

TechTalk



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MEET THE SMA BOARD of DIRECTORS

Meet your new SMA Board of Directors, note the board has been expanded. For over 50 years the board was only nine members, primarily manufacturers with only one contractor. The SMA board felt it was time for a change, be national and include a better representation of the industry on the SMA Board of Directors.

Contractors are in the trenches, dealing with stucco on the ground level, they could benefit from better representation. While we all have similar issues, some regions of the country have very specific needs. A broader net can get input from the entire United States. The SMA agreed contractors who install lath and plaster from various regions was the optimal approach to solve this issue. Many SMA board members sit on ASTM committees and noted that there are regional differences in installing lath and applying plaster that are often not addressed at the ASTM level.

The SMA has always strived to be inclusive in the endeavor to support good regional practices. The SMA board voted to have three contractors appointed to the SMA board. One Director representing the **east**, the **central** and **western** USA. This makes the SMA Board now eleven members strong.

WELCOME your three new SMA Contractor Directors:

Joe Brooks of Advanced Stucco from Ft. Lauderdale Florida. Joe is the founder and CEO of Advanced Stucco. Joe started Advanced Stucco in 1995 and loves the creative side of what plaster can do to transform buildings. He is dedicated to his family and business; he feels its time and wants to give back to his industry.

Kevin Maxwell of Prime Wall Systems from Hutto Texas. Kevin has been in the industry a long time and has a long list of certifications, including the first to be an SMA certified contractor. Kevin was also helpful in developing the SMA training modules. Prime Wall Systems serves all Central Texas.

Eric Miranda of Onyx Building Group from El Cajon California. Onyx is a full-service wall and ceiling contractor; Eric is the go-to guy for all lath and plaster issues within the company. Eric is also a listed industry expert for the State of California Contractors License Board. His qualifications run deep. Onyx is also an SMA Certified Contractor.

2024 SMA Board of Directors

Dale Nehls - Quikrete

Keven Wensel – Omega Products

Herman Guevara – Plastic Components

Rick Durham – Sika Facades

Dennis Deppner - Masterwall

Chip Blome - L&W Supply

Gary Goodwin - Mid Continent Steel and Wire

Robert Blaswich - L&W Supply

CONTRACTOR DIRECTORS

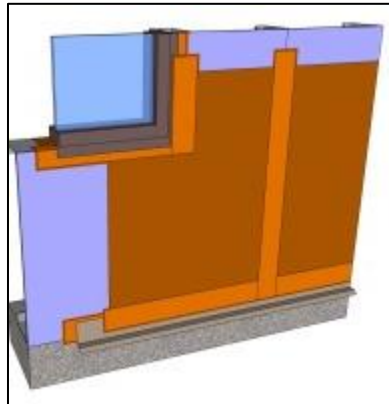
Joe Brooks - **Kevin Maxwell** – **Eric Miranda**

FLUID APPLIED BARRIERS

There are many options for water-resistant barriers to use behind stucco. The stand-by and historic choice has been asphaltic paper or felts. Most experts prefer the Grade D paper over felts, even as the felt has a higher degree of water resistance. Felts tend to be less vapor permeable than asphaltic papers. Felts work great on flat planes, like a roof. However, when they are tucked and folded to 90-degree angles they can have issues, especially when applied in cold weather. Asphaltic paper has better tensile strength. The asphaltic products had another major benefit for stucco, they wrinkle when wet. The wet scratch coat causes the paper to wrinkle and form shallow channels. When the plaster dries, the asphaltic paper releases substantially from the dry cement. This results in a weep or drainage plane behind the stucco.



The key to making this or any sheet good water-resistant barrier work is lapping and integration with flashings. Tucking in, over or under can be the recipe for success or failure. Historically it was pretty basic and easy to follow. Today flashing is anything but simple. This makes a good case for Fluid Applied Barriers. Most are applied by spray, roller or trowel and can go over or under a flashing. This can help eliminate the dreaded “reverse lap”. Contractors should not be selecting the water-resistant barrier product, that is the designer’s job. Should the product specified be something a contractor is uncomfortable using: the contractor should provide an explanation for the water-resistant barrier they prefer to use. Provide the reason you prefer another product, how it will impact the schedule, and what the cost impact will be to the owner.



It is also important to remember winning the battle could ultimately be losing the war. Should the design team opt to use your suggestion, especially if you pushed hard to use your selection, you may have supplanted yourself as the specifier of a product. Should a problem occur, the architect will likely point to you as you picked or pushed for a product. It is really hard to blame the architect in this scenario, you would do the same in their position. This may feel like a no-win situation. But you do have options.

