

January 11, 2005

## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

### Re: Metal Supported Rainscreen Stucco on Breatherboard

Due to several recent projects where metal-supported rainscreen stucco developed horizontal stress cracks, HAL INDUSTRIES INC. will now recommend that a building paper slip sheet be used over Breatherboard beneath the wire lath and stucco for metal supported projects.

The purpose of the building paper is to cover the Breatherboard and its joints where the stucco scratch coat might have an opportunity to crack in a continuous line, since this type of scratch coat crack could be a precursor to a full stress crack in the main stucco body once expansion and contraction of the stucco, due to weather cycles, begins.

Building paper beneath wire lath typically presents a rippled surface to the stucco scratch coat, which should induce short randomly occurring shrinkage cracks rather than long continuous ones.

The above procedure may not diminish the effects of other possible contributors to stucco cracks such as lath joints, variations in stucco mixes, improper curing procedures, weather conditions during curing, and perhaps the project designers most controllable factor, the spans between expansion joints (which should be reduced for metal supported stucco). Alternative options would be to cut the support steel into shorter lengths before installing in order to help diminish expansion stresses, and also to consider use of hexagonal wire lath rather than the square style in order to break up the wire pattern.

Kindly call our office if you wish further clarification in this matter.

Sincerely,

HAL INDUSTRIES INC.