

## Achieving Level 5 Finish on Plasterboard Surfaces

### What is 'Level 5 Finish'.

There are 6 levels of finish defined in AS/NZS2589 for the installation and finishing of plasterboard. These are named Level 0 to Level 5 inclusive, with Level 5 being the highest standard.

Generally, domestic applications are prepared to a Level 4 Finish unless specifically a higher or lower level of finish is agreed to by all contracting parties.

AS/NZS 2589 states that a Level 5 Finish should be used wherever gloss or semi-gloss paints are to be used, and where critical lighting conditions occur with painted surfaces such as large flat wall and ceiling areas, where severe glancing light will occur from large window openings or skylights, or where artificial silhouette and spot lighting is to be used.

The most common method of achieving a 'Level 5 Finish' is by way of 'skim coating'. Skim coating is a term used to describe a thin finish coat, trowelled or airless sprayed onto the prepared plasterboard surface, and then possibly sanded, to achieve a smooth and even finish. It is normally less than 1mm in thickness and is applied over the entire surface to fill imperfections in the joint work, smooth the paper texture and provide a uniform surface for decorating.

### Achieving a 'Level 5 Finish'.

CSR Gyprock has trialled several possible methods of achieving a 'Level 5 Finish' on walls and ceilings and this data sheet discusses methods which are considered practical for typical on-site situations.

It is important to note that achieving a satisfactory 'Level of Finish' is dependant on many factors, including appropriate preparation and the skill of the applicators. Therefore CSR Gyprock cannot guarantee in any way the coating process or any other processes used to achieve the desired level of finish.

#### **PREPARATION.**

Level 5 Finish cannot be achieved without a high degree of preparatory work. It is critical to achieving a successful outcome that each of these requirements is reached and checked prior to proceeding to the next step.

Table 1 (on page 2) summarises the various preparation requirements for installations on timber and steel substrates. Detailed installation information is provided in the Gyprock® Residential Installation Guide, N°GYP547.

The following points should also noted:

- All framing/substrate must be prepared in accordance with the Gyprock® Guide N°GYP547 and/or AS/NZS 2589:1 'Gypsum linings in residential and light commercial construction – Application and Finishing.'
- The maximum permissible frame deviation is 3mm. Carefully check and correct any problem areas before proceeding.
- Plasterboard must be applied horizontally except that a single sheet may be fixed vertically where it covers the whole wall. Horizontal sheeting also minimises the effect of glancing light and reduces jointing by up to 25% and places wall joints at a more convenient level for jointing.
- All joints must be set and finished in accordance with Gyprock® Guide N°GYP547 and/or AS/NZS 2589:1. Recess and butt joints should be taped and set with a three coat system. Internal angles should be taped and set with a two coat system. External angles should be set with metal bead and a three coat system. Fastener heads and accessories should receive three coats of compound. Allow each coat to dry before proceeding.
- All indents or gouges shall be filled to a flat finish in the plane of the surface of the board. All joint compound should be carefully sanded to a smooth finish free of tool marks and ridges.
- Wall and ceiling linings must be kept free of any dirt, oil or other foreign matter which could cause a lack of bonding.

#### **METHOD 1 – SPRAY APPLICATION.**

- **Skim Coat Material (recommended):**

Gyprock Total Joint Cement mixed to consistency suitable for spray application. Suggestion: 1.75 litres of water per 15kg of Gyprock Total Joint Cement.

- **Spray Unit (suggested):**

Titan Speeflo or equivalent.

# Achieving Level 5 Finish with Gyprock® Plasterboard

## PROCEDURE.

CSR Gyprock found the following techniques provided the best results during testing.

1. Install framing and plasterboard to Level 5 requirements.
2. Prepare equipment and compound mix. Titan Speeflo should be running at 40 PSI or as recommended by the manufacturer.
3. First coat should be sprayed horizontally.  
Trialling the spraying technique and the compound dispensing from the nozzle on test surface is highly recommended.
4. Second coat should be sprayed vertically.
5. Third coat sprayed horizontally
6. Sand and prepare for paint finish. Depending on the desired finish sanding may not be required. If sanding is required, use 150 to 180 grit sand paper .

### IMPORTANT NOTES – METHOD 1.

- To avoid ‘tram tracking’, we suggest holding the spray gun nozzle approximately 400 to 500mm away from the surface. This may vary depending on the viscosity.
- Drying time will vary depending on ambient temperature. Each spray coat should be dry before applying the subsequent coat.

- The number of coats will depend on total coat thickness required, however best results are achieved by applying thin coats, slowly building the thickness. This generally results in less sanding and there is less chance of slumping (runs).

## METHOD 2 – ROLLER APPLICATION.

- **Skim Coat Material (recommended):**  
Gyprock Total Joint Cement mixed to consistency suitable for roller application.
- **Roller Equipment (suggested):**  
Large lambswool roller.  
Foam roller (without nap).

## PROCEDURE.

1. Install framing and plasterboard to Level 5 requirements.
2. Prepare equipment and compound mix.
3. Apply the first coat using a large lambswool roller.
4. Immediately follow with back rolling using a foam roller to flatten the surface. Allow to dry.
5. If required, apply subsequent coat(s) as described in Step 3 and 4.  
Allow to dry. Sand and prepare for paint finish. Use 150 to 180 grit sand paper.

**Table 1. – Summary of Installation Requirements for Level 5 Finish.**

Level of Finish	Max. Frame Alignment Deviation mm	Horizontal Wall Sheet Fixing	Joint between Frame Members and Back-block				Adhesive + Fastener Fixing	Screw Only Fixing	Approved Internal Corner Fixing System	Stopping & External Corner Metals	Jointing and Finishing Butt and Recess Joints Internal and External Corners
			Ceilings Butt	Recessed Butt	Walls Recessed	Walls Recessed					
<b>GYPROCK Installation Requirements for Category ‘A’ Timber</b>											
5	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓ or *	✓	✓	✓	Tape Coat + Second Coat + Finish Coat + Skim Coat to the entire surface
<b>GYPROCK Installation Requirements for Category ‘B’ Timber</b>											
5	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓ or *	✓	✓	✓	Tape Coat + Second Coat + Finish Coat + Skim Coat to the entire surface
<b>GYPROCK Installation Requirements for Steel Frame</b>											
5	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓ or *	✓	✓	✓	Tape Coat + Second Coat + Finish Coat + Skim Coat to the entire surface

Level 5 – \* Screw only fixing may be used when fastening to metal furring system.

Where a butt joint in a wall is less than 400mm long and is located more than 2 metres from the floor, there may be no need to provide back-blocking.



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