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MIA Statement of Position On Sealing Natural Stone Countertops

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Most granite countertops do not need to be sealed. Before 1995 there were very few quality penetrating sealers on the market and there were very few cases of staining. Both prior to and after the availability of penetrating sealers, no cases of food poisoning, radon, or food preparation issues associated with treated or untreated granites have been reported. If a homeowner cleans their countertops after each meal, they will rarely, if ever, have staining or cleanability issues with granite. This being said, many granite countertops receive additional benefit from being sealed. That benefit is the further reduction of moisture migration into an already moisture resistant surface.

Should natural stone counters be sealed? In many cases it makes sense to seal marble and granite countertops with a quality sealer. The product should have a life expectancy of ten to fifteen years and be of an oliophobic (resistant to water and oil based stains) nature. Once properly sealed, the stone will be more resistant against everyday dirt and spills.

In today's natural stone industry, many species of granite receive a resin treatment at the factory where the blocks of granite are cut into slabs and then polished. The treatment is used to fill micro-fissures, indentations and other minor characteristics that are found in many natural stones. The reason for the resin treatment is to address what most consumers consider as imperfections, but in reality are "birth marks". The consuming public gravitates to perfection, defined as no "birth marks," and so the marble and granite industry tries to fulfill the desire. Both resined as well as unresined slabs will outlast most of our lifetimes. Granite should, and in most cases will, be the last countertop surface a person will buy, providing a strong return on investment. The bottom line: Sealing resin treated countertops may increase the resistance of the already resistant nature of stone (adopted 11/8/06).

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