The industry recommends keeping the exposure of the water-resistive barrier (WRB) to the very minimum prior to covering with the exterior cladding. Prolonged exposure to sunlight, wind, moisture, job site dust and dirt, and other detrimental elements can promote degradation of the WRB. Prolonged degradation may contribute to failures of the exterior envelope and moisture migration.

**ASPHALT SATURATED KRAFT PAPER:**
Allowable time exposures for WRB’s vary due to atmospheric conditions, exposure to sunlight and abuse resistance. Generally, grade “D” building paper can be exposed to the elements for thirty (30) days. Exposure to extreme elements can shorten this period and protected areas can have longer exposure times. Hot, dry and extreme exposure to the sunlight can leach the asphalt out of the grade “D” paper. This is visible as the paper fades from a rich, dark black, to a light brown or grey.

The top layer of asphalt saturated kraft paper will wrinkle when wet. Wet plaster, when applied swells the restrained paper to form shallow channels on the back of the plaster. When the plaster sets, the asphalt paper dries and pulls back slightly from the plaster to create a shallow and effective drainage (weep) system. This is an anticipated and desired phenomenon.

**SYNTHETIC HOUSEWRAPS:**
Most housewraps are able to withstand longer exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light as compared to asphalt saturated kraft papers. When using synthetic wraps, consult manufacturer for allowable time exposure. Housewraps should have the same bond breaking ability with cement to perform similar to asphalt saturated kraft papers or a single layer of grade “D” paper can be applied over the housewrap prior to the application of the lath.

Portland cement plaster (stucco) is the outermost part of a moisture management, exterior envelope assembly. Even during periods of sustained precipitation, rainwater may saturate into the plaster, but rarely reaches the WRB. Incidental moisture typically finds its way behind the cement membrane through large cracks, penetrations and/or gaps in trim accessories. The WRB is a secondary barrier and will keep this incidental moisture out of the wall cavity. Applied properly and integrated in a “shingle-fashion” with flashings, the WRB directs moisture back out of the envelope via the installed weep screeds.

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