.

Address the underlying moisture source. Ensure your bathroom exhaust fan moves at least 50 CFM and runs during and 30 minutes after every shower. In Calgary's dry climate, many homeowners under-ventilate bathrooms, allowing moisture to concentrate and penetrate tile installations. Check that tub and shower caulking is intact — failed caulk joints are a primary water entry point.

When to Hire a Professional

Shower waterproofing and retiling requires professional installation — this is not a DIY project. Waterproofing failures in Calgary bathrooms routinely cause \$15,000-\$30,000 in structural damage when moisture reaches the framing. A professional tile setter will install the waterproof membrane correctly, use the proper thinset for Calgary's climate, and ensure the installation can handle chinook-driven humidity swings and seasonal movement.

For a typical Calgary bathroom retiling with proper waterproofing, expect \$3,500-\$7,000 depending on tile choice and bathroom size. This includes complete removal, substrate repair, waterproof membrane, and reinstallation with quality materials designed for Calgary's challenging climate.

Need help finding a tile installer experienced with Calgary's climate challenges? Calgary Tiling can match you with local professionals who understand proper waterproofing and substrate preparation for lasting bathroom tile installations.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Radon Lab
- Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing
- Mike's Restoration Service

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Q18

How much does it cost to regrout an entire Calgary bathroom shower?

Regrouting a Calgary bathroom shower typically costs \$800-\$2,200 for professional work, or \$150-\$400 in materials if you tackle it yourself. The wide range depends on shower size, grout type, and whether you're dealing with standard ceramic tile or premium materials like natural stone.

Professional regrouting costs break down to roughly \$8-\$15 per square foot of tiled surface. A standard tub surround (approximately 80 square feet of tile) runs \$650-\$1,200, while a larger walk-in shower (120+ square feet) costs \$1,000-\$1,800. Premium epoxy grout, which is highly recommended for Calgary showers due to our hard water conditions, adds \$200-\$400 to the total cost but provides superior stain resistance and longevity.

Material costs for DIY regrouting are significantly lower. You'll need grout removal tools (\$30-\$60), new grout (\$40-\$120 depending on type and quantity), grout sealer (\$25-\$40), and basic supplies like sponges and buckets (\$20-\$40). However, regrouting is labour-intensive work that requires patience and attention to detail — most homeowners underestimate the time required to properly remove old grout without damaging tiles.

Calgary's extreme climate makes grout choice critical. Our indoor humidity drops to 15-20% during winter heating season, which causes standard cement-based grout to cure too quickly and become brittle. Professional tile setters in Calgary often use epoxy grout for shower applications because it's non-porous, stain-resistant, and unaffected by our hard water. Epoxy grout costs 2-3 times more than standard grout but can last 15-20 years versus 5-8 years for cement grout in Calgary conditions.

Additional costs to consider include grout removal (the most time-consuming part), which professionals charge \$3-\$6 per square foot if the old grout is particularly stubborn or if there are multiple layers. If tiles are damaged during grout removal, replacement tiles cost \$5-\$15 per piece plus installation. Natural stone showers require re-sealing after regrouting, adding \$150-\$300 to the project cost.

When to hire a professional: Regrouting looks straightforward but requires skill to avoid damaging tiles during grout removal, achieve consistent joint depth, and properly mix and apply grout within its working time. Calgary's dry climate gives you less working time than in humid climates, making timing critical. If your shower has natural stone, glass tile, or if you discover water damage behind loose tiles during removal, professional expertise becomes essential to avoid costly mistakes.

DIY regrouting is manageable for handy homeowners with a standard ceramic or porcelain tile shower, plenty of time, and realistic expectations about the labour involved. Plan on a full weekend for a standard tub surround, working in small sections to ensure proper grout consistency and cleanup.

Need help finding a tile professional for regrouting? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced contractors who understand Calgary's unique climate challenges and use appropriate materials for long-lasting results.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Keystone Exteriors
- Wise Abatement
- Makki Abatement
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Greenstone landscaping solutions

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Can a Calgary tile contractor colour-match new grout to old grout when doing a partial repair?

