

Site Guidelines for Lime Mortar

1. Introduction

When using hydraulic lime mortars for construction or renovation work there are some important differences that need to be adhered to compared to using sand and cement mixes.

The following document gives an overview of these differences; more detailed information is available on specific topics and these can be obtained from EcoRight on request or via www.ecoright.co.uk

2. Protection

In order to ensure that the mortar achieves its optimum initial set suitable protection against extremes of temperature, driving rain, sunlight and wind must be taken. Lime mortar takes longer to achieve its full set and colour when compared to sand and cement meaning that protection during the first few days after use are critical.

Lime mortar **MUST NOT** be used above temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius. For colder temperatures, **DO NOT** lay bricks if temperature is **5°C** and falling or **ONLY USE** if temperatures are **3°C** and rising (same Code of Practice for all mortar types)

3. Site Practice

Before laying bricks/stone they should be suitably wetted to achieve a good bond between mortar and masonry. Masonry with high porosity should be pre-wetted as too high suction rate will have the effect of the mortar going "dead"

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Failure to do so will cause the moisture in the mortar to be sucked out resulting in an ineffective bond and pointing to be very difficult

The higher the porosity of the masonry, the more wetting is required ranging from dipping the masonry into a bucket of water to spraying the units with a hose (allow excess water to drain)

4. Preparation

Prior to re-pointing joints should be raked out to at least twice the joint width or until a stable base is reached. Joints should be free of dust and other contamination.

5. Mixing

EcoRight hydraulic lime mortars are supplied pre-mixed and only require the addition of clean, potable water – “Just Add Water”

Mixing time is upto 10 minutes and can be reworked for up to 12hrs

On no account should any other additives be used such as cement, fairy liquid, anti-freeze or additional sand.

EcoRight mortars are factory batched under strict quality control to achieve specific strengths and colours.

Top Tip: By mixing mortar at the end of the day, it can be left overnight and then re-worked first thing the next day. This will help to control evaporation and improve consistency of the mix which will increase no. of courses laid per day

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6. Laying Brick and Blocks

Lime mortar can be used to lay bricks and blocks up to 1.2m height in any one day thus reducing the risk of instability. A reduction in this height is recommended for dense bricks with lower water absorption and in adverse weather conditions.

7. Colour

Lime mortar will take time to achieve its true colour, typically 1-2 months under normal circumstances but can take longer in variable weather conditions

Due to its vapour permeability, lime mortar can draw impurities and minerals out of the bricks and this can result in a “bloom” deposit on the mortar. This can be simply washed off with water and \ or a soft brush or left to naturally wash off with rainfall.

8. Health and Safety

Refer to Health and Safety guidelines for full details however it should be specifically noted that hydraulic lime is highly alkaline and therefore suitable PPE should be utilised.

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