

Achieving a Level 5 Finish on Plasterboard Surfaces

What is a Level 5 Finish?

There are 3 levels of finish defined in AS/NZS2589 for the installation and finishing of plasterboard. These are named Level 3 to Level 5 inclusive, with Level 5 being the highest standard.

Generally, residential applications are prepared to a Level 4 Finish unless a higher or lower level of finish is agreed to by all contracting parties. However, modern trends towards open plan living and large windows increase the light in buildings, which offers more chance to see the textural differences between jointing compound and plasterboard paper on the wall and ceiling despite good plastering workmanship.

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 or glancing light will occur from situations such as:

- Floor to ceiling windows
- Windows directly adjacent to walls
- Unshaded batten holder ceiling lights
- Ceiling mounted fluorescent lights
- Wall lights and downlights close to walls
- Windows at the end of long corridors
- Brightly lit rooms
- Lights installed just below skillion/raked ceilings
- Reflections of light from water features

To achieve a level 5 finish, a suitable material is required to be roller applied, sprayed or hand trowelled (often referred to as Skim Coating) onto the surface of the prepared plasterboard to create a uniform surface.

Achieving a Level 5 Finish

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

It is important to note that achieving a satisfactory 'Level of Finish' is dependent on many factors, including appropriate preparation and the skill of the applicators.

PREPARATION

A 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 3) summarises the various preparation requirements for installations on timber and steel substrates. Detailed installation information is provided in the Gyprock Residential and Commercial Installation Guides.

The following points should also be noted:

- All framing/substrates must be prepared in accordance with the Gyprock Residential Installation Guide and/or AS/NZS 2589 '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, reduces jointing by up to 25% and places wall joints at a more convenient level for jointing. Vertical sheeting should only be considered where the long joints will run parallel to the direction of the light.
- All joints must be set and finished in accordance with the Gyprock Residential Installation Guide and/or AS/NZS 2589. 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 a metal bead and three coat system. Fastener heads and accessories should receive three coats of compound.
- All indents or gouges should be filled to a flat finish in the plane of the surface of the board. The 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 – ROLLER APPLICATION

Product Type: Surfer

- Gyprock One Finish

1. Install framing and plasterboard to Level 5 requirements.
2. Stir gently prior to use. Thinning with water may reduce performance and is not recommended. Do not mix with other materials.
3. A polyester 10-12mm nap roller is recommended for general application of this product. The chosen nap length will affect the texture level and amount of product applied. A shorter nap roller will provide a smoother finish but may also require additional coats to provide adequate coverage to the wall/ceiling area.
4. Roll the product evenly on the surface in a similar method to applying paint. For best results complete each full wall or ceiling area in one pass to minimise any visible overlap areas on sections completed at different times.
5. For superior hiding power, the application of 2 coats is recommended.
6. The product should be touch dry in approximately 60-90 minutes under normal drying conditions (25°C and 50% humidity) when applied at 0.2-0.3mm wet film thickness. Allow longer drying times under cool, moist conditions and or when applied at high film builds.



- The product may be sanded depending on the type of finish desired. For a fine surface, free of any sign of texture, lightly sand using 180 to 220 grit sandpaper. A mechanical sander is recommended for ease of use. Sanding may not be required where a short nap or spray application has been used, or where some level of texture is acceptable.
- Allow product to dry for 16-24 hours prior to final painting and decoration.

Product Type: All-purpose jointing compound

- Gyprock Ultra-AP or
- Gyprock Pre-mixed Total Joint Cement

- Install framing and plasterboard to Level 5 requirements.
- Mix to a consistency suitable for roller application. Water should be added to the compound gradually until the desired consistency is achieved. The goal is to have a compound thin enough so that it can be rolled smoothly, without sagging, with a paint roller.
- For Ultra-AP add 1.75 litres of water per 15kg, and for Total Joint Cement add 2.3 litres of water per 15kg.
- Using a long nap roller cover (13mm), roll the compound evenly on the surface to be skimmed. It is best to work in small sections of 0.5-1.0 metre.
- Using a wide broad knife, remove any excess compound to achieve a smooth flat finish while the compound is still wet. The key to roll skimming a wall is to not leave excess compound on the surface to avoid more sanding than required. Roll skimming works the compound into pores of the plasterboard sheet to achieve a similar consistency to that of joints and screw heads.
- Once the compound is completely dry, lightly sand using 150 to 180 grit sandpaper, to remove any minor imperfections.
- A good light source aimed along the surface is necessary to see any imperfections that were not covered by roller skim coating. If minor imperfections can't be removed by further sanding, application of a second coat should be considered before final decoration.