Yes, experienced Calgary tile contractors can often achieve a very close colour match when repairing sections of existing grout, but perfect matching is challenging and depends on several factors including the age of the original grout, the brand, and how much it has changed colour over time.

The most successful grout colour matching happens when the contractor can identify the original grout brand and colour name. Major grout manufacturers like Mapei, Laticrete, and Custom Building Products maintain consistent colour formulations across years, so if your original installation used "Bone" or "Delorean Gray" from a specific manufacturer, a contractor can source the exact same product. However, grout colour shifts over time due to cleaning products, hard water deposits, and general wear, so even an exact product match may look slightly different against aged grout.

Calgary's extremely hard water creates unique challenges for grout colour matching. The high mineral content in Calgary's water supply causes white mineral deposits and gradual darkening of grout over time, especially in shower areas. A contractor doing a partial repair may need to clean the existing grout thoroughly with a mineral deposit remover before attempting to match the colour. Sometimes what appears to be "grey" grout is actually white grout that has been stained by years of hard water exposure.

For the best colour match results, an experienced tile contractor will bring several grout samples to your home and test them in natural light against your existing installation. They may also recommend cleaning a small test area of the existing grout first to see its true original colour. Some contractors carry grout colour charts with dozens of options and can blend custom colours for challenging matches, though this adds complexity and cost to the repair.

When perfect colour matching isn't achievable, skilled contractors often recommend strategic approaches. If the repair area is substantial (like an entire shower wall), they may suggest re-grouting the entire visible area with new grout rather than trying to patch-match. For smaller repairs, they might use a slightly contrasting grout colour intentionally to create a clean, deliberate look rather than an obvious failed match.

The timing of grout colour matching is also important in Calgary's dry climate. Fresh grout appears darker when wet and lightens as it cures over 24-72 hours. In Calgary's 15-20% winter humidity, grout dries faster than in humid climates, so the final colour appears sooner but contractors need to account for this accelerated curing when making colour decisions.

For the most successful grout repair, hire a tile contractor experienced with colour matching who can assess your specific situation, test clean a sample area, and provide realistic expectations about the final

appearance. Most professional tile setters in Calgary have dealt with grout colour matching challenges and can guide you toward the best approach for your particular installation.

Need help finding a tile contractor experienced with grout repair and colour matching? Calgary Tiling can match you with local professionals for free estimates on your project.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Eshine Cleaning Services
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- Turnbull masonry

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Q20

Why do tiles keep cracking in my Calgary basement bathroom even after being replaced multiple times?

Your basement tiles are likely cracking due to seasonal foundation movement from Calgary's frost heave cycles, combined with the lack of a proper crack isolation membrane between the concrete slab and tile.

This is the most common and expensive tile failure in Calgary homes, and it will continue happening until the underlying movement issue is addressed.

Calgary's frost depth exceeds 1.2 metres, which means basement foundation slabs experience seasonal movement as the ground freezes and thaws around them. Even well-built foundations shift slightly — often just 1-2mm — but that's enough to crack rigid tile and grout. When tiles are installed directly on concrete with standard thinset, they're essentially glued to a moving surface. Every winter-to-spring transition creates stress that eventually shows up as hairline cracks, loose tiles, or grout that crumbles out.

The solution is installing a crack isolation or uncoupling membrane like Schluter DITRA, Laticrete STRATA_MAT, or similar product over the concrete before any new tile goes down. These membranes have a grid or dimpled structure that allows the concrete slab to move independently from the tile above. The tile floats on the

membrane rather than being rigidly bonded to the moving concrete. This adds \$2-4 per square foot to the project cost, but it's the only reliable way to prevent recurring cracks in basement tile installations.

Calgary's extreme climate makes this problem worse than in more temperate regions. Our chinook winds can swing temperatures 20-30 degrees in hours, creating rapid expansion and contraction cycles. The combination of deep frost penetration, chinook-driven temperature cycling, and Calgary's clay-heavy soil conditions means basement slabs here move more than in cities with milder climates or different soil types.