Should you opt to go ahead use a specified product that gives you concerns. Let the specifier know you have concerns and what those concerns are. Be specific, respectful and careful in communications. Most importantly document those concerns and the responses in writing, RFI or email will work. Be careful not be threatening or use the withholding warranty approach. It is better to explain your concerns rationally and politely and then follow their directive. Again, document that directive. Email works, just make sure you save those communications for 10 years. That is that statute of limitation in most states for defect litigation claims.

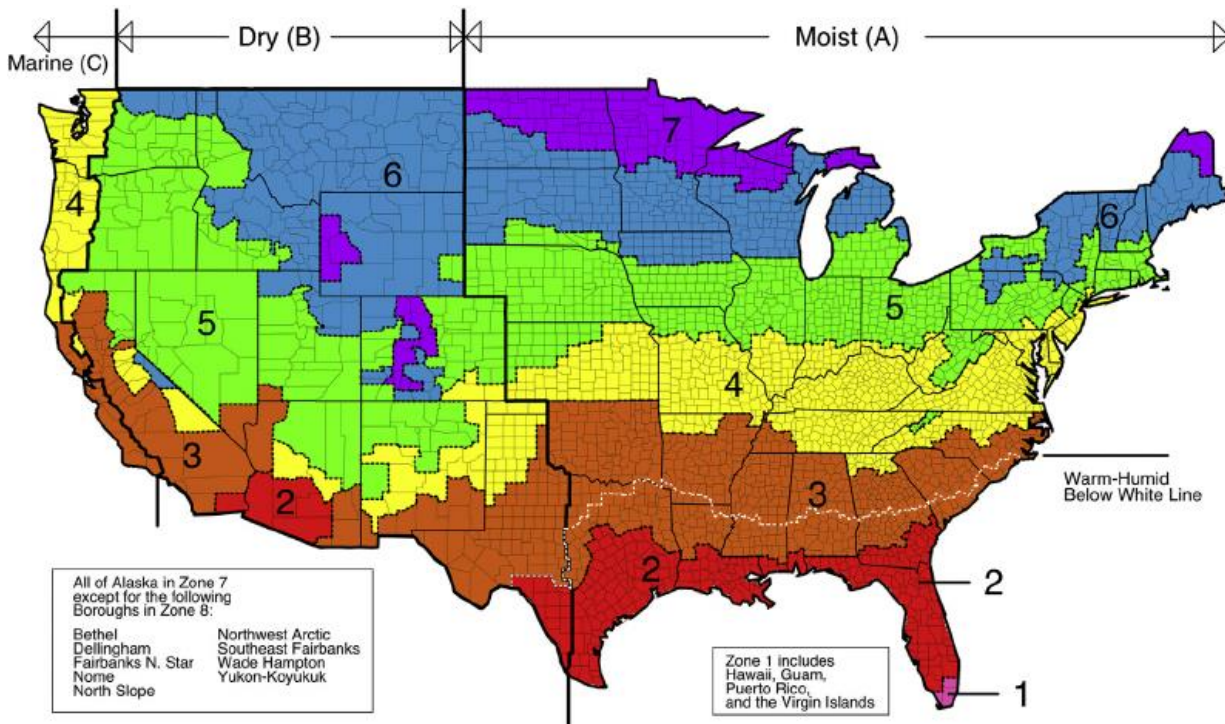
A simple email showing that you had concerns, and yet they ignored you by directing you to proceed can be extremely helpful to your case should things go wrong down the road, if it is documented.



TWO-LAYERS VERSUS DRAIN MAT

The 2021 International Building Code made some aggressive changes related to water-resistive barriers over wood-based sheathing. The code (IBC and IRC) implemented the moisture regime from the International Energy Code to break the country into three distinct regions. MOIST, DRY and MARINE. The DRY region is essentially left alone, for now. The code allows for two layers Grade D paper or an equivalent to be placed over wood-based sheathing when cement plaster is applied over that sheathing. The map below shows the three distinct zones. The two states most conflicted are California and Texas as the line can be hard to decipher. Washington and Oregon are essentially the cascade mountain range as the divider. California and Texas are more complex.

