



RAPID SET® EISENWALL TURNS TIME INTO MONEY



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Although schedule and budget have always ruled in construction, today's economic climate has led many companies to explore new products in the hopes of finding ways to do more with less at a faster rate. One example is the use of fast-setting cements for exterior plaster. To demonstrate the savings realized by using such products, Quality Plastering Corp. in Sacramento, California, conducted a side-by-side comparison of portland cement and Rapid Set Eisenwall, a premium cement quick-setting plaster product, on a 276-unit condominium and townhouse project in Milpitas, California.

"We did the first part of the project with conventional portland cement and experienced cracking right away," Steve Browne, director of operations for Quality Plastering Corp., said. "But when we switched to the rapid-setting cement for the rest of the project, we noticed that cracking diminished tremendously."

Developed by CTS Cement Manufacturing Corp., Eisenwall is strong, durable, fast-setting, and has very low shrinkage. Eisenwall is the only cement product in the United States that is ICC (International Code Council) approved to be scratched and browned to a 3/4-inch (7/8-inch) application in one day. "I can apply the scratch and brown coats in a single day and apply the stucco color coat or acrylic finish the next day so I can move forward without tying up equipment or crews," Browne said.

Fast-setting cement plaster costs more upfront than ordinary portland cement. But Browne said that, depending on the project, it can end up making them money.

For Browne, indirect savings often offset material costs because equipment gets released sooner and there are fewer call backs. "We used it on a model home that was on an accelerated schedule," he reports. "The quicker the developer got the model open to the public, the quicker they could start getting sales."

Using the cement on custom homes and small commercial projects has helped both contractors cut "windshield time" driving to and from job sites. "We use it on smaller projects, where applying just one coat would not be a full day of work for a crew," Browne explained. "It allows us to do the first and second coat in the same day, so we don't have to come back as often."

With portland cement, building codes require a contractor to wait two days after application of the scratch coat before applying the brown coat, and then seven more days before applying the topcoat. With Eisenwall, however, walls only have to be moist cured for 90 minutes. In average weather conditions, traditional cement-finish coats can be applied three hours after completion of moist curing. Acrylic finishes and other paints or coatings can be applied after 24 hours. This accelerated timeline has been a boon for Browne on multi-family housing projects.



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He stressed that fast-setting plaster requires better coordination of the crew to make sure the plaster doesn't harden before it can be applied and finished. Unlike the hour or more the contractor had to wait before floating conventional plaster, Eisenwall can be floated in approximately 20 minutes. This means everyone has to be in place and ready to go before mixing begins.

"Instead of my usual eight- to 10-person crew," Browne said, "I increase manpower to an 11- or 12-man crew, putting a couple of extra finish guys on the wall to keep

up with the fast setting." He also notes that workers can only mix as much as can be finished in a short time. It requires coordination between the applicators spraying it on the wall and the crew coming along behind to screed and float it. Once the crew knows how to work with Eisenwall, the process runs smoothly.

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