Other factors that may be contributing include inadequate substrate preparation (the concrete wasn't properly cleaned or primed), wrong thinset type (standard all-purpose instead of flexible), or installation during Calgary's dry winter months when rapid moisture loss weakens the thinset bond. However, even perfect installation technique won't overcome foundation movement without a proper membrane.

For your next installation, insist that any tile contractor install an uncoupling membrane over the concrete. The concrete should be cleaned, any cracks filled with flexible caulk, and the membrane adhered with the manufacturer's specified thinset. Then new tile goes over the membrane with appropriate thinset for your tile type. This typically adds \$200-600 to a basement bathroom floor project but eliminates the recurring crack problem permanently.

Professional installation is highly recommended for this repair because the membrane must be properly adhered without voids or bubbles, seams must be sealed correctly, and the right thinset must be used both under and over the membrane. A failed membrane installation is worse than no membrane at all.

Need help finding a tile installer experienced with basement moisture and movement issues? Calgary Tiling can match you with contractors who understand Calgary's unique foundation conditions and the importance of proper crack isolation systems.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Radon Lab
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD
- Ardco Construction
- Calgary Garage Builders Ltd
- The Original Workshop

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How much does emergency tile repair cost after a leak in a Calgary home?

Emergency tile repair after water damage in Calgary typically costs \$15-40 per square foot for basic tile replacement, but total restoration including waterproofing, substrate repair, and mould remediation can range from \$3,000-15,000+ depending on the extent of damage and affected areas.

The cost depends heavily on how quickly the leak was discovered and stopped. A small leak caught within hours may only require replacing a few damaged tiles and re-grouting. However, water damage behind tile often means the substrate (drywall, cement board, or subfloor) has been compromised and needs replacement before new tile can be installed.

Immediate damage assessment is critical in Calgary's dry climate. While our low humidity helps materials dry faster than in humid climates, water that penetrates behind tile can still cause significant damage within 24-48 hours. The waterproof membrane behind shower tile (if properly installed) should contain most water, but if the leak originated from plumbing behind the wall or from a failed membrane, water can migrate into wall cavities and floor systems.

Common emergency tile repair scenarios and costs:

- **Surface tile replacement only** (substrate intact): \$15-40/sqft for tile, thinset, and grout
- **Tile plus substrate replacement:** \$25-60/sqft including new cement board or drywall
- **Full shower restoration** after major leak: \$4,000-12,000 including waterproofing membrane, tile, and plumbing access
- **Floor tile replacement** with subfloor damage: \$20-50/sqft including subflooring repair

Additional costs often required:

- **Mould remediation:** \$500-3,000 if water sat for more than 48 hours
- **Plumbing repair:** \$200-1,500 depending on the source of the leak
- **Drywall replacement** in adjacent rooms: \$3-8/sqft
- **Emergency water extraction:** \$300-800 for professional equipment

Calgary-specific considerations: If the leak occurred during winter, heated indoor air accelerates drying but can also cause rapid substrate movement as materials dry unevenly. This is why emergency repairs often require anti-crack membranes even in areas that wouldn't normally need them. Chinook temperature swings can also affect cure times for emergency thinset and grout repairs.

Insurance coverage varies significantly - most policies cover sudden plumbing failures but may exclude gradual leaks or maintenance-related issues. Document everything with photos before any demolition begins.

When to call professionals immediately: Any leak that has penetrated behind tile requires professional assessment. Water damage restoration specialists can determine the extent of moisture penetration using thermal imaging and moisture meters. Attempting DIY repairs without proper moisture assessment often leads to mould growth within wall cavities months later.

For emergency tile repair after water damage, Calgary Tiling can help you find restoration specialists and tile contractors experienced in water damage repairs through the Calgary Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Jk Stucco
- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- G.D.K Drywall LTD.
- WestAim Construction Ltd.
- Upper Cut Landscaping LTD

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How do I stop tiles from sounding hollow and loose in my Calgary kitchen without removing everything?

