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### **Fabricators Get Up to Speed on Porcelain and Sintered Materials with ISFA's Mineral Surfaces Training Program**

*"It was really nice to connect with other fabricators to learn more about the industry and see how others are handling the challenges we all face. I look forward to participating in future activities and training sessions."*

*—Jeff Preston, Top Advantage Surfaces*

**Ingomar, Pa. – September 21, 2023** – [The International Surface Fabricators Association \(ISFA\)](#) held a Mineral Surfaces training event September 13-14 in Massillon, Ohio. Hosted by [Tower Industries](#) and sponsored by Panoramic Porcelain by [Daltile](#), the course is designed to arm fabricators with the knowledge and skills they need to embrace these materials to meet growing customer demand.

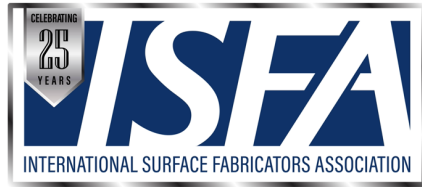
The comprehensive, two-day training was held at [Tower Countertops](#), a division of Tower Industries. More than 30 fabricators were in attendance, including shop owners, operators and managers. The event started with a welcome to new members, covering ISFA membership benefits, programs and more.

Raul Amat, the national manager of Panoramic Porcelain Surfaces for Daltile North America, presented a comprehensive overview of mineral surface materials, including porcelain, sintered stone and ultra-compact surfaces. The presentation was sent to attendees after the training so they could share it with staff at their shops.

"The overview explained how the materials are made and provided a foundation of understanding that I wasn't aware of," said Joey Carrabetta, Bluemar Marble. "Learning how these materials differ from others was helpful, and how to handle porcelain slabs was very useful. I gained a lot, including new tools and processes I will need in my shop."

Rey Matos, the technical support and fabrication specialist for Daltile North America, conducted the training. In the shop, attendees learned about all facets of the fabrication process, including material handling and inspection, cutting techniques (feed rate, blade recommendations, tension release cuts), sink cutouts, miters, overhangs, seaming, polishing and finishing, installation, and chip and scratch repair techniques. Attendees learned ways to minimize the risk of cracking and chipping. The trainer recommended larger pads, for example, when offloading these materials from the delivery trucks, and they identified ideal locations for A-frame placement and other storage and handling best practices.

Then fabricators worked in teams to glue up mitered edges, complete sink cutouts, bore holes for faucets and polish edges, including a waterjet demonstration. The training also covered vertical applications, including handling and installation. At the end of day two, the instructors covered chip repair techniques and other troubleshooting topics.



“This was my first training session with ISFA,” said Brian Yi, Zean Century Stone Ltd. “It was a great experience overall. ISFA is a warm and welcoming group, and the training covered most of the areas I expected. The trainers are very knowledgeable professionals.”

In addition, this training event included a moderated shop safety discussion with safety experts from [Sheakley](#), a family-owned firm dedicated to practical and innovative risk management and safety solutions, and Kerry Klodt, general manager of Tower Industries, gave a presentation about Entrepreneurial Operating System, which has been successfully implemented at Tower for more than five years.

Participants who completed the Mineral Surfaces Training with a satisfactory result received a certificate recognizing that they are an ISFA Certified Professional and session materials including a fabrication guide, tool recommendations and other resources.

“Thank you, ISFA, for an incredibly productive and fun event,” added Mark Clayborne, Atlantic Custom Granite & Marble. “I would definitely recommend the program to others.”

Aside from the Mineral Surfaces Training program, ISFA offers Solid Surface Fabrication Training events throughout the year. The next Solid Surface Training session will be held October 24-25 in Chicago. In addition, ISFA offers a Solid Surface Training option that is conducted onsite at the registrant’s shop. This is ideal for fabrication shops, facility management and maintenance companies, and other technical trade businesses with several staff members who need training and would benefit from having it in their own space. Onsite training includes the same fabrication coursework as the regularly scheduled events. For more information about onsite training or to get on the list for the next Mineral Surfaces Training session, contact [Trainer@ISFAnow.org](mailto:Trainer@ISFAnow.org). For more information about the International Surface Fabricators Association and all its training programs, visit [www.ISFAnow.org](http://www.ISFAnow.org).

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The International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA) is globally recognized as a premier trade organization serving the manufactured surface industry. ISFA exists to help fabricators and other industry professionals increase product quality, improve safety measures, encourage professionalism and elevate profitability by facilitating education, standards and camaraderie. ISFA values innovation, dependability, trust, honesty, ethics and serving others above all else. Learn more at [www.ISFAnow.org](http://www.ISFAnow.org).

*[Editors note: Photos courtesy of the International Surface Fabricators Association.]*