



Technical Bulletin

Recommended Surface Treatment For Finishing Gypsum Panels To Attain a Level 5 Finish

1. Scope. The purpose of this document is to describe guidelines for determining the visual performance expectations that an acceptable surface treatment will impart to achieve a Level 5 finish over a properly prepared Level 4 joint treated gypsum panel surface.

2. Terminology. The following definitions are applicable to this document.

gypsum panel products (n): The general name for a family of sheet products consisting essentially of gypsum. - **ASTM C11**

inspection lighting (adj): Inspection lighting shall be representative of normal lighting conditions in intensity and location.

normal lighting conditions (adj): Normal lighting conditions are described as those in place when the project is finished. This includes, but not limited to, design lighting (e.g. wall washers, spots and floods, etc) and natural lighting." - **PDCA**

normal viewing position (adj): The normal viewing position shall be at any angle provided it is established at a minimum distance of five feet perpendicular from the surface to be viewed.

properly painted surface (adj): One that is uniform in appearance, color and sheen. It is one that is free of foreign material, lumps, skins, runs, sags, holidays, misses, strike-through, or insufficient coverage. It is a surface which is free of drips, splatter, spills, or overspray which were caused by the contractor's workforce. Compliance to meeting the criteria of a "properly painted surface" shall be determined when viewed without magnification at a distance of five feet or more, under normal lighting conditions and from a normal viewing position. - **PDCA**

skim coat (n): A type of surface treatment that employs the use of joint compound to minimize surface variations.

surface treatment (adv): Any method of treating a gypsum panel substrate to minimize surface variations.

uniform surface (n): A gypsum panel substrate that exhibits the same visual appearance properties over the entire surface area when decorated.

3. Guidelines For Determining An Acceptable Surface Treatment. The following performance descriptions have been established as a guide.

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3.1 Conditions for Installation

3.2 Materials

3.3 Visual Performance Expectation

3.1 Surface Treatment - Conditions for Installation

3.1.1 Surface treatment shall be installed over a properly prepared gypsum panel substrate. The level of gypsum panel finish should meet the minimum criteria of a Level 4 finish as described in; GA-214 "Recommended Levels of Gypsum Board Finish", NWCB "Recommended Levels For Finishing Of Gypsum Board", and/or equivalent.

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3.1.2 Surface treatment will be applied over unpainted properly prepared gypsum panel substrates only.

3.1.3 - Leave sufficient material that minimizes surface variations over joints, fasteners, trims, and gypsum panel surface in accordance to the jobsite standard.

3.1.4 During the construction phase, jobsite conditions should be maintained in accordance with Drywall Finishing Council document titled, "Interior Job Condition Specification For The Application of Drywall Joint Compounds, Drywall Textures, And Paint / Coatings".

3.1.5 A jobsite standard of the finishing system, surface treatment, and decoration of gypsum panel substrate shall be constructed for the purpose of establishing a level of visual appearance deemed acceptable.

3.1.6 The jobsite standard shall be constructed in advance of work.

3.1.7 The constructed jobsite standard shall be representative of the wall and ceiling configuration typically found at the jobsite.

3.2 Surface Treatment - Materials

3.2.1 All surface treatment materials should be compatible with materials in the underlying properly prepared gypsum panel substrate, and provide an acceptable surface to receive decoration.

3.2.2 Any material may be used that meets the visual performance expectations of a surface treatment applied over a properly prepared gypsum panel substrate.

3.2.3 Surface treatment materials may be applied by any method deemed practical and/or recommended by the manufacturer.

3.3 Surface Treatment - Visual Performance Expectation

3.3.1 Provide a finished surface that is suitable for decoration.

3.3.2 Provide a uniform decorated surface when viewed without magnification under occupancy conditions with normal lighting conditions and from a normal viewing position. Consideration shall be given to window treatment and/or any other decorative finishes that could affect lighting and viewing.

3.3.3 Inspection lighting shall be representative of normal lighting conditions in intensity and location.

3.3.4 Achieves a level of visual appearance as established by the approved jobsite standard.

4. Comments. The following definitions are applicable to this document.

intent - This performance description is designed to minimize decorating problems that can occur due to surface variations between the gypsum panel surface and areas finished with joint compound.

surface smoothness - Because the joints and fasteners must be concealed with fill and finish coats of joint compound, it is impossible to achieve a finished surface that is a flat plane. Instead, the joints and fasteners are finished with graduated arcs designed to prevent recesses or ridges that result in distinct shadows in critical light.

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environmental control - Temperature, humidity, and airflow should remain constant, and as close to occupancy conditions as possible. The potential for finishing and decorating problems is minimal when job environmental conditions match occupancy environmental conditions. Controlling and maintaining environmental conditions is key. Changes in temperature, humidity, and airflow can have a profound adverse effect.

environmental limitations / considerations - All products shall be applied and maintained in accordance with manufacturers recommendations.

environmental conditions - Follow the Drywall Finishing Council document titled, "Interior Job Condition Specification For The Application of Drywall Joint Compounds, Drywall Textures, And Paint / Coatings".

gypsum panel preparation - To achieve optimum surface treatment performance over gypsum panel products, the substrate must meet the minimum performance criteria of a Level 4 finish. Refer to Gypsum Association GA-214 titled, "Recommended Levels of Gypsum Board Finish".

project standard specification - A project standard of the approved wall and/or ceiling configurations shall be established to provide a visual sample constructed, finished, and decorated in accordance with applicable project specifications. As a guideline, refer to PDCA P5-94 titled, "Benchmark Sample Procedures For Paint and Other Coating Systems".

level of paint finish - A Level 5 paint finish is recommended. This system when combined with the Level 5 gypsum board finish is the most effective method to minimize joint and fastener photographing and provides the most uniform final finish. Refer to Drywall Finishing Council document titled, "Recommended Levels of Paint Finish Over Gypsum Board".

installation - It is not the intent of this document to direct, specify and/or limit installation of surface treatments to a particular trade.

5. Resources. The following definitions are applicable to this document.

ASTM C-11. Standard Terminology Relating to Gypsum and Related Building Materials and Systems. American Society for Testing and Materials, West Conshohocken PA

DWFC. Interior Job Condition Specifications For The Application of Drywall Joint Compounds, Drywall Textures, and Paint / Coatings. Drywall Finishing Council Incorporated, Garden Grove CA

DWFC. Recommended Levels of Paint Finish Over Gypsum Board. Drywall Finishing Council Incorporated, Garden Grove CA

DWFC. Recommended Specification for Preparation of Gypsum Board Surfaces Prior To Texture Application. Drywall Finishing Council Incorporated, Garden Grove CA

FSCT. Coatings Encyclopedic Dictionary. Federation of Societies for Coatings Technology, Blue Bell PA

GA-214-96. Recommended Levels of Gypsum Board Finish. Gypsum Association, Washington DC

GA-216-00. Application and Finishing of Gypsum Board. Gypsum Association, Washington DC

PDCA, Glossary of Terms. Painting and Decorating Contractors of America, Fairfax VA

PDCA. Standard P1-92. Touch-Up Painting and Damage Repair - Financial Responsibility. Painting and Decorating Contractors of America, Fairfax VA

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PDCA. Standard P4-94. Responsibilities for Inspection and Acceptance of Surface Prior to Painting and Decorating. Painting and Decorating Contractors of America, Fairfax VA

PDCA, Standard P5-94. Benchmark Sample Procedures for Paint and Other Coating Systems. Painting and Decorating Contractors of America, Fairfax VA

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