

Optimum High Lime Mortar Mixes for the Pacific Northwest

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Abstract*:

One of the greatest ongoing challenges of the masonry industry of the Pacific Northwest is to overcome the resistance that many architects have in specifying masonry for buildings to be erected in an environment continually subjected to high moisture and winds. Under adverse weather conditions, even the most skillfully crafted brick and block works can exhibit signs of water leakage, poor bonding and efflorescence. Informed design professionals and contractors realize that the structural integrity and lifespan of masonry construction is highly dependent on the quality of the mortar. Thus, one step to improve the weathering performance and appearance of masonry systems in the Northwest was to determine the optimum mortar mix designs, using only local materials from separate regions. With this goal established, the Masonry Institute of Oregon and the Masonry Institute of British Columbia, along with other interested industry members, worked closely with Genstar Lime Company to implement a testing program that would achieve the necessary data. The regions of Portland, Tacoma and Vancouver, B.C. were chosen as target areas due to their similar weather conditions and diverse quality of masonry materials, such as Portland cement and sand.

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