Hollow-sounding tiles usually indicate incomplete thinset coverage or bond failure underneath, and unfortunately there's no reliable way to fix this without removing and reinstalling the affected tiles. The hollow sound means there are voids between the tile and substrate where the thinset didn't make full contact, and these voids will eventually lead to cracked tiles from foot traffic and thermal stress.

Why Tiles Sound Hollow

In Calgary's extreme climate, hollow tiles are particularly problematic because our dramatic temperature swings from chinook winds put extra stress on poorly bonded tiles. When thinset coverage is incomplete (less than 80% contact), the unsupported areas of tile flex under load and will crack within months. This commonly happens when installers use too small a trowel notch, don't back-butter large tiles, or work over an uneven substrate without proper leveling.

The hollow sound occurs because you're essentially hearing the tile acting like a drum head over an air pocket. Even if the tile feels solid now, those voids concentrate stress and the tile will eventually crack along the edges of the bonded areas. In a kitchen where you're dropping pots, standing for long periods, and dealing with thermal cycling from appliances, hollow tiles are living on borrowed time.

Attempted Quick Fixes (Why They Don't Work)

Some homeowners try injecting grout or adhesive through the grout joints to fill voids, but this rarely works because the access is limited and you can't achieve the full coverage needed for a proper bond. Others attempt to drill small holes and inject epoxy, but this weakens the tile and still doesn't address the fundamental lack of substrate contact. These approaches might temporarily reduce the hollow sound but won't prevent eventual cracking.

The Professional Solution

The only reliable fix is removing the hollow tiles, cleaning the substrate and tile backs completely, and reinstalling with proper thinset coverage. An experienced Calgary tile setter will use a large-format thinset (even for standard tiles) applied with the correct notch trowel and back-butter each tile to ensure 95%+ coverage. They'll also check that your substrate is flat within 3mm over 3 meters — substrate irregularities are often the root cause of incomplete thinset contact.

When to Act Quickly

If you're hearing hollow sounds in a kitchen installed within the last year, contact your installer immediately. Most professional tile setters warranty their work for at least one year and will address bond failures at no charge. Document the hollow areas by tapping with a coin or tile spacer — solid tiles make a sharp "click" while hollow tiles make a dull "thunk."

Prevention for Future Projects

For your next tile project, ensure your installer uses large-format thinset (ANSI A118.15), back-butters tiles larger than 12x12, and checks for proper substrate flatness before starting. In Calgary's dry climate, they should also lightly mist the substrate before applying thinset to prevent premature moisture loss that can compromise the bond.

Need help finding a tile professional to assess and fix your hollow tiles? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced local installers who understand proper bonding techniques for Calgary's challenging climate conditions.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Royland Stucco
- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Canadian Closet
- Mike's Restoration Service
- Dealtwith.

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Q23

What's the best way to fix a leaking tile shower floor in a Calgary home without a full demolition?

A leaking tile shower floor typically requires at least partial demolition to access and repair the failed waterproofing, but the extent depends on where the leak originates and how the shower was originally constructed.

The most common cause of shower floor leaks in Calgary homes is **failed or missing waterproofing membrane** beneath the tile. Many older Calgary showers were built with cement board and grout as the only "waterproofing" —

but grout is not waterproof and cement board is porous. Water migrates through these materials and eventually finds its way to the subfloor, causing rot, mould, and structural damage.

Diagnosing the leak source is critical before any repair attempt. If water is seeping through grout joints or around the drain, the waterproof membrane (if one exists) has likely failed. If the leak appears at the shower threshold or outside corners, the issue may be inadequate waterproofing at transitions. In Calgary's dry climate, grout also shrinks more than in humid climates, creating hairline cracks that allow water penetration over time.

Limited repair options that avoid full demolition include re-grouting with epoxy grout (which is truly waterproof unlike cement grout) and applying a topical sealer like Aqua Mix Sealer's Choice Gold over the entire shower floor. However, these are temporary solutions at best. If the substrate beneath the tile is already compromised by water damage — which is likely if you're seeing leaks — these surface treatments won't address the root problem and the leak will return.

