

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Stucco over CMU

Concrete Masonry Units (CMU) are an excellent cement plaster base. Cement plaster can add decoration, water and impact resistance. Successful stucco installations on masonry rely on the ability to bond (suction) or a mechanical key. New CMU allows for suction and keying of cement plaster. Questionable bonds, such as painted CMU, should use a bonding agent or lath. All but new uncoated CMU or very non absorbive masonry surfaces should employ random test patches to insure a secure bond prior to proceeding. Do not apply cement plaster over 5/8 inch thick to masonry without a lath. Masonry must be sound and stable prior to plastering.

When installing portland cement stucco over concrete masonry units, you may either direct apply the stucco to the CMU or install a water resistive barrier and lath the CMU. Applications previously painted CMU substrates, continuous insulation and/ or a air/water resistive barrier will require the use of metal lath when installed over CMU

Direct Application

Cracking in the CMU will propagate through the stucco and without a water resistive barrier, water may penetrate into the wall assembly. However, unless the bond between the CMU and stucco is lost, the stucco will not have movement cracks unless the CMU does.

Lathed Application

Lathed stucco can lead to cracks in the stucco independent of any cracks in the CMU. Lath also has the potential to rust, causing loss of attachment and, since rust takes up more volume than steel, spalling of the stucco can result. However, when a water-resistive barrier is installed behind the lath, it can block the passage of water into the CMU.

There may be other factors as well that are taken into account when selecting which of these two types of application to make. The selection is up to the project designer.

If you should have any further questions please feel free to call. Sika Facades Technical Department at 800-226-2424

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