

Painting brick masonry is a growing design trend that can enhance the appearance of a wall or structure and allows for an endless selection in colors. When painting brick masonry walls, it is important to consider the brick to be painted, construction details, surface preparation, and paint selection as well as long-term maintenance. The Brick Industry Association offers technical guidance regarding Painting Brick Masonry in BIA Technical Note 6.

For customers considering painting brick masonry walls, Meridian offers these recommendations:

Brick Selection:

- Meridian manufactures bricks specifically designed for painting. Contact your sales representative to find products available in your area.
- Bricks to be painted should meet the applicable ASTM standard for weathering and durability.
- Loose coating materials can separate from brick and should be removed before painting. Bricks with heavy sand or slurry coatings should not be painted.
- Products with manganese or other metallic body additives can produce stains which may bleed through paint when exposed to moisture during installation and cleaning. Bricks with these additives should not be painted unless the new masonry wall is given sufficient time after installation to dry and be observed for these stains. If stains appear, they must be removed prior to applying a masonry coating or else they may show through the finished wall.
- Different products of the same size can be mixed in a wall to be painted, but variations in texture may be visible after painting.
- Bricks prone to efflorescence are not recommended for painting. Any efflorescent salts or stains should be removed before painting.

Construction Details:

- Prevention of water penetration and the allowance for proper drainage are essential in masonry walls which are to be painted as trapped moisture can lead to failures in both the masonry and coating material.
- BIA Technical Notes 7 and 7B provide instructions for designing and constructing masonry walls to prevent water penetration and allow for proper drainage.

Surface Preparation:

- The use of acidic masonry cleaners can result in paint failures and should be avoided.
- A curing period of at least 30 days is recommended before new masonry is painted. This allows for the materials to dry and the acidic properties of the mortar to neutralize.
- After curing, the masonry walls should be inspected for signs of moisture penetration, efflorescence, or stains. Any issues should be addressed before proceeding with painting.
- Follow any additional steps for surface cleaning and preparation provided by the manufacturer of the selected masonry coating.

Paint Selection and Application:

- When selecting paint for brick it is essential the product is breathable and allows for air flow through the masonry and wall cavity.
- There are a variety of manufacturers producing paints designed specifically for brick masonry and have breathability characteristics.
- Follow the selected manufacturer's recommendations for surface preparation, application, cleaning, and maintenance.