The most effective limited-demolition approach is removing only the shower floor tile (leaving walls intact if they're sound) and installing a proper waterproof membrane like Schluter Kerdi or Laticrete Hydro Ban over the shower pan. This requires careful removal of floor tile, assessment of the pan condition, membrane installation with proper integration to the drain assembly, and new tile installation. In Calgary, expect \$2,500-\$4,500 for this approach in a standard shower, depending on tile choice and substrate condition.

Calgary-specific considerations make shower leaks particularly problematic. Our extreme indoor dryness (15-20% humidity in winter) followed by humid summers creates seasonal movement in wood-framed floors. If water has been leaking for months or years, the subfloor may have suffered freeze-thaw damage in unheated areas or significant rot that requires structural repair before any waterproofing work can begin.

When full demolition becomes necessary: If the leak has caused subfloor rot, mould behind walls, or damage to joists, partial repairs won't be sufficient. Signs include soft or spongy areas around the shower, musty odours, or visible water damage on the ceiling below. In these cases, full demolition allows proper assessment and repair of structural damage — and ensures the new shower is built to current waterproofing standards with a continuous membrane system.

Professional assessment is essential for any shower leak repair. An experienced tile contractor can determine whether the existing pan is salvageable, assess the extent of water damage, and recommend the most cost-effective repair approach. Attempting DIY repairs on a leaking shower often leads to recurring problems and more expensive fixes down the road.

Timing considerations: If you're planning to sell within 2-3 years, a proper partial repair may be sufficient. If this is your long-term home, investing in full demolition and proper waterproofing will prevent future problems and protect your Calgary home's structural integrity through many more chinook cycles and seasonal moisture changes.

Need help finding a tile contractor experienced with shower leak repairs? Calgary Tiling can match you with professionals who understand Calgary's unique climate challenges and waterproofing requirements.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Radon Lab
- True North Overhead Doors
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc
- BOND CONTRACTING & CONSTRUCTION INC
- Bracha Concrete & Coatings Inc.

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Q24

What's the best epoxy grout for repairing heavily stained grout joints in a Calgary commercial kitchen?

For heavily stained grout joints in a commercial Calgary kitchen, Laticrete SpectraLOCK PRO Premium or Mapei Kerapoxy CQ are the top choices. Both are 100% solids epoxy grouts that provide chemical resistance, stain immunity, and the durability required for commercial food service environments.

Laticrete SpectraLOCK PRO Premium is the gold standard for commercial kitchen applications. This three-component epoxy grout (resin, hardener, and aggregate) cures to a non-porous surface that resists grease, acids, and commercial cleaning chemicals. It's available in 40+ colours and can be colour-matched to hide existing staining. The working time is approximately 45 minutes at room temperature, which gives installers adequate time for cleanup before the epoxy sets. In Calgary's dry climate, the extended working time is particularly valuable since standard grouts cure too quickly in low humidity.

Mapei Kerapoxy CQ offers similar performance with enhanced crack resistance due to its polymer-modified formula. It's specifically designed for commercial applications and provides excellent chemical resistance against the oils, acids, and alkaline cleaners common in commercial kitchens. The "CQ" designation indicates it meets strict commercial quality standards for food service environments.

Calgary-specific considerations make epoxy grout particularly important in commercial kitchens here. The extreme temperature swings from chinook winds create substrate movement that can crack standard cement-based grouts, allowing moisture and bacteria penetration. Calgary's hard water also contains minerals that can discolour standard grout over time, while epoxy grout remains unaffected by mineral deposits.

Installation requirements for epoxy grout are more demanding than standard grout. The material must be mixed precisely according to manufacturer ratios, applied quickly due to limited working time, and cleaned thoroughly before curing begins. Epoxy residue that hardens on tile surfaces requires aggressive mechanical removal. Most commercial kitchen operators hire professional tile contractors for epoxy grout installation because mistakes are costly and difficult to correct.

Cost considerations run \$8-15 per square foot for professional epoxy grout installation in Calgary, compared to \$3-6 for standard grout repair. However, epoxy grout typically lasts 15-20 years in commercial applications versus 3-5 years for cement-based grout, making it cost-effective long-term. The reduced maintenance and elimination of recurring staining issues justify the higher upfront investment.

