

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Stucco Wall Base Deterioration at Soil

Degradation at the base of a stucco wall that comes in contact with soil is caused by the moisture wicking effect and occurring due to Alkali. The stucco coming in contact with the soil has led to and is the cause of the deterioration. This is common in older buildings and for this reason, the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) determined the need for “weep screed” a separation device as a remedy in new construction. Repairing the condition is relatively simple although in most cases, only temporary. A separation of the stucco and the soil followed by repair would be the only permanent solution.

To temporarily repair the condition; toughly clean the surface removing all loose and damaged material, then apply a diluted muriatic acid solution. The recommended ratio is 15 to 20 parts by volume of water to 1 part acid apply this to a wet surface to neutralize the condition. Follow this by thoroughly rinsing the surface and allow it to dry out completely prior to the repair process application. The repair process and required materials are determined by the condition and depth of the affected area. Areas deeper than 1/8" will require pre-filling with an appropriate base coat material. Stucco finishes are applied at approximately 1/8". It is recommended that all of the repair areas receive an application of an acrylic bonder prior to any patching material application. Determine the type of the existing finish product and apply this same type and color, matching the existing texture to the best of your ability.

The most challenging areas are where concrete or other site work exists, due to the stucco having been applied prior to the site work; the location is difficult if not impossible to access. If the site work has been placed above the mud sill (bottom framing plate) the site work will need to be removed and the grade taken down, during this time the area can be accessed and the condition remedied.

Building codes dictate that concrete is to be installed a minimum of 2" below the termination point of the weep-screed and 4" where soil conditions exist, this termination point is to occur a minimum of 1" below the mud sill.

The result of any repair is only as good as the accessibility and preparation.

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