

Shower Pan on a Slab

Q. While I was removing the old tile from a concrete shower pan in a slab foundation, a portion of the 1x5-inch raised concrete lip separated from the slab below. It appears that the lip was formed and placed on top of the slab, and there is nothing tying the two together (see illustration, below). How should I repair this? Should I remove the complete lip and repour the whole thing, or repair just that section? How can I bond the new concrete to the old? Also, while making the repairs, should I hot-mop the pan?

A. Michael Byrne responds: It may be possible to repair the existing curb, but you will get better results by pouring a new reinforced curb that is bonded to the old concrete with a

concrete bonding agent. You will have to ensure that there is no wax, oil, grease, or soap scum on the face of the concrete slab that could ruin or reduce the bond. After that, I recommend that you install a sloped shower pan to contain the shower water and prevent harmful organisms from becoming resident in the surrounding walls and floor.

As for hot-mopping the pan: In many areas, local building codes still allow unprotected concrete to be used as a base for a ceramic tile shower stall, even though the practice is not sanitary, is not approved by the UBC, and is not sanctioned by the tile industry. I haven't recommended hot-mopped shower pans since 1974, when health

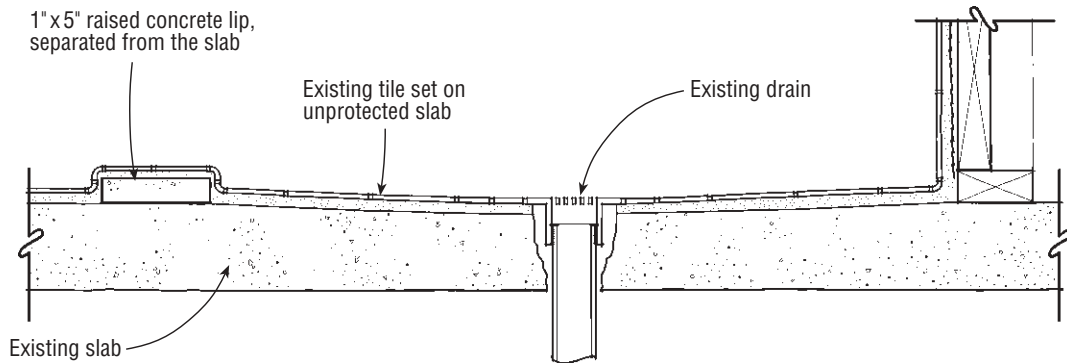
and safety concerns convinced me to switch to Chloraloy 240, a CPE pan liner (made by the Noble Company, www.noblecompany.com). You could also check to see if your local building department approves of using a surface-applied membrane system. The Schlüter Company (www.schluter.com) makes a low-profile drain and membrane system that might work for you.

Contributing editor **Michael Byrne** is an expert tilesetter and consultant in Los Olivos, Calif., as well as author of many JLC articles and the book *Setting Tile*.

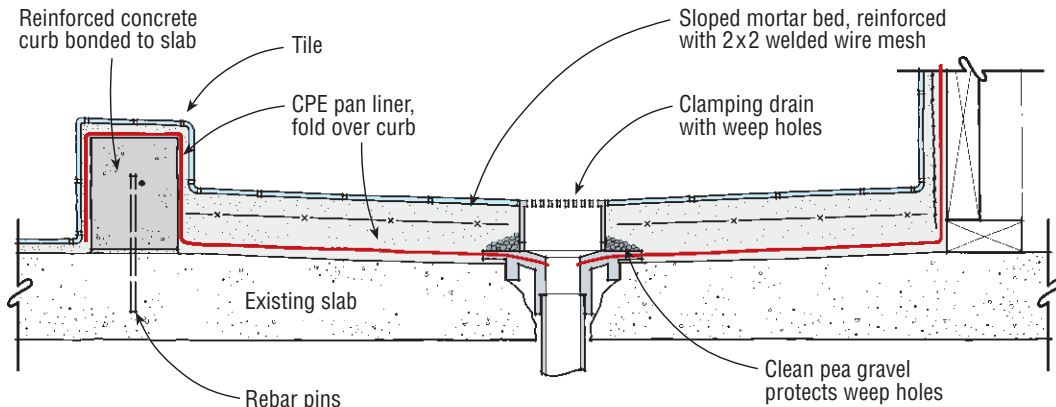
Waterproofing ICFs

Q. Is there a spray-on waterproofing that's compatible with ICF foundations — that won't "melt" the polystyrene?

Existing Shower Pan



Recommended Method



A. *Bruce Richgels responds:* When waterproofing ICFs, we use a spray-on polymer-modified membrane — either Tremco’s Tuff-N-Dri or GMX’s Ultra-Shield. The GMX product comes with a 20-year warranty, even when applied to ICFs. The key thing with ICFs is to use a water-based formulation rather than a solvent-based one, which would destroy the polystyrene.

Even though these coatings have the ability to withstand hydrostatic pressure, we always install a vertically stranded drainage board to protect the membrane during backfill. With ICFs, the R-value of the drainage board is not important, so the minimum thickness (typically 3/4 inch) can be used. As with any foundation drainage method, a perimeter drain tile in a bed of clean stone is also needed; usually, the coating manu-

facturer’s warranty requires it.

Bruce Richgels is an account representative for Waterproofing Inc., a Minneapolis-based company specializing in foundation waterproofing.

Durability of Cedars

Q. *I’m pricing cedar for a replacement deck that was formerly built with treated yellow pine. A local supplier is telling me his “northern white” cedar will last far longer than “Alaskan” cedar, which I can purchase for about half the price. Is there really such a dramatic difference?*

A. *Paul Fiset* responds: According to all my reference materials and based on my own experience, Alaskan, northern, Atlantic, and Port-Orford cedar are similar in durability. Keep in mind that only the heartwood is resistant to decay. Sapwood is not at all

reliably durable. One difference with Alaskan yellow is that the heartwood color — yellow — makes it easier to distinguish the heartwood from the sapwood, which is pale yellow. With the other cedars, there is not a great difference between sapwood and heartwood colors, so it can be more difficult to tell if you have in fact purchased durable heartwood or non-durable sapwood.

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Got a question?

Send it to Q&A, JLC, 186 Allen Brook Ln., Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com.

