

Put down the torch, and take a step back!

Have you ever had a situation where you have finished your work and stepped back in satisfaction, having done everything you could to produce an excellent finish – only to have your world drop out from under you when the builder turns up with a torch or a high powered light, holding it parallel to the wall and proceeding to red mark and argue about every blemish they can see?

You then try to explain that this is not normal lighting conditions, but they flatly state that any blemish identified is a defect...

I bet you have all been in this situation. I expect many of you have then grudgingly spent the next few days going over every little mark possible because you want to please the builder.

What you may not realise is that using torches or high powered lights along the surface of the project is great for use in finishing your work but **“are not deemed suitable for performing a subjective visual inspection of interior surfaces.”** This statement is referenced in the Australian Standard AS 2589:2007 referring to high intensity floodlights.

Using high powered lights or torches along the surface of the project is great for use in finishing your work but “are not deemed suitable for performing a subjective visual inspection of interior surfaces.”

Why is it not suitable? Because shining any light along the surface generates a critical lighting situation. Critical lighting is defined as:

Natural or artificial light projected across the surface at a low incidence angle. Critical lighting will often create a shadow effect on any blemishes or bumps no matter how minute on the surface. Non critical lighting is what we strive for in decorating homes where the light striking the surface is at right angles or diffuse therefore having less opportunity to create a shadow effect on the surface.

Architects and Engineers go out of their way to design buildings minimising the influence of critical

lighting because of this very effect of highlighting surface blemishes. For a builder to create an artificial environment and use that for determining if your work is up to standard is not appropriate.

Next time the big torch comes out, you can show them this document and advise the builder that normal lighting conditions is a requirement for undertaking final inspections.

If you find yourself facing this situation, you have every right to advise that they are creating an artificial critical lighting environment and the Australian Standard requires a Level 5 finish where critical lighting is evident. If you have been asked to deliver a Level 4 finish then it cannot be inspected under critical lighting conditions. The table on the following Pre-Paint Sign-Off Form presents viewing distances and comments for undertaking inspections which also acts as a great tool for handing over between plastering and painting.

Next time the the high intensity light, torch or similar comes out, you can show them this document and advise the builder that normal lighting conditions is a requirement for undertaking final inspections. As a final note, if the normal lighting conditions are “critical lighting conditions” and the designer has only requested a Level 4 finish – it is the designer/architect that has the problem – not the plasterer.

For further information on standards and tolerances, please refer to the AWCI Trade Guidelines or contact your local state office.

Pre-Paint Sign-Off Form

Inspection Guidelines

Please refer to Aust/NZ Standard AS/NZS 2589:2007 which contains specified allowable tolerances for plaster jointing and external and internal angle finishes.

Recess Edge Joints

Recess edge joints are unacceptable if:

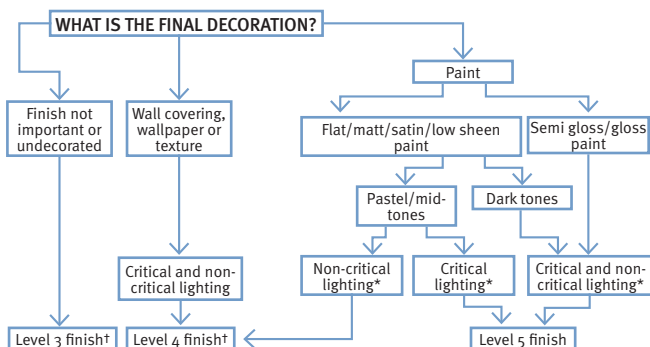
- The total width is less than 250mm.
- The joint is hollow, that is, light can be seen in the centre of the joint when viewed with a straight edge placed at right angles across the joint.
- The joint is overbuilt, that is, the build-up of the joint exceeds 2mm over the width of the joint.
- The joint build is less than 2mm over the width of the joint but the profile of the joint exhibits a distinct peak or ridge at the centre, that is, the joint does not have an even convex profile over its full width.
- Gouges, scratches, voids or pock marks are visible in the joint cement/compound.

Note:- The compound has to be sanded (scratched) by the abrasive to produce a smooth finish.

Where critical lighting, dark tones and semi or full gloss paints are used a Level 5 finish is required, and having more than one of these elements present will considerably reduce the finished decorated product quality, as a consequence.

Level 5 does not mean the surface is free of texture variation. Minor surface imperfections may still be visible, in accordance with the standard.

Levels of finish- refer to the table below

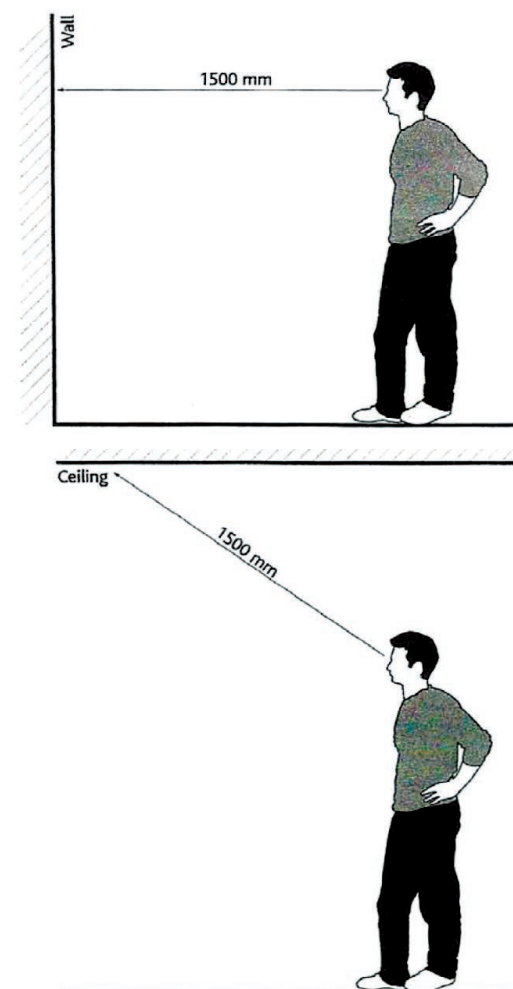


* Critical lighting: natural or artificial light projected across a surface at a low incidence angle. Non-critical lighting: when the light striking the surface is diffuse or at right angles, or both.
 † May not be suitable for subsequent decoration to high levels of quality in the future. See Level 4 or Level 5 for upgrading requirements.

Guidelines

It is recommended that visual inspections of finished surfaces be carried out in normal daylight conditions. No torches, artificial light to be used (only to assist the plasterer carrying out the work and not for inspection purposes.) To avoid glancing light, these inspections should be carried out between the hours of 10am and 2pm. The inspection of a particular surface should be carried out at a distance of 1.5 to 1.8 metres and as per the diagram. Where differences of appearance are not clearly discernible, then that finish is normally considered acceptable.

Two drawings illustrating minimum normal viewing positions and distances for walls and ceilings.



2 Non-critical light is defined in s.6.7(4) Australian Standard AS/NZS 2589.1: Gypsum linings in residential and light commercial construction – Application and finishing, Part 1: Gypsum plasterboard. Refer also to CSIRO Division of Building Research Report No TR 90/1: Illumination and Decoration of Flat Surfaces.

