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**Q** I am beginning to see more references to grade classifications for building paper. What are they and what do they mean?

**A** Building paper is typically identified by type, grade and style in accordance with Federal Specification UU-B-790a.

Type classifications are Type 1 (barrier paper), Type 2 (concrete curing paper), Type 3 (fire-resistant paper) and Type 4 (insulation paper). Papers also are assigned a grade classification on the basis of their water resistance and vapor permeability. Grade A is a high water-vapor resistant paper, Grade B is a moderate water-vapor resistant paper, Grade C is a water-resistant paper and Grade D is a water-vapor permeable paper. The materials also receive a style classification that evaluates whether or not the paper is reinforced or coated.

Most paper used in our industry is Type 1, Grade D, designed to allow moisture to pass from the stud cavity to the building exterior. You may occasionally see Type 3 or Grade B paper specified.

**Q** What's a dash-bond plaster coat, and when is it used?

**A** Portland cement plaster can be directly applied to substrates like sante, concrete masonry and brick. On occasion, however, those bases are not sufficiently porous to allow for the proper adherence of the scratch (first) coat of plaster to the substrate. In such an instance, either the quality of the base has to be upgraded to provide for an acceptable bond between the plaster and the substrate, or the surface of the substrate has to be covered with metal lath.

One way to increase the bond strength is to apply a thin prep coat of plaster to the substrate prior to the application of the scratch coat. Often referred to as a dash-bond coat, this prep coat is a thin slurry plaster mixture with a higher than normal concentration of cement. It is thoroughly applied to the substrate as a skim coat without regard to finish appearance and allowed to set prior to the application of the first coat of plaster. It does not take the place of the scratch coat and is not to be built up to any significant thickness.

**Q** What's a powder-actuated fastener?

**A** It's any fastener that is installed using a device that incorporates a blank cartridge or load to propel the fastener, usually a pin or stud, into a substrate.

The fastening devices quite often resemble pistol guns, are usually referred to as guns and work in a manner similar to a pistol. The fastener and load are placed in a chamber, the trigger is pulled, the gun goes bang and the fastener is embedded into the substrate. Some powder-actuated tools are struck with a hammer or mallet to initiate the firing mechanism, but the concept is the same. 📌

## About the Author

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*(The Portland Cement Plaster (Stucco) Manual, published by the Portland Cement Association, was used as a reference in the creation of this article.)*