

NATIONAL LIME

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ASSOCIATION

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IMPORTANT!

TO ALL MEMBER COMPANIES

Gentlemen:

Subject: New National Exterior Plaster (Stucco) Standard
A Victory for Lime

For many decades the U.S. lime industry has been severely hampered in promoting building lime for lime-cement exterior and interior plaster or stucco through the influence of ASA national standards (ASA A42.2 and A42.3) that depreciated the value of lime.

Due to the considerable clout of the Portland Cement Association, the ASA Standards in the 1930-60 era recognized only a plaster mix of 1 part cement to 2 1/2-3 parts of sand by volume to which might be added up to 10% by weight of hydrated lime. Unfortunately, this relegated lime to the role of a dispensable or unnecessary "additive" in the eyes of many architects and contractors. Too often straight portland cement mortars were used. As evidence that this plaster standard was inadequate, the use of exterior plaster declined sharply on a national level, except in the southwest and Florida. Previously in the 1890-1920 era it had flourished in many large middle western and eastern cities where use of 1:1:6 or 1:2:9 mortars predominated. Severe cracking problems caused by the use of the above ASA hard but brittle mortar contributed to this decline and prejudiced many architects against all stucco.

By 1960, the National Lime Association, working in concert with the former Finishing Lime Association of Ohio, was finally able to obtain adoption of a much higher lime content standard, recognizing essentially 1:1:6 to 1:2:9 mixes, designated ASA A42.5. However, this simply supplemented the two earlier ASA cement plaster standards that were firmly entrenched in nearly all regional, state, and municipal building codes. It probably confused as much as it helped lime's position.

Therefore, we are pleased to enclose a copy of a new American National Standard on cement and cement-lime plastering, exterior (stucco) and interior, designated A42.2, and the accompanying provisions for lathing and furring, A42.3. This standard replaces all of the three former ASA standards, A42.2, A42.3, and A42.5. ANSI is the successor to the former ASA. This new standard is much more workable, flexible, detailed, and accurate than the former standards.

In addition to more complete and precise design details and construction procedures, note the flexibility in the plaster mixes, such as:

1. Different strength plaster mixes for varying plaster bases, i.e., higher absorptive bases, higher lime for high absorptive bases, and both types for total lath.

2. Even the high strength plaster permits up to 3/4 parts lime to 1 part cement in the base coats. For most plaster work, a mix of 1 part cement to 3/4-1 1/2 parts lime is specified in base coats.

3. For finish coat a 1:1:6 or 1:2:9 is specified.

Obtaining agreement on a complicated standard like this that involves so many associations with conflicting interests and government agencies (see list of participants in forward) is a herculean task and very time-consuming. I personally served five years on the four-man editorial committee that prepared this standard. This involved circulation of five complete drafts and at least eight editorial committee meetings, plus meetings of the full committee. It even involved research and translations of German and Swedish plaster standards that have always recognized lime. Needless to say, the Portland Cement Association is not happy with this standard; it is a setback for them.

So I hope our NLA members interested in building lime will make good use of this standard. Exterior plaster, when properly applied, is a sound, high quality construction method and potentiates economy for facing walls. No other method can offer such a variety of colors and textures. At the rate conventional interior plastering has declined, only this use can save the plastering trade from oblivion. It needs promotion, and this new standard is your best promotional tool.

Additional copies can be obtained for 25¢ each.

Yours very truly,

R. S. Boynton
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Executive Director