

Patching Portland Cement Plaster (Stucco)

Portland cement plaster is a plaster mix in which portland cement or combinations of portland and masonry cements or portland cement and lime are the principle cementitious materials mixed with aggregate.ⁱ It is often referred to as stucco and is used worldwide in all climates, over a variety of substrates, as a building cladding material.

General Patching

The most difficult part of the process is finishing a patched wall so that the patch is no longer visible. Often this process may require the entire plaster panel to be refinished. Large cracks, chips and holes should be patched using materials similar to those used in the applied stucco.

The severity of the damage will determine the sequence of repairs. For instance, if the water-resistive barrier beneath the stucco has been compromised, the entire damaged assembly will require removal.

Scaffold Ties

Scaffolding is often tied to the building with wires or rods. Regardless of the tie system, when the attachments are removed after plastering is complete the holes created in the membrane must be patched to preserve the moisture resistance of the system and to provide an acceptable aesthetic finish. Patching the holes during scaffolding removal is recommended. The following procedure is suggested:

- Cut the wires as close to the connection source as possible and treat the ends for corrosion resistance.
- Back out all threaded rods, if used.
- Using a daub of polyurethane-based, or similar, sealant that can cure in a sealed environment, fill any holes to below the finish line of plaster.
- Apply a fast-setting basecoat material above the sealant leaving room for the finish coat.
- Finish the patch and surrounding area using a finish material that matches the texture and color of the surface being patched.

Scaffolding tie patches will never be completely inconspicuous but should not be so noticeable that the patch is easily identifiable. It is good practice to include a few scaffolding patches, using the specified texture and color, in the jobsite mock-up to allow the architect to review and approve the level of patch the contractor is capable of providing.

This method, without the steps for cutting the wires and backing out the rods, can also be used to patch small holes in stucco.

ⁱ ASTM International C11-18, *Standard Terminology Relating to Gypsum and Related Building Materials and Systems*, West Conshohocken, PA; ASTM International, 2018, www.astm.org