For existing stained grout removal, mechanical grinding or chemical strippers may be required before installing new epoxy grout. Professional contractors use oscillating tools with grout removal attachments to avoid damaging surrounding tile. In commercial kitchens, work is typically scheduled during off-hours to minimize disruption to food service operations.

This is professional-only work due to the technical mixing requirements, limited working time, and specialized cleanup procedures. Commercial kitchen environments also require coordination with health inspectors and adherence to food safety protocols during installation.

Need help finding a commercial tile contractor experienced with epoxy grout? Calgary Tiling can match you with professionals who specialize in commercial kitchen applications through the Calgary Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Makki Abatement
- Ardco Construction
- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Radon Lab
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc

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How much does it cost to repair cracked grout in a Calgary bathroom floor?

Grout repair on a Calgary bathroom floor typically costs \$200-\$600 for a standard bathroom, depending on whether you need spot repairs or full re-grouting. For minor crack repairs covering 10-20% of the grout lines, expect \$200-\$350. Full re-grouting of a 50-square-foot bathroom floor runs \$400-\$600 including labour and materials.

Spot grout repair involves removing the damaged grout with a manual grout rake or oscillating tool, cleaning out debris, and applying fresh grout to match the existing colour. This works well when cracks are isolated to high-stress areas like doorway transitions or around the toilet base. Professional contractors charge \$3-\$6 per linear foot for spot repairs, making it cost-effective for small areas.

Full re-grouting becomes necessary when cracks are widespread — often a sign that the original grout was mixed incorrectly, applied in Calgary's extreme winter dryness without proper curing protection, or the subfloor has movement issues. Removing all existing grout and re-grouting the entire floor costs \$8-\$12 per square foot including materials. For a typical 50-square-foot bathroom floor, that's \$400-\$600 total.

Calgary's climate significantly affects grout longevity and repair success. Indoor humidity dropping to 15-20% during winter causes grout to cure too quickly, creating weak, crumbly joints that crack within months. Professional grout repair in Calgary requires misting the fresh grout and covering it with plastic sheeting for 72 hours to slow the cure rate. DIY repairs that skip this step often fail within one heating season.

Material costs are relatively modest — a 25-pound bag of quality sanded grout costs \$15-\$25 and covers 100-200 square feet depending on tile size and joint width. The labour is where costs add up, as proper grout removal is time-intensive and requires care not to chip tile edges. Epoxy grout, which resists Calgary's hard water staining better than cement-based grout, costs \$40-\$60 per bag but may be worth the upgrade in high-use bathrooms.

Consider the underlying cause before investing in grout repair. If cracks keep returning in the same locations, you likely have subfloor deflection or movement that needs addressing first. Calgary basement floors over concrete slabs are particularly prone to seasonal movement from frost heave. Installing an anti-crack membrane like Schluter DITRA before re-tiling may be necessary for a permanent solution, adding \$2-\$4 per square foot but preventing future cracking.

DIY grout repair is feasible for handy homeowners if the damage is limited and the subfloor is stable. A grout rake, vacuum, and matching grout can handle small repairs for under \$50 in materials. However, colour-matching existing grout can be tricky, and improper mixing or application often looks worse than the original cracks.

Need help finding a tile contractor for grout repair? Calgary Tiling can match you with local professionals who understand Calgary's unique climate challenges and can assess whether spot repairs or full re-grouting is the right solution for your bathroom floor.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Makki Abatement
- Mayken Hazmat Solutions LTD
- True North Overhead Doors
- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc
- Calgary Custom Concepts

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Q26

How do I find matching replacement tile for a discontinued line when doing repairs in my Calgary home?

Finding replacement tile for a discontinued line requires detective work, but there are several reliable strategies that work well in the Calgary market. Most tile manufacturers discontinue lines every 3-5 years, so this is one of the most common challenges homeowners face when doing repairs.

