

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Date: February 27, 2009

Re: CRACKING IN PORTLAND CEMENT STUCCO BASECOATS

The following offers information on cracking that can sometimes be noted in cementitious stucco and the potential cause(s).

1. Color Coat Stucco is not structural; it is a decorative finish.
2. Plaster cracks form when a stronger force exceeds the restraint capacity of the stucco assembly. Cracks are "stress-related energy".
3. Minor cracking at the corners of doors, windows and other high stress point areas is common and may be expected.
4. Although stucco assemblies do sometimes crack, it does not mean that the stucco has failed or was installed incorrectly, it simply means that stresses from outside sources are present, and have relieved themselves in the plaster membrane.
5. Hairline surface cracking usually presents no leaking problems or other sub-standard performance of the plaster skin. It is usually a mere cosmetic or aesthetic consideration.

Most cracking ceases when the wooden skeleton of the building is in a condition of equilibrium, with the lumber set in its final configuration, as the building is occupied, loaded, stabilized and interior temperature brought to a fixed level. Because of the nature of the material, some hairline cracking in Portland cement plaster is very normal and may be expected. Such cracks may easily be filled the first time the exterior is redecorated.

A straight edge placed over the apex of the fissure frequently will rock, indicating that some considerable force within the wall assembly has pushed the plaster outward from its original alignment, to form a buckle in the substrate and in the overlying plaster. Plaster does not shift outward of its own volition after it is stabilized, it must be pushed out of alignment by some significant force.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. We appreciate your use of Parex USA Products.