

Tips to Minimize Aesthetic Irregularities

INTRODUCTION

Because all components of a wall assembly can have some bearing on the final aesthetics of the wall cladding, Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) and EIFS with Drainage are subject to some planar irregularities, even with the most meticulous application. By taking several steps, these irregularities can be minimized so that the finished wall should have a uniform appearance in both texture and color, free of chatter or trowel marks.

APPLICATION TIPS TO MINIMIZE IRREGULARITIES

- Ensure that sheathing substrates are installed in accordance with both the sheathing manufacturer's recommendations and all local code requirements. The sheathing or substrate surface should be flat, free of fins or planar irregularities greater than ¼-inch in 10 feet. If the stud framing is not in plane, this irregularity can be reflected in the sheathing and the final cladding.
- For systems with expanded polystyrene (EPS) insulation board, install slivers of EPS in any gaps that are greater than 1/16" prior to rasping the wall surface. Never fill gaps with base coat!
- Rasp EPS insulation board surfaces to alleviate planar irregularities, board joints, high spots, shallow areas, etc. It is important to use a proper rasp as trowels with screws, wood block with nails, etc. may not provide the uniformity or thoroughness of high-quality rasps which are available through tool suppliers listed in the EIMA Member Directory.
- Additional skim coat layers of base coat can be applied to level minor irregularities.

A LEVEL INSULATION BOARD SURFACE

For all types of insulation board, leveling the surface within ¼" in 10' should minimize visible irregularities. Throughout the insulation leveling and rasping process, utilize a sufficient length straight edge to check and ensure planar uniformity of the wall surface. Generally, a 6' straight edge provides the right balance of ease of use and the ability to span a satisfactory amount of wall surface area.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- When installing the base coat and reinforcing mesh, feather reinforcing mesh overlaps to minimize the likelihood of read-through. Application of a skim coat of base coat can also be utilized to blend or "feather" reinforcing mesh laps and is particularly effective when utilizing high-impact reinforcing meshes.
- Always ensure uniform floating of the finish utilizing similar technique, direction and pressure. When a "smooth" finish is required, it may be necessary to re-skim the original base coat and reinforcing mesh application with an additional application of base coat.



- Irregular appearance that results from aberrations in the wall plane can be moderated, to some degree, by utilizing finishes with coarse or heavy textures. Since the thickness of a textured finish is determined by the size of the aggregate that is used, the courser textured finishes are thicker and therefore are more capable of filling depressions in the surface than a thinner, fine aggregate finish. And, in general, swirl finishes may be able to provide a little better ability to conceal irregularities than a sand finish of similar aggregate size.
- Review project plans and determine areas which may require additional attention such as signage lighting, up lighting or other artificial lighting which may increase the potential effects of critical light.

When making a visual judgement of the final appearance of the EIFS or EIFS with Drainage, it is important to maintain distance and stand perpendicular to the wall surface as much as possible. It is recommended to stand a minimum of 10' from the wall, with natural light conditions – using flashlights or shallow angle lighting may cast shadows that look significant but that otherwise would not be visible in natural light. The finish should have a uniform appearance in both texture and color, free of chatter or trowel marks.

SUMMARY

Despite the most precise application of any of the materials in EIFS, some planar irregularities of the wall surface should be expected. This bulletin goes over application tips for all components of the wall assembly that can minimize aesthetic irregularities.

ABOUT EIMA

Founded in 1981, the EIFS Industry Members Association (EIMA) is a North American non-profit technical trade association dedicated to advancing and promoting the Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) industry. As a leading authority on EIFS, EIMA serves as a vital hub for leading suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, contractors, architects, and professionals in the industry. EIMA stands as a cornerstone for individuals and businesses seeking to thrive in the dynamic world of Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems. Learn more at www.eima.com

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