Start with the manufacturer and model information. Check the back of a loose tile or look for any remaining boxes in your basement or garage — the manufacturer name, series name, and model number are your best leads. Take a sample tile to local Calgary tile retailers like Centura, The Tile Shop, or Olympia Tile. Even if they don't stock that exact line anymore, experienced staff often know which current products are close matches or can check their discontinued inventory in the warehouse.

Calgary's tile distributors sometimes hold discontinued stock longer than retail stores. Commercial suppliers like Daltile, Crossville, or local distributors may have remaining pallets of discontinued lines in their warehouses. Call with your tile information — they can search their system for remaining inventory across their network. This approach works particularly well for builder-grade tiles that were used in multiple developments across Calgary.

Consider the "close enough" approach for hidden areas. If you're repairing tile behind a toilet, under a vanity, or in a closet, a close color and size match may be acceptable even if the pattern or finish doesn't perfectly match. Take a sample tile to multiple retailers and compare it under different lighting conditions — Calgary's intense sunlight can make color differences more or less noticeable depending on the room's exposure.

Online tile liquidators and surplus dealers often carry discontinued lines. Search for your specific tile model online, but be cautious about shipping costs and color variation between production runs. Tile color can vary significantly between batches, so even "matching" tile from a different production run may not blend seamlessly with your existing installation.

For natural stone repairs, work with a stone specialist. Natural stone varies significantly even within the same quarry and production period. A stone specialist in Calgary can help match the mineral composition, finish, and color variation rather than trying to find the exact same product line. Sometimes a different stone from the same quarry or region provides a better visual match than the "same" discontinued product from a different production batch.

Plan for partial room replacement if exact matches aren't available. In highly visible areas like a kitchen backsplash or main bathroom floor, installing obviously mismatched replacement tiles often looks worse than replacing an entire section with new tile. Consider replacing from one natural break point (like a doorway or corner) to another with a complementary new tile that coordinates with your existing installation.

Calgary's extreme climate affects tile differently over time, so even "matching" new tile may look different than existing tile that has been exposed to chinook temperature swings, UV fading, or Calgary's hard water mineral deposits. In bathrooms especially, existing tile may have subtle color changes from soap residue and mineral buildup that make new tile appear brighter or different even when it's technically the same product.

Save extra tiles from any new installation for future repairs. Store them in a dry basement or garage area with the manufacturer information and installation date clearly marked. Calgary's temperature swings can cause cardboard boxes to deteriorate, so consider storing loose tiles in plastic bins with the product information taped inside.

Need help finding a tile installer for repairs or partial replacement? Calgary Tiling can match you with local professionals who have experience working with discontinued lines and color-matching challenges.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Amar Homes Inc

- Jk Stucco
- Greenstone landscaping solutions
- Mike's Restoration Service
- Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services

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Q27

Can grout haze be removed from porcelain tile in a Calgary home after the grout has fully cured?

Yes, grout haze can be removed from porcelain tile even after full curing, but it requires more aggressive methods than cleaning fresh haze. Porcelain's dense, non-porous surface makes it the most forgiving tile type for haze removal, even when the grout has hardened completely.

Grout haze removal on cured grout requires an acidic cleaner specifically designed for this purpose. Products like Aqua Mix Grout Haze Clean-Up, Custom Building Products Sulfamic Acid Cleaner, or TileLab Grout Haze Remover contain mild acids that dissolve the cement-based haze without damaging porcelain. These cleaners work by chemically breaking down the dried grout particles that create the cloudy film on the tile surface.

Calgary's extremely dry winter climate (15-20% indoor humidity) actually makes grout haze more stubborn because the cement particles cure harder and bond more tenaciously to the tile surface. The low humidity causes grout to cure faster than in more humid climates, giving installers less working time to clean excess grout before it hardens. This is why many Calgary tile setters work in smaller sections and clean more frequently during installation.

The removal process involves applying the acidic cleaner according to manufacturer directions, allowing it to dwell for the specified time (usually 5-15 minutes), then scrubbing with a non-abrasive pad and rinsing thoroughly. Multiple applications may be needed for heavy haze buildup. Always test the cleaner in an inconspicuous area first, even though porcelain is acid-resistant. Ensure adequate ventilation and wear gloves and eye protection when using acidic cleaners.

