



ASSOCIATION OF
INTERIOR SPECIALISTS

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Site guide

Wallcoverings



AIS Site Guide for Wallcoverings



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Site Guide for Wallcoverings

Introduction

Only wallcoverings give you the combination of colour, pattern, texture and finish that create a unique look and feel. A painted wall can deliver a feel, but it can not easily achieve a look, or a look and feel combination.

Fibreglass, anaglypta and woodchip all have similar limitations. This is why contract wallcoverings are so versatile.

There are literally thousands of products to choose from. This huge variety of choice gives hundreds of possible look and feel combinations. Wallcovering industry experts are constantly seeking different ways to achieve looks and feels through new designs and materials. Wallcovering really does let you achieve the result in the way that suits you.

This guide will help you identify the many different types of wall surfaces you will find on site(s), and give guidance on how to prepare them. Additionally, it advises on the appropriate adhesive systems and tools. Also covered are methods of application and certain installation techniques, which should assist you in achieving a perfect result every time.

Note: This document must always be used in conjunction with a manufacturer's current Hanging Information Leaflet.

Association of Interior Specialists

A single source serving the interior fit-out industry, the **Association of Interior Specialists** represents companies involved in the manufacture, supply and installation of all aspects of interior fit-outs and refurbishment including suspended ceilings, partitioning, operable walls, drylining, platform floors, and office furniture and fittings. Our members operate in retail and commercial offices, the public sector, banks and building societies, hotels and leisure, airports, hospitals, and so on.

AIS membership is not automatic and applicants are subject to strict vetting procedures. In the case of contractors, this includes inspection of recent contracts to assess workmanship standards. On being accepted into membership of the Association, members agree to abide by its code of conduct and conditions of membership.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Association are to:

- Raise, maintain and ensure continuity of standards.
- Be a source of quality membership.
- Provide a single voice and industry leadership for the interiors sector.
- Encourage and promote the use of members' products and services.
- Provide benefits to and represent the interests of its members.

In support of its objectives, the AIS encourages the application and use of interior systems; the development of suitable materials and systems; the use of correct installation practices; care in the selection and use of materials and systems; the use of agreed standard contract documents and

contractual procedures. It is also concerned with the promotion of closer working relationships with the specifier and related specialist trades.

To achieve its overall objective of providing clients with the quality installations to which they aspire, the AIS requires the standards, materials, service and workmanship of its members to be of a very high order.

Membership and code of conduct

Membership of the Association is not automatic and applicants are subject to stringent vetting procedures. On being accepted into the Association, all members agree to abide by its code of conduct and conditions of membership.

The AIS code of conduct requires members:

- To conduct their business in a manner that will reflect credit on the Association and themselves.
- To adopt and commit to the principles and practices laid down by the Association.
- To act with the utmost integrity towards others, be they members or non-members, and at all times exercise high standards of business practice and workmanship.
- At all times not knowingly to mislead clients, architects or other employing bodies by fact or implication as to the performance of their products or systems.
- To ensure that they are, and remain, conversant with and adhere to the relevant current British Standards (and, where appropriate, international and European Standards) and other relevant technical Standards, Regulations and practices.
- In so far as they are able, to ensure that their products or systems are tested and/or comply with the recognised Standards specified by the client or statutory authority.

The Board and committee members bind themselves to treat in complete confidence private information concerning members of the Association, and information which is considered likely to bring AIS members into disrepute will be brought to the attention of the member(s) concerned before further action is taken.

Materials – Types of Wallcoverings

Vinyl Wallcoverings

Vinyl wallcoverings come in various widths and with different types of backers. Width-wise, they are usually categorised as follows: wide width is generally 130 - 140cm wide, medium width can be between 70 - 100cm, and narrow width can be between 52 - 70cm. Generally speaking, backer types are either paper or fabric. What usually dictates which particular backer is used is the durability needed.

Low to medium wearing areas, such as offices, hotel bedrooms etc, a contract quality paper backed wallcovering would be suitable, however, for hard wearing areas, such as corridors, staircases, lift lobbies, a fabric backed wallcovering is ideal, as these type of products are very tough and durable.

Wide width 130cm, paper backed vinyl (PBV)

The key to the PBV range is that it offers excellent choice at value for money prices. Choices can range from simple background designs and plain colours to more contemporary accent-type designs and sophisticated embosses.

Paper backed wallcoverings offer all the benefits of colour and design, but they would generally be used for low traffic areas where exceptionally high durability is not of prime concern.

Narrow width (53-70cm) vinyl wallcoverings

This product type is available in both paper backed vinyl and fabric backed vinyl. Most manufacturers offer a range of narrow width products suitable for a variety of applications, typically the hotel and leisure markets. For example a 52cm wide collection which can be classic damasks and motifs, fire rated to UK standards and washable. It must be noted that this particular product may not be totally suitable for partition systems because of its narrow width.

Medium width vinyl wallcoverings

New to the market, medium width wallcoverings are designed so that you can get quick results with the minimum of fuss. It must be noted that this particular product may not be totally suitable for partition systems because of its 90cm – 100cm width.

