



Painting Textured Drywall

Using joint compound or similar material labeled as spray drywall texture to create a textured profile on new drywall is a common practice in some areas of the country. It is usually referred to as orange-peel or knock-down textured drywall. This material, however, has virtually no moisture resistance and little, if any, integrity or cohesive strength when used as a skim coat. It can be readily removed simply by wiping with a wet sponge. Under certain conditions, this weak and porous surface can cause problems such as diminished mud-crack resistance and washability of applied waterborne flat or low-sheen paints.

Causes of Mud-Cracking

Improperly mixed, uncured or thick applications of a drywall texture may split and crack. When this happens it may appear the paint film has cracked, but in fact the underlying texture layer has actually cracked and opened up through the applied paint film to the surface. Close examination of a crack will usually confirm this fact. Sharp temperature or humidity changes may also cause cracking either before or after being painted. Many manufacturers of joint compound and spray drywall texture require the use of special liquid hardeners or binders to be added when used as drywall texture. These liquids are usually latex resin which promote adhesion and add cohesive strength and general integrity to the texture layer.

Mud-cracking may also occur in the applied paint film or in the texture material itself when flat latex paints are applied too heavily on textured drywall. This is especially likely in areas such as corners and ceiling boundaries. Cracking or splitting occurs, which is caused by interference with the film-forming process or coalescence. When the paint is applied to the textured drywall, the liquid portion of the wet paint film may be quickly sucked down into the porous joint compound layer. This causes an immediate and severe imbalance of the pigment-to-vehicle ratio, which results in cracks or fissures. Surprisingly, higher grade latex flat paints, with a corresponding higher vehicle percentage, are more susceptible to this shock to the film-forming process than lower grade latex flat paints.

Causes of Poor Washability

Poor washability is also caused by the paint vehicle being absorbed into the porous joint compound layer. This leaves a vehicle poor/pigment rich paint film on the surface with diminished washability and burnish resistance.

Painting Recommendations

Use a premium quality primer-sealer to prime the drywall prior to application of the texture. After the texture has been applied and has dried completely, apply another coat of primer followed by two coats of your wall paint of choice for best results. Avoid excessive film builds when applying flat and low-sheen latex paints directly to unprimed textured drywall. Avoid applications during cold ambient conditions and always optimize ventilation.