

Grouting Hollow Metal Frames

Grout, when used in accordance with industry guidelines, can improve frame durability, sound deadening, and, depending on wall construction, increase frame anchorage strength. Grouting of the frame does not increase door durability, nor is it required for fire-rated frames. For most commercial applications, grouting of mullions and other closed sections is not recommended.

For applications covered by ANSI/NAAMM HMMA 862, “Guide Specifications for Commercial Security Hollow Metal Doors and Frames,” and ANSI/NAAMM HMMA 863, “Guide Specifications for Detention Security Hollow Metal Doors and Frames,” the standards require that “frame jambs shall be fully grouted to provide added security protection against battering, wedging, spreading, and other means of forcing open the door”.

Grout is a water-based product. If not used properly, it can destroy the opening in a very short time. Grout can be either “mortar”, which is a masonry mixture of lime, cement, sand, and water, or “plaster”, which is a gypsum-based product.

Plaster grout dries by exposure to air. When a frame member is filled solid with plaster grout, only those areas exposed to air will dry and harden, while the center remains wet (uncured). The water remaining in the plaster grout can rust the frame from the inside. Plaster grout should not be used.

Mortar grout cures by chemical reaction and hardens throughout. Use mortar grout.

Frames are not designed to act as forms for grout. Grout must have a maximum 4 in. slump and be hand troweled in place. Bracing of the frame may be necessary prior to grouting to prevent sagging of the header or bowing of the jamb due to weight or pressure of the grout. Grout should not be installed after gypsum wallboard is installed, as the liquid within the grout will deteriorate the wallboard.

When dictated by temperatures, anti-freezing agents for mortar may be recommended by specifications. These agents can adversely affect metal, and all surfaces in contact with the grout must be coated with a corrosion resistant material.

It is recommended that the contractor be responsible for the grouting and for any required barrier coating. It is also his responsibility to use care in the application of the grout.