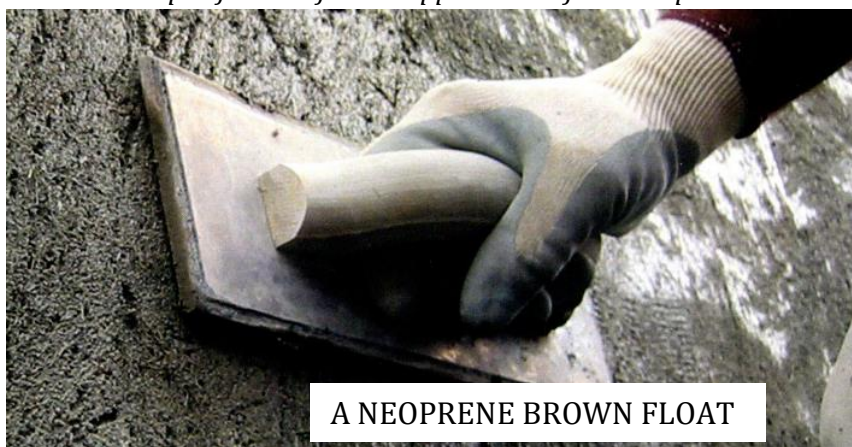


OVERVIEW: The base coat of cement plaster shall be applied by hand tool(s) or by machine, brought to a true plane with a rod or darby, then floated uniformly to promote densification and provide a surface receptive to bonding of the finish coat. This is best done with a wood shingle, cork or neoprene style rubber float. The SMA calls this “hard” floating and can have a significant impact on the cement plaster basecoats ultimate performance. ASTM has similar language in ASTM C926 *The standard specification for the application of cement plaster*.

The process of “hard” floating the cement plaster basecoats provides **densification** that compacts the cement membrane to make it more resistant to cracking and water penetration.



A NEOPRENE BROWN FLOAT

TIMING: To hard float cement plaster requires the use of the proper tool and timing. Floating too early, the cement membrane will move under the float. This cement movement can result in a wavy or bumped brown coat. Floating too late, the plaster membrane is not consolidated. The correct time is when the excess mix water has evaporated and the cement coat slightly stiffens. Most experienced plasterers know when the brown coat is ready to float. Another method used to test timing is to press the float onto the freshly applied brown coat and when the float does not stick, it is ready to be compacted and densified. The floating action is circular and with only light to moderate pressure leaving a slightly roughened surface for the finish coat.

CAVEAT: Sponge (green) floats do **not** densify the cement membrane and not recommended for this task. Should the brown coat be allowed to become too dry to float, the surface can be scrapped with a trowel and achieve similar results to hard floating. This task is called “dry rodding” and allowed by ASTM C 926 “... Dry rodding the surface of the brown coat shall be permitted”.

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