

Plastering to floor level with applied skirting

When applying a skim coat of gypsum plaster/finishing product onto internal walls, it is quite common to see the plaster terminate or feather out approximately 25-30mm from the unfinished floor before it is ultimately covered by skirting.

Whilst this is generally considered to be an acceptable practice, it is worth considering the reasons why it is done, and whether the labour/install specification should make a reference.

Why is it done?

In very simple terms, if skirting is going to be applied to the face of the wall/lining, then there is no need for the plaster to meet the face of the unfinished floor.

In practice, the process of applying plaster so close to the floor risks picking up contaminants (dust/small aggregate) from the unfinished floor that is then fed into the application which in turn will affect the quality of the finish. There is also more risk of damage to tools which will also affect finishing/flatness.

In light of the above factors it can also be very difficult to ensure that there isn't a small quadrant or flare at the very bottom edge that will adversely affect the skirting application, causing snagging issues later.

NOTE: In addition to the skim coat, it is common for moisture control purposes to terminate plasterboard 10mm from unfinished floor level, but it is important to note that this gap should be filled according to manufacturer's instructions.

Specification and Benchmarking

Where there is no specification regarding this level of finishing or practice, it can be assumed that this practice will take place for the benefit of time and resources on behalf of the contractor.

Before specifying, you should consult guidance and evidence from the drywall and/or plaster manufacturer to check if they have recommendations regarding either specific performance criteria of the wall, or proprietary gypsum plaster/finishing products that will affect this decision.

It is essential that the principal contractor establishes a benchmark for the quality and application of finish which can be referred to throughout the contract.



Photographs of drywall with plastering short of floor level prior to skirting application.



Photograph of drywall with board and plaster 10mm short of floor level (prior to filling).

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