



# INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 324

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Effective: 10/14/2016

  
Chief Building Official

## INSTALLATION OF LATHING FOR EXTERIOR PORTLAND CEMENT-BASED PLASTER (STUCCO) FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

**Reference:** California Building Code (CBC) section 2510 and California Residential Code (CRC) section R702.2 and ASTM C 1063

**Introduction:** Stucco is a commonly used exterior finish in southern California. The above referenced code sections address its use directly as well as via reference standards including ASTM C 1063 which includes a requirement for control joints to minimize cracking. Additionally, the durability and quality of the applied stucco may be negatively affected by improperly sequenced construction activities, for example drywall nailing performed after stucco has been applied but not properly cured.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this informational bulletin is to define conditions under which control joints may be omitted and when the placement and attachment of drywall may be done independent to the application of exterior stucco, and to establish inspection procedures. **This bulletin applies only to residential structures.**

### **CONTROL JOINTS**

Since the provision to provide control joints took affect with the adoption of the 2008 CBC and its reference to the then updated ASTM C 1063 standard, a significant number of homes have been built, following a specific protocol, without control joints. Despite the absence of the control joints, these homes have performed as intended with minimal cracking. Based on this significant history, control joints may be omitted provided the following conditions are met:

1. The designer of record shall approve the use of the following protocol as equivalent to code prescribed crack control. This may be done on the original approved plan set or may be done via a letter wet signed and stamped by the designer of record which shall be presented to the City inspector prior to exterior lath inspection, and retained in the jobsite files to be turned over at project completion to the City inspector.
2. Glass fiber shall be added to the scratch and brown coats and the stucco product used, meeting all applicable standards, shall be approved by its manufacturer to allow for the incorporation of said fibers.

3. Strip lath reinforcement shall be provided at the corners of all doors and windows.
4. Stucco shall be applied in three coats\* – scratch, brown and finish in accordance to California Residential Code section R703.6 and ASTM standards C926 and C1063.
5. Quality control inspections shall be documented via signed field memos by a qualified third party utilizing the statement:

“This is to confirm that through my direct personal knowledge all (fill in blank with bolded phrase below) has been inspected and found to be in conformance to the protocol as defined in City of Irvine Information Bulletin 324, product specifications and code.”

- Verification of **stucco wire and reinforcement** – prior to code required exterior lath inspections by the City of Irvine
- Verification of **glass fiber mix proportions** – upon completion of brown coat.

\* Note: This bulletin may also be used for proprietary exterior lath and stucco systems provided the system is listed by an approved agency, the installation adheres to its listing requirements and the additional measures above and provided the manufacturer accepts in writing both the omission of control joints and the protocol defined herein.

### **SEQUENCE OF CONSTRUCTION/INSPECTION**

Because the quality of stucco can be significantly affected by vibrations occurring before stucco coats have been properly cured, the required sequence of inspection and construction has been to complete interior drywall attachments before exterior lath inspection occurs.

When screw attachments are used to install drywall in lieu of nails, vibrations are not necessarily a concern. Care is still necessary to ensure wall framing is not jarred excessively, for example when placing drywall sheets against framing and other ongoing construction activities.

The decision to use nails or screws is a field decision that need not be specified in the approved plan set. When the attachment method is to be screws, exterior lath and stucco may proceed independently of the drywall installation.

**Process:** The project general contractor may request the exterior lath inspection before drywall is attached provided a field memo is given to the City inspector from the drywall subcontractor committing to use of screw attachments for all drywall.