- The product may be sanded depending on the type of finish desired. For a fine surface, free of any sign of texture then lightly sand using 180 to 220 grit sandpaper. A mechanical sander is recommended for ease of use. Sanding may not be required where spray application has been used.
- Allow product to dry for 16-24 hours prior to final painting and decoration.

Product Type: All-purpose jointing compound

- Gyprock Ultra-AP, or
- Gyprock Pre-mixed Total Joint Cement

- Install framing and plasterboard to Level 5 requirements.
- Mix to a consistency suitable for spray application.
- For Ultra-AP add 2.3 litres of water per 15kg, for Total Joint Cement add 3 litres of water per 15kg.
- Run airless spray equipment at 3000 Psi with a 19-23 thou airless spray tip.
- Apply using a "cross-hatch" method to produce a film build of 180 to 220 microns. This involves holding the gun approximately 600mm from the wall and spraying an even coat horizontally across the substrate side to side with a 50% overlap for the initial scratch coat.
- To complete the application, spray the next coat up and down vertically. To avoid excess build up and minimise clogging of the tip do not release the trigger at the end of the stroke but use a slight flicking motion off the area before commencing the return pass. Moving the gun at a constant correct speed will deposit a full, wet coating without runs or sag.
- Sand with 150 to 180 grit sand paper.
- Allow product to dry for 16-24 hours prior to final painting and decoration.



METHOD 2 – SPRAY APPLICATION

Product Type: Surfer

- Gyprock One Finish

- Install framing and plasterboard to Level 5 requirements.
- Spray Equipment Recommendation: Run equipment at 2,500-3,000psi with a 17 thou–23 thou airless spray tip depending on job and user preference. A 250 micron in-line filter can be used. Do not use fine fillers.
- Apply using a "cross-hatch" method to produce a film build of 180 to 220 microns. This involves holding the gun approximately 600mm from the wall and spraying an even coat horizontally across the substrate side to side with a 50% overlap for the initial scratch coat.
- To complete the application, spray the next coat up and down vertically. To avoid excess build up and minimise clogging of the tip do not release the trigger at the end of the stroke but use a slight flicking motion off the area before commencing the return pass. Moving the gun at a constant correct speed will deposit a full, wet coating without runs or sag.
- This product is a high solid material which may clog at the spray tip if it has not been cleaned properly from previous use. To avoid potential spatter, a clean shot accessory at the tip is recommended.



IMPORTANT NOTES

- One Finish can be applied on painted surfaces after sanding.
- Avoid application in temperatures below 10°C, or when humidity is above 85%. Ensure the surface is not subject to direct air flow when the product is being applied or still wet.
- The number of coats will depend on total coat thickness required, and level of expectation.
- For all applications, it is highly recommended to apply a test area first for acceptability by the specifier/owner before widespread work is conducted.

PAINTING AND DECORATION

Finishes applied to plasterboard surfaces can have a significant effect on the perceived quality of the installation, particularly where critical lighting conditions exist.

- Textured or heavy patterned finishes tend to hide imperfections
- Matt finishes minimise imperfection visibility
- Semi-gloss and gloss finishes highlight imperfections
- Light colours are less likely to show imperfections and impact damage

Gyprock recommends paint systems consisting of one coat of a plasterboard sealer followed by two coats of finishing paint. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and recoating.

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 & Back-block				Adhesive & Fastener Fixing	Screw Only Fixing	Approved Internal Corner Fixing System	Stopping & External Corner Metals	Jointing & Finishing Butt & Recess Joints Internal & External Corners	
			Ceilings		Walls							
			Butt	Recessed	Butt	Recessed						
Gyprock Installation Requirements for Category 'A' Timber												
5	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓	or	*	✓	✓	Tape Coat + Second Coat + Finish Coat + Surfacer or All-purpose compound to entire surface
Gyprock Installation Requirements for Category 'B' Timber												
5	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓	or	*	✓	✓	Tape Coat + Second Coat + Finish Coat + Surfacer or All-purpose compound to entire surface
Gyprock Installation Requirements for Steel Frame												
5	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓	or	*	✓	✓	Tape Coat + Second Coat + Finish Coat + Surfacer or All-purpose compound to 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.

Max. frame alignment deviation is 3mm for 90% of the framed area, and 4mm for the remaining 10% when measured over 1.8m in length.

Manufactured for life warranty

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Health & Safety

Information on any known health risks of our products and how to handle them safely is on their package and/or the documentation accompanying them. Additional information is listed in the Safety Data sheet – available from gyprock.com.au



For more information about Gyprock® products, visit gyprock.com.au or call 1300 306 556

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