For textured or matte-finish porcelain, haze removal can be more challenging because the surface texture provides more area for haze particles to bond. A soft-bristled brush may be needed in addition to scrubbing pads to work the cleaner into the texture. Polished porcelain is the easiest to clean because the smooth surface releases haze readily.

Prevention is always better than removal. Professional tile setters in Calgary clean grout residue from tile faces every 15-20 minutes during installation using a damp sponge with frequent water changes. In Calgary's dry climate, they often mist the tile surface lightly before final cleaning to prevent the grout from curing too quickly on the tile face.

When to call a professional: If the haze covers a large area, if you're uncomfortable working with acidic cleaners, or if initial attempts don't produce satisfactory results, a professional tile cleaner has access to stronger products and specialized equipment. The cost of professional haze removal (\$2-4 per square foot) is often worthwhile compared to the time and effort required for DIY removal on large areas.

Need help finding a tile professional for cleaning or future projects? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced installers who understand Calgary's unique climate challenges.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Keystone Exteriors
- Quality count construction Ltd.
- Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing
- Royland Stucco
- Calgary Custom Concepts

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Is it possible to repair a chipped porcelain tile in my Calgary bathroom without replacing the whole piece?

Yes, minor chips in porcelain tile can often be repaired without full replacement, though the visibility and durability of the repair depends on the chip size, location, and your tile's finish. For small chips (under 5mm), a porcelain repair kit or ceramic touch-up pen can provide a nearly invisible fix, especially on textured or darker tiles.

Porcelain repair kits are your best option for DIY chip repair. These kits contain a two-part epoxy filler that you mix to match your tile colour, plus a clear topcoat that mimics the tile's glaze. The process involves cleaning the chip thoroughly, filling it with the mixed compound, smoothing it flush with the tile surface, and applying the protective topcoat once cured. Quality kits from brands like Konig or Picobello run \$25-40 and can handle multiple small repairs. The key is colour matching — bring a tile sample or clear photo to a tile shop to find the closest match.

For larger chips or edge damage, the repair becomes more challenging and visible. Chips larger than 10mm or those that go through the tile body to expose the unglazed bisque underneath are difficult to repair invisibly. Edge chips on floor tiles are particularly problematic because they're subject to foot traffic stress that can cause the repair to fail over time. In Calgary's dry winter climate, epoxy repairs cure harder and more brittle than in humid environments, making them more prone to re-chipping if the repair area experiences impact.

Location matters significantly for repair success. A small chip on a bathroom wall tile in an inconspicuous corner can be repaired quite successfully. However, chips on floor tiles in high-traffic areas, or on the leading edge of a shower threshold where water flows, are better candidates for full tile replacement. Calgary's hard water can also stain repair compounds over time if they're in areas that stay wet frequently.

The repair process requires patience and steady hands. Clean the chip with rubbing alcohol, mix the repair compound according to instructions, and apply it slightly proud of the tile surface. Once fully cured (usually 24 hours), sand it flush with fine-grit sandpaper and apply the topcoat. In Calgary's dry indoor air, work quickly as the compound can skin over faster than in humid climates.

Professional tile repair is worth considering for valuable tiles or highly visible locations. Experienced tile setters have access to better colour-matching systems and can often achieve nearly invisible repairs on premium porcelain. For a single tile repair, expect to pay \$150-300, which may be worthwhile if the alternative is replacing expensive designer tile or dealing with the disruption of removing tile in a finished bathroom.

When replacement is the better choice: If the chip is larger than a dime, on a high-traffic floor area, or if your tile has a complex pattern or metallic finish that's impossible to match with repair compounds. Also, if the tile is cracked

rather than just chipped, replacement is necessary as cracks will continue to propagate regardless of surface repairs.

Need help finding a tile professional for repair or replacement? Calgary Tiling can match you with experienced local contractors who handle both small repairs and full bathroom retiling projects.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Calgary Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Royland Stucco
- Premium Built Structures
- Keystone Exteriors
- Canadian Closet
- UR COWRY CABINETS

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