



You and the Customer

Taking the time to go over the characteristics of natural stone, the process of measuring, fabrication, and installation is important. Doing so will help ensure a level of higher satisfaction for most customers.

After educating your customer on the characteristics of natural stone, and after they have decided to go ahead with the purchase, you will now need to guide them through the measuring and installation process. There are a few things that apply to both.

- Their Project Manager from Great Lakes Granite & Marble will call the customer in advance and schedule a 4-hour window for their measure or install.
- The measure/install team will call in the morning on the day of service to confirm the service date and time, and will call 30 minutes prior to arrival to update the customer on their ETA.
- The install and measure teams will do their best to clean-up and remove debris. However, the customer should be made aware that during the installation process there may be some dust created.
- The installers will run shop vacuums to contain as much of this dust as possible. This is a construction process and the customer should be made aware of this.
- The customer or a representative of the customer **MUST** be on site the entire time whenever a measure/install team is at their residence. This person must also have the authority to make work

measure/install team is at their residence. This person must also have the authority to make work order changes and the authority to sign all required paperwork.

Measuring



The following are items to go over with the customer:

- There is a 2-3 week turnaround time from measure to install.
- All aspects of the job will be reviewed during the measure with the customer.
- Inquire as to whether or not the customer wants backsplash and if so what height – 4” is standard.
- All cabinets must be installed and level to within 1/8 of an inch across a 10 foot span.
- All filler panels, side panels, and moldings must be installed.

- All appliances adjacent to countertops must be in place so that the measure man can do the most precise work.
- Sink, faucet, cook top, hot-water tap, and anything else that penetrates the granite must be in the home at the time of the measure so that:

The measure man can evaluate the items to be sure they will fit in the space available and interface with each other properly. The measure man may bring these appliances back to the shop so they can receive the proper cut outs. We can measure without these items, but we can not begin production without them. If the customer does not have them at the time of measure, they will need to bring them to the shop before fabrication can begin.

All appliances will be returned to the customer's home on the day the granite is installed.

- If the stove is a slide-in or built-in (professional cook top) then it must be in place at time of measure.
- If the microwave is a built in and the job calls for full-height splashes, the microwave must be in place at time of measure.
- All existing backsplashes must be removed before measure.
- All countertops must be removed before measure.
- Once the measure is complete, the customer has the option (and we suggest that they do) come to our warehouse and view their chosen material and actually pick out their slab.

Installation

- All existing tops must be removed prior to the installers' arrival.

If customer is requesting a tear out to be performed by us, all plumbing must be shut off and disconnected from any sinks that are being torn out. This includes removal of the garbage disposal from the sink if it is being re-used.

All electrical must be cut-off and removed from cook tops that the installer is removing.

- All cabinets must be flat and level to within an 1/8 of an inch over a 10-foot span. All walkways must be cleared to give the installers a safe path to the work area in which to carry the extremely heavy granite pieces. During the winter months, all outside approaches should be free of snow and ice for a safe passage for the installers.
- Children and pets should be kept away from the work area.
- There will be odors from epoxy, silicone and caulk. The installers will open windows when possible for ventilation.
- Once installed, the stone should not be touched for 24 hours. This allows the adhesives and epoxies to fully cure and dry.
- The same goes for the plumbing. No plumbing should be done for 24 hours.

FAQ

•If all of this information seems overwhelming right now, don't worry. The questions you'll get from customers will be fairly consistent, and this pattern will solidify your knowledge

1. What do I need to consider when buy marble or granite?

Marble and granite are natural products with lots of natural variation. They are relatively durable materials. Granite, more so than marble, is highly scratch, stain, and chip resistant.

2. Can I pick out my own stone?

Absolutely! Encourage all customers to visit the warehouse which will be supplying their granite to look at material and pick out their slab. Natural stone varies from inch to inch let alone slab to slab. The importance of customers picking out their own stone cannot be emphasized enough.

