We’ve constructed a partition according to design WP1470 as described in the Gypsum Association’s GA 600, which consists of two layers of fire rated gypsum board on each side of metal studs, with resilient channels on one side of the wall between the studs and the wall board. The cavity is filled with mineral fiber insulation. If possible, we would prefer to avoid taping the section of the wall that is above the ceiling line. Is there any documentation that can help us avoid the taping the joints above the ceiling? —TX, California

I covered a very similar question in the March column, and I have since learned that there are a few exceptions to what I believed to be the rule of thumb. My initial response was that the Underwriters Laboratories Fire Resistance Manual spells out pretty clearly that “Unless otherwise specified in the specific design, all gypsum board systems except those with predecorated or metal-covered surfaces have joints taped and joints and fastener heads covered with one coat of joint compound (fire taped). Base layers in multilayer systems are not required to have joints or fastener heads taped or covered with joint compound.”

A cursory look at the GA’s WP1470 reveals a citation of UL 454, which lists all the materials, including joint tape and compound, but makes no mention of where they can be omitted. So at first glance, I would have guessed that all areas required taping of the joints.

However, I did recall a recent conversation with one of the gypsum manufacturers that suggested to me that there was a way around that particular provision, so before I committed myself to my earlier conclusion, I thought the Gypsum Association might point me in the right direction. And as is invariably the case, a quick call to Michael Gardner at the GA resulted in a valuable lead.

Gardner pointed out that there is code language, and an ICBO evaluation report (ER-1632) with similar wording that does allow for the omission of joint treatment in certain instances. An exception in Section 2508.4 of the International Building Code provides that:

“Joint and fastener treatment need not be provided where any of the following conditions occur:

“Where the gypsum board is to receive a decorative finish such as wood paneling, battens, acoustical finishes or any similar application that would be equivalent to joint treatment.

“On single layer systems where joints occur over wood framing members.

“Square edge or tongue-and-groove edge gypsum board (V-edge) gypsum backing board or gypsum sheathing.

“On multilayer systems where the joints of adjacent layers are offset from one another.

“Assemblies tested without joint treatment.”

What do you recommend to clean a dirty EIFS surface? —via e-mail

Many exterior surfaces, including EIFS, look dirty when they have mildew growing on them. My first recommendation is to try a test area with a solution consisting of the following: one gallon of warm water, one quart chlorine bleach and eight ounces of trisodium phosphate. Let this solution sit for about 20 minutes and rinse thoroughly. If this cleans the test area, proceed with the rest of the area. Work from the bottom up to avoid streaks. Be careful not to scrub too hard to avoid damaging the surface. If this solution does not do the trick, you can contact the EIFS manufacturer for more specific directions that describe which commercial cleaners are recommended to remove various surface contaminants.

About the Author
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