

Paint is an economical method to change color on a stucco (portland cement plaster) building. When painting is the chosen option, the NWCB recommends painting with a breathable type product specifically designed for exterior cement stucco. Breathable is also known as vapor permeable. This allows water in a vapor form to pass through the system rather than collect as condensation.

Painting New Stucco

New stucco, just like any Portland cement product, is highly alkaline when first applied and has a Ph of about 12.4. It is important to use an alkali-resistant paint and allow the Ph level to drop to 8 or lower before painting, this typically happens in a week to 10 days. Ph level for alkalinity and acidity (0-14) can be tested with litmus test paper or testing devices.

Elastomeric coatings have unique properties that allow them to span small cracks in brittle wall finishes. The NWCB has seen success and failure with these coatings placed over a traditional concealed barrier stucco system. Elastomeric coatings are typically very low in vapor perm rating and can trap the moisture that is trying to exit the wall system as a vapor. The NWCB believes an elastomeric coating should “not” be used to solve a water intrusion and/or a flashing problem. However, elastomeric coatings have proven to work well on stucco systems that have good flashings and drainage. The decision to place an elastomeric over a traditional stucco system should be considered carefully.

Important Note: An acrylic finish coat is “not” considered an elastomeric coating. 100% acrylic finish coats designed for stucco typically are very vapor permeable and have proven to work well in the Pacific Northwest.

Points to Consider:

- Paints and coatings should have a perm rating of **7** or higher
- Elastomeric coatings can be difficult to remove or re-color at a later date
- Does the paint or coating have a track record of success for the region?

Read manufacturer’s limitations and follow instructions

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