

Bath Enclosures

Caulking Tips

- Before applying any sealant to a bath enclosure, it is important to fully understand some basic concepts about the nature of sealants and how they perform when applied.
- Any sealant, whether it's latex caulk or silicone, acts as a barrier when applied in a wet environment such as a bath enclosure. The objective is to keep water from extending beyond the barrier of sealant that the installer applies. For this reason, regardless of the type of door being installed, the easiest, most practical and most functional seal is obtained by applying sealant along the entire outer perimeter of the bath enclosure. In layman's terms, to keep water to the wet side, seal the dry side.
- Although an installer may elect to seal the total interior perimeter of the enclosure as well, it is important to note that an exterior as well as an interior barrier can create a reservoir of water. If water can find a way to get beyond the interior layer of sealant it most certainly will not run back into the shower. The interior sealant precludes this possibility. Thus, the installer has inadvertently created a potential service call if a reservoir is formed and fills faster than it can drain. What's worse, the eventual leak is not the source of the problem, but merely the result. You can reapply sealant at the outer leak point repeatedly, but the true source of the problem is not being addressed.
- This is not to say that sealant should never be applied to certain interior components. It's just necessary to ensure that water can weep back into the shower and down the drain. For instance, in the majority of installations on tile, the surface of the tile has a great deal of texture. When a wall jamb is attached to such a surface, there are often small air gaps between the metal and the wall. Sealant can be applied here, but its function is solely aesthetic.

Specific Tips for Bypass Units

- For bypass units, it is advisable to seal the full exterior perimeter. The joints where the wall jambs and the bottom tracks meet can be sealed to preclude water from collecting underneath the bottom track. This can be accomplished after installation with frameless units, but framed units utilizing our free-flow or “double L” sills need to have sealant applied to the end of the track prior to installation. It is most difficult to attempt this after the unit has been installed. At that point, the only way to ensure that the area is sealed is to pump a great deal of sealant into the corner, the results of which can be objectionable to the homeowner.

Specific Tips for Stand Alone Swing Doors

- The shallow underside of our low-profile thresholds provide excellent areas for sealant application. Seal between the drip anchor and the bottom rail on the framed doors to preclude water from leaking down behind the sweep when the door is open.
- Frameless doors utilizing tape applied drip rails need to be sealed once the drip rail is attached to the bottom of the glass. A bead of sealant against the glass at the top edge of this drip rail will ensure that a barrier of protection is given to the tape, as certain cleaners have the possibility of eroding the tape’s adhesive properties.

Specific Tips for CrystalLine Custom Hinge Units

- Perhaps the most functional interior sealant is that applied when “wet glazing” between the interior sides of buttress glass panels and their respective thresholds. Instead of glazing vinyl, applying a bead of sealant between the glass and the threshold eliminates the possibility of water entering the buttress threshold. Deflecting water in this manner not only makes a tight seal, but also precludes the necessity of unsightly weep holes in the buttress threshold. When glazing vinyl is used horizontally, every application requires weep holes on the interior side of the threshold. Weep holes in a door threshold that are a mere 5 inches above the shower pan are hardly noticeable. Buttress threshold weep holes can approach 36 inches from the shower pan and prove to be aesthetically objectionable to the homeowner.

- Should an installer decide to seal down the interior walls, it is advisable to stop the sealant bead at the top of the door threshold. This allows any water that might seep into the door threshold to drain to a wall and back into the shower. If the installer seals all the way to the curb, then this water has to build up to the first possible weep hole it can reach.
- In some cases, it might prove worthwhile to seal the joint where the buttress threshold nests inside the corresponding vertical member. If this is done, make sure that it is executed only on the exterior side of the enclosure.