

DID YOU KNOW?



Hints and tips from the Technical Department

LIME STAINING

The surface of paintwork on textured plaster homes sometimes becomes discoloured with a white stain.

This is not the colour leaching from the paint, but lime coming from the plaster beneath.

Plasters contain lime (Calcium Hydroxide) as an ingredient to assist set up and cure of the plaster. This reacts during the curing process to produce complex insoluble minerals one of which is Calcium Carbonate (Limestone).

During the curing period it is important that the plaster remains damp, as water is required to fix the lime into the plaster correctly. The actual time for curing varies due to the plaster type and time of year. Most plaster manufacturers should have available comprehensive curing schedules.

If the plaster dries out too quickly the lime will not be fully reacted giving the potential for future problems.

Lime is slightly soluble in water and can migrate through a coat of paint to dry out on the surface producing a characteristic patchy white bloom.

All acrylics, especially non membrane types, allow some water to pass through. This movement can be sufficient to dissolve any un-reacted lime and deposit it on the paint's surface as the water dries out, giving rise to lime staining.

This can easily be checked by treating an area with dilute hydrochloric acid, which causes the lime stain to spectacularly dissolve. Washing with this acid solution is successful in cleaning these jobs up, but a better proposal is to not have it happen in the first case.

To do this the plaster should be fully cured before painting starts, and the surface should be primed with Flexigard primer before finishing in low build acrylics like Solagard or SunProof.