Visit the SMA website and click on Technical Resources then Technical Bulletins to download the Tech Times bulletin on Water-Resistant Barrier (WRB) for Portland Cement Plaster (Stucco) on Framed Walls (2021)



HISTORY

While some experts profess to be saving the industry, the history of why two layers and only over wood sheathing would seem to be evidence to the contrary. The first requirement for two layers water-resistant barrier was introduced into the code in 1982. It was to reduce cracking and not drainage. Due to the wrinkle effect as discussed in the previous article, the top layer pulled away from the base layer, keeping the wood sheathing drier, reducing the buckling of the plywood and therefore less cracking in fresh stucco. Oakridge testing has shown two-layers drainage very fast.

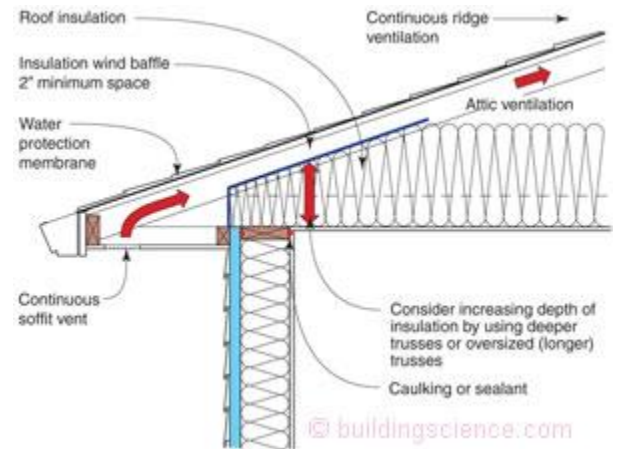
However, the use of drain mats has a place in wet climates and even dry climates can benefit using them. The gap with the drain mat is constant, could this even better for minimizing cracks?

1982 Uniform Building Code Section 476(d) Weather-Resistive Barriers: *...when applied over wood-based sheathing, shall include two layers Grade D paper.*

ANOTHER CODE ALERT

“VENTILATION”

Another issue that is asked of the SMA is the need for ventilation on stucco soffits. More accurately, designers ask, what does the code require. General information on ventilation is found in Chapter 12 of the International Building Code and Chapter 8 of the Residential code. Basically, buildings shall be designed to provide natural ventilation or an approved mechanical system. Specifics for attics are that they shall be ventilated by a net free area of not less than 1/150th of the area or space ventilated. That can be reduced to 1/300th if a Class I or II vapor barrier is installed on the warm side of the ceiling. Venting can be done along the ridge eaves or attic walls. Refer to the code for more as this is just a basic overview.



NEW: When the second floor of a conditioned space extends over the first floor, the soffit area is not required to be vented. The same was true of balconies, but that has changed in the 2021 International Building Code in Section 2304.12.2.6. This is the chapter on wood framing and the code change was first adopted in California after a horrific balcony collapse in 2015 that occurred in Berkeley, CA. Section 2304.12.2.6 states “*Enclosed framing on exterior balconies and elevated walkways that are exposed to rain, snow or drainage from irrigation shall be provided with openings that provide a net free cross ventilation area not less than 1/150th of the area of each separate space.*”

Code ventilation requirements are intentionally a bit vague. This is because designers have several factors to consider and options to allow for venting, condensation, or moisture evacuation. The code intentionally allows for designers to have options, and still maintain life/safety protection. Another issue is fire, venting can negate the fire protection of some cladding such is stucco.

Wildfire concerns can be an issue in the west. It is predicted that we will see more wildfires and they might be even more catastrophic. Cement stucco is a favored cladding in these areas as cement plaster is noncombustible and seamless. Most experts agree that putting stucco on the underside of overhangs helps to prevent hot embers from entering a structure. But what about venting? They are soffits vents with smaller openings that comply with code requirements for wildfire zones, yet local officials have the final call.



The SMA has a TECH TIMES bulletin on best practices for homes in wildfire zones based on research and recommendations from the University of California .

VISION MEETS DUTY

The SMA Board of Directors meet three times a year. The Board directs the activities of the SMA by looking for growth opportunities and staving off potential threats to our market. The goals are many, including providing services and support to SMA members so they may be more successful in this tough business climate. The challenges are even greater.

The goal is to grow the U.S. Stucco market share. It is hard to criticize the success of the SMA board as US Census data revealed in 2023 that stucco became the primary cladding on new home construction for the United States. Stucco knocked off vinyl siding to be number one. Fiber Cement Siding has made impressive gains and is closely behind stucco per the Census data.

The SMA put out two Market Study reports (2016 and 2019) . The staff is working on a new study report due out before the end of summer.