3. Should I use marble or granite for my kitchen countertop?

Granite is best for kitchens as it is more durable for this high-traffic area. Marble is more appropriate for decorative, low traffic areas such as fireplaces and bar tops

4. My little sample of granite has pits; will I have these in my kitchen counters?

Probably, but remember, granite is a naturally varying stone so some granites have more pitting than others. The best way to verify what your material will look like is to visit the warehouse that will be supplying the stone and examine it closely. If the customer is not happy with these natural occurring blemishes, they should be directed to a different color of stone or a different material all together

5. Will my granite look like the sample in this website?

Maybe, maybe not. Photos do not capture the entirety of the material and the lighting in a persons home will also change the colors and hues of some stone. The photos are only meant to give a ballpark reference.

6. Do I have to buy the whole slab?

You should check with your vendor on its' policy. Great Lakes Granite and Marble's policy is to only make the customer pay for what they use of the material unless it is a special order material.

7. Will I be able to see the seam?

Yes, there is no such thing as an 'invisible' seam in natural stone countertops.

8. How are seams made?

Seams are made using a resin-based polyester mixed with a peroxide-based hardener and a pigment matching the stone. This mixture is applied like butter to the granite, the pieces are pulled tightly together, and the surface cleaned smooth. The seam is then left to dry for 24 hours.

9. Can natural stone chip?

Yes, natural stone can chip - although it is very difficult to chip granite. If a chip occurs, contact the local vendor and inquire about a repair. Most repairs require a skilled, experienced artisan and cannot be done simply by watching *Bob Villa's This Old House*.

10. Can natural stone scratch?

It is quite difficult to scratch granite as it is one of the hardest natural materials in existence, but it does happen. If it does scratch, contact your vendor to inquire about a repair. Marble being naturally softer is thus easier to scratch with granite. Some minor scratching should be expected and considered part of the normal wear-and-tear of marble. It is considered "aging patina" and can be restored to new at any time.

11. Can natural stone crack?

Yes, due to its incredible density and low tensile strength, natural stone, is susceptible to cracking if not properly supported. A quality stone vendor takes steps to minimize cracking, but even so it does happen every once in a while. If a crack occurs contact your local stone vendor for repair.

The most common reasons for cracking after **installation** are:

- The cabinets were not structurally sound
- The stone was not properly installed
- The house settled, shifting the support of the cabinets

12. Can granite burn?

•You can't burn granite with ordinary use. It's okay to set hot pots and pans on the surface.

13. Can granite stain?

Yes. It is possible, but if proper precautions are followed staining can be avoided. Quickly clean up spills of any greasy, oily, fatty, or dark substances. Furthermore, clean up any cooking and eating areas after use. If you follow these normal cleaning habits, the chances of

- incurring a stain will be quite low if eve.

14. Can granite fissure?

Yes. Fissures occur naturally in stone and are a part of the product. A fissure is defined as a crack, break, or fracture in the rock which may contain mineral-bearing material. Most fissures are hardly noticeable and are difficult to feel with your fingers. The difference between a fissure and a crack is that a fissure was present when the stone hardened and formed; a crack occurs as a result of insufficient support of a quarried piece of stone. Fissures are yet another reason the customer should examine and pick out their specific piece of stone to ensure that they are comfortable with their material selection and natural fissures.

Whew!

It is our hope at Great Lakes Granite & Marble that this tutorial has better equipped you to educate customers. An educated customer is more often a satisfied customer.. Thank you

very much for taking the time and effort to complete this tutorial. We greatly appreciate your efforts to deliver these products with as much quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction as possible. Now is your time to start showing off all of the knowledge you have gained on natural stone.

Now is your time to start showing off all of the incredible knowledge you have gained on natural stone. And, this is actually the most important part of interacting with current or potential customers to educate them as thoroughly and honestly as possible. If you do this, customers will be well informed in order to make the best possible purchasing decision. Be sure of one thing, natural stone is not for everybody so glossing over or hiding certain facts about its properties will only earn you trouble. For instance, many people don't like the seams that go along with natural stone. Unfortunately, there is only so much that can be done about seams in natural stone. The materials natural properties and certain safety precautions warrant that sometimes a job must have seams. In these cases, stone cannot be melted, smashed, or fused together so a 16th of inch seam is the standard. Any effort you make to hide this fact will most likely result in customer dissatisfaction.

The good news is that natural stone is a terrific and terrifically interesting product. If you can impart your knowledge and enthusiasm for this material, most people will be naturally drawn to it.

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