From the Foundation

Tape-on Concept Aims to Change Rigid Attitudes about Drywall Cornering

By Don King

Often the finishing process in drywall construction is only the beginning of the real test of integrity and performance in an environment in which the drywall finish is at the mercy of a number of factors beyond the control of the architect and the builder.

New structures often start to settle. Wood framing members expand and contract as they take up or give off moisture in adjusting to their surroundings.

This is where rigidly fastened exposed metal can contribute to a costly set of circumstances. Inflexible, rigid fastenings tend to respond to any movement of underlying framing members by pulling away, resulting in nail popping, paint chipping, and edge cracking on the corners. Then, too, drywall compounds do not adhere as well to metal corner bead surfaces. Furthermore, costly, time-consuming touch up work creates bottlenecks when trying to achieve accurate color tone matches on dissimilar tape and metal surfaces. And the susceptibility of non-corrosion resistant metal to rust should not be ignored.

Correcting all these problems requires costly callbacks, costly touch up, costly damage to reputations, costly erosion of profits, and above all, the costly risk of losing repeat business.

Here is where the tape-on corner concept developed by Beadex comes into the picture. Tape-on corners feature specially formulated paper tape laminated to preformed, corrosion resistant metal. This combination provides the excellent finish holding compatibility of drywall tape with the outstanding strength and shape-holding merits of metal.

In contrast to rigidly fastened metal, tape-on corners are applied with regular drywall compound. A tight continuous bond is formed between the corner and the drywall surface, allowing the corner and the wallboard to move together, thus adjusting more successfully to any shifting in the framing members.

A typical installation of tape-on corners involves no special tools other than a corner trowel, a standard drywall knife, and a mud pan. Using an angle trowel and a mud pan, the drywaller applies joint compound to a depth of about 1/8" covering both sides of the corner at the same time. The tape-on corner is then pressed firmly into the compound with the metal side facing the wall. To save time and extend reach, use a roller tool to embed the comer, squeeze out extra compound, and properly align the corner all in one motion. Once the corner is embedded, the extra compound is removed with a knife and returned to the mud pan for future use. When thoroughly dry, the corner receives a light sanding, if necessary, and a finish coat of compound.

Projects such as apartments and offices where room sizes and corner bead choices are more standardized offer opportunities for mass production variations on the procedure described above. In these situations, a hopper replaces the corner trowel. The hopper quickly and uniformly applies compound to tape-on corners which have been precut to exact lengths. Once in place, metal to the wall and tape surface exposed, the comers are next firmly embedded and aligned with a roller tool and excess compound is wiped off with a knife. After the compound is thoroughly dried (and sanded if required) a finish coat of compound is applied.

Drywaller Ray Skinner’s firm, In-
terior Services, Inc, specializes in custom drywall work on upscale residences. He summed up his experiences with tape-on corners as follows: “The inherent problems with nail-on [rigidly fastened metal] are nail pops, cracking and mud peeling off the metal. With tape-on, I don’t have that, which means I have a lot less call backs.

“With tape-on, I can put on an average of 30 to 50 sticks per hour and often as many as 60 sticks per hour which can save a lot of time. Nail-on usually takes approximately 20 sticks per hour.

“With tape-on, I can float it out and make everything look perfect. I especially like working with it on arches because I can float out the corners to any desired radius. No matter how bad the framing, I can make the corners look perfect.”

Many of the conventional concepts about drywall finishing have been with us for a long while. From the results we have experienced to date, we sense that the tape-on concept may be ready to start making some significant changes in those rigid attitudes about drywall cornering.

About the author:
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