

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

The Secret To Great-Looking Drywall Surfaces

(NAPSA)—Whether you're building a new home, adding a new room or finishing a basement, homeowners can ensure a top-quality drywall installation by following a few basic—but very important—gypsum board application and finishing guidelines.

Installing drywall panels isn't an overly complex process. The panels are available in a variety of sizes, with 4x8-ft. and 4x12-ft. sheets being the most commonly used. If you're doing the work yourself, the smaller 4x8-ft. panels are easier to handle.

Drywall panels are most commonly available in 1/2- and 5/8-inch thicknesses. The 1/2-inch panels are ideal for most wall surfaces, while ceilings generally require a 5/8-inch thickness to protect against sagging. However, a 1/2-inch-thick, sag-resistant gypsum board panel from United States Gypsum Company, maker of the popular SHEETROCK brand of drywall, is specially designed for ceiling applications.

Drywall panel installation techniques are fairly standard. The real trick to achieving great-looking results lies in how well the panels are finished. A poorly finished drywall surface may show visible "joint banding" or "photographing" problems. These terms refer to a noticeable difference in appearance between the drywall panel and the treated joint areas. These problems are especially a concern in larger rooms with an abundance of lighting or when semi-gloss or eggshell paints are used.

Priming or sealing the drywall surface prior to painting often doesn't solve the problem. Conventional primers can help equalize the texture differences between the drywall face paper and treated joints, but they may not equalize the porosity differences. Sealers, on the other hand, are typically effective at equalizing porosity differences, but often do not correct texture variations.

To completely eliminate drywall joint banding and photographing, drywall contractors use a technique called "skim coating," which involves covering the



The texture and porosity differences between drywall face paper and joint compound must be equalized to achieve best-looking finished drywall results.

entire surface with a thin coat of joint compound. This process leaves a film thick enough to fill imperfections in the joint work, smooth the paper texture and provide a uniform surface for decorating. After the skim coat has dried, a good-quality drywall primer is applied prior to painting.

A growing number of drywall contractors are now using a new spray-applied product, called SHEETROCK Brand Primer-Surfacer (TUFF-HIDE), which delivers the same results as skim-coating followed by a primer coat application, but requires less time to apply.

For homeowners who are tackling drywall projects on their own and don't have access to professional spray equipment, the next best technique is to use SHEETROCK Brand First Coat. It's a specially formulated product that provides a superior prime coat over interior gypsum board. This product minimizes both texture and porosity differences in new drywall, and applies easily with a brush or roller.

Whatever option you choose, remember that there are no shortcuts for creating great-looking gypsum board walls and ceilings. Each step must be done carefully and correctly, including board finishing, which has a major impact on how well the finished drywall surface will look.

For more information on the latest drywall finishing products and installation tips, visit the USG Web site at www.usg.com or call 1-800-USG-4YOU.