SMA TRAINING

The SMA training modules have been getting a lot of interest lately. There are 5 free modules in English and Spanish. The 6th Module is a supervisor module and qualifies a contractor to become SMA Certified.



SMA TECH TEAM COMMITTEE KICKS OFF

The newly established SMA Technical Committee held its first meeting on Thursday April 25, 2024. Co-Chairs Kevin Wensel and Dennis Deppner ran the 23-person committee by establishing goals and the rules for this committee.

GOALS: To enhance the industry with consensus Tech Papers, Details and Specifications through Subject Matter experts (SME). It was felt that other groups may not have the hands-on expertise or best interest to continue making stucco a successful and still affordable cladding.

RULES: anyone can join the committee with approval of the select ad hoc committee within the Technical Committee. It is also mandated that all members be respectful of others' opinions and recognize regional practices.

If you are interested in being on this committee, let the Chairpersons or SMA know.

The SMA Promotion Committee has yet to kickoff. That should occur before the end of Summer. If you have Interest, contact **Paul McMinn** of Stockton Products, **Bob Blaswich** of L&W Supply (NEW SMA Board Member) or the SMA.



STUCCO Happenings

The SMA gets contacted daily with questions by people needing help with stucco. The questions cover a wide range of issues as well as the regions seeking help.

Requests can be calls or emails and range from homeowners, architects, designers, builders, stucco contractors, building departments city facilities managers, and even nonmember manufacturers and dealers, as well as general contractors, lawyers, and insurance adjusters.

While the questions vary, there is a common thread. They all are looking for help from a neutral third party they can trust with expertise in stucco. Most are referrals. The next is from the SMA website. Most inquiries are from the United States, but some come from Canada and even a few from Europe. Recently an email came from France, as a neighbor told them to contact the SMA for advice.

To be clear, the SMA only writes letters for SMA members. However, SMA does try to help all that contact us. We feel it is a form of PROMOTING the continued use of stucco through trust and a being helpful.

The SMA held a membership meeting in Dallas Texas with a great turnout. The subject was the code and Water-Resistant Barriers, what it meant, what to do and what is likely to happen next. The crowd was engaging and the meeting became a group discussion on what the industry needs. It seems the group was focused on how we can all work together as an industry to help keep stucco the market share leader without driving costs through the roof.

CALIFORNIA A meeting is planned for southern California to cover the Water-Resistant Barriers and code for stucco in California. The state has adopted the same IBC language with a few twists.



NEW SMA MEMBERS

Premier Plastering Supply - Houston
Rivers Del Rey, Inc. - Gilroy, CA
Tremco CPG / Dryvit, OH

CONTRACTORS:

Kelly Moore Construction Systems, Inc. Fort Worth, TX
Hacienda Plastering Inc. - Sylmar CA

CED Technologies, Inc. - Cooper City, FL

Custom Masonry Corporation, San Antonio, TX

KA Wolfe, LLC - Grand Prairie, TX

Superior Plastering, - Oakland, CA

SMA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

TEXAS

Environmental Product Declarations

(EPDs) are becoming more popular for products. The goal of the EPD is to drive down embodied carbon in the built environment. Embodied carbon is the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with production, transport, and manufacturing of a product's life cycle from cradle to grave.

The building and construction industry is claimed to be responsible for a significant amount of these emissions, estimates are as high as 42% for annual global CO2 emissions with experts claiming that approximately 27% of those annual emissions come from the construction industry and 15% are from embodied carbon.

EPDs are viewed as a vital tool for mitigating the environmental impact of our environment.

What are EPD's? Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) may be compared to nutritional labels on food items. These declarations also disclose detailed information on the effects of raw material extraction, manufacturing processes, product use, waste generation, efficiency and energy use, and end-of-life considerations, shedding light on environmental impacts of building materials and products.

In the construction industry, three types of EPDs are used to compare the carbon intensity and environmental impact of functionally equivalent building products and materials. These EPDs include: **Industry Wide, Product Specific and Site Specific**. As the names imply, Industry wide is a general classification for generic products. The Building for Environmental & Economic Sustainability (BEES) is a government funded tool developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to allow designers, builders and product manufacturers to select cost effective, environmentally-preferable building products based on consensus standards. And designed to be practical, flexible, and transparent.

Stucco is generic and is included in this Life Cycle Analysis. The Stucco Manufacturers Association was instrumental in the report. If asked about the EPD, members can contact the SMA for a copy of the BEES study.



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