Wide width 130cm, fabric backed vinyl (FBV)

A tough durable fabric backed vinyl provides enhanced wear and tear performance, making them especially suitable for 'high traffic areas' such as corridors, lobbies and stairwells.

Fabric backed products use either a cotton scrim or non-woven polyester backer for extra strength and are suitable for heavier weight and deeper embossed products. You can choose from a huge selection of designs, from modern geometric to classic florals or plain background colours to very architectural sophisticated embosses.

Fabric backed vinyl ranges have prices to suit all budgets. All products are completely strippable and come in a variety of widths from 52cm to 1.3m to suit every application.

Biocide antimicrobial protection

It does not take much, in a so-called 'normal' environment, for synthetic materials to become a breeding ground for micro organisms such as mould, mildew, algae and, more worryingly, bacteria.

Therefore, in specific areas, such as treatment rooms in hospitals, or nursing homes, food preparation areas or laboratories, where such micro organisms would have catastrophic consequences, there are now wallcoverings that contain a biocide such as Bio-Pruf - an antimicrobial protection.

Wallcoverings containing biocide provide a built-in armour, protecting and controlling mould, mildew, bacteria, yeasts and algae attack. Because biocide is added during the manufacturing process, it becomes an integral part of the wallcovering, so it cannot wash off and will not wash out. This antimicrobial protection is the added value that can turn an ordinary wallcovering into a premium quality product. Long after the purchase, your customer will realize that the added value of biocide

antimicrobial protection has been well worth the price. Biocide protects their products from premature microbial degradation and failure, thus increasing their effective and useful life.

Glassfilm

Glassfilm is designed to enhance the beauty of glass and avoid the 'goldfish bowl' effect of modern commercial offices. It is a specially manufactured, non-coloured decorative/privacy film for glass partitions. Fire rated and UV absorbent, Glassfilm is available in a wide range of highly decorative designs.

Glassfilm gives the effect of etched glass at a fraction of the cost and, when professionally installed, gives the appearance of being part of the glass itself, rather than an additional layer.

Alternatives

Contract wallcoverings are not just limited to paper and fabric backed products. The wallcovering industry continually looks for new, alternative materials that can be used to develop unique wall effects. Alternative contract wallcoverings include:

- Modern, luxurious fabrics and textiles (silks, suedes and cottons).
- Natural woven grasspapers.
- Woven fibreglass coverings.

There are even decorative but functional wallcovering products available that you can 'write on then wipe off' turning walls into a whiteboard.

These are just some of the alternative wallcoverings available. Contact your local supplier's representative for further details on the extensive range of product type which are now available. Do not limit the products you use out of habit; there really are huge choices available today for you and your customer.

Fire Regulations

Fire safety is a key concern to contract wallcoverings manufacturers. Contract wallcoverings can be tested to comply with British, German and French fire regulations, plus other local regulations as required. In the UK, 0 and 1 wallcoverings achieve the highest grades against Fire Propagation and Surface Spread of Flame under BS 476, part 6 and 7 tests. In France, wallcoverings can be tested to achieve the classified M1 rating.

Many products are now tested to the new Euro Class Fire Classification – EN 13501, which will eventually replace the current British, German and French standards. Therefore, these Euro Class products can be specified for projects in the future with complete confidence that there will be no conflict when these new regulations come into force.

The above-mentioned fire testing procedures for contract wallcovering are conducted in strict accordance to the regulations laid down by the independent testing houses, who issue these certificates. This involves the testing of a 'system', [eg the substrate, wallcovering primers and adhesives and wallcovering].

Each supplier or manufacturer works closely on this issue with their own adhesive manufacturer. Their products are tested using only the manufacturer's specified primer and adhesive system, which therefore forms an integral part of the system tested and certificated.

It would therefore not be possible to claim the wallcoverings fire certification, if an adhesive other than the manufacturer's adhesives were used. This issue is often overlooked and can have costly consequences when fire certification is scrutinised and the system used is found to be different from the system tested.

Apart from invalidating the fire certification as described earlier, we would always recommend you use the manufacturer's specified adhesive system for its required bond strength. Whilst we are well aware that tradesmen do successfully use other brands of adhesive with various products, the use of adhesives such as powder or tub pastes, in conjunction with a heavy duty contract wallcovering may not provide sufficient bond strength for this weight of product, resulting in an increased risk of delamination and the need for costly remedial works.

Checklist

With every order of wallcoverings you will find (as part of your delivery) a comprehensive set of hanging instructions. These will give guidance on various issues such as site conditions, preparation, tools, primers/adhesives and hanging/application guidance, giving tips on the best ways to install the wallcoverings so that you achieve a problem free finish every time.

1. Check materials are as ordered and as specified. Identification samples are usually available on request from your supplier.
2. Check materials are free from damage.
3. Check there is sufficient material from your batches, before cutting and hanging.
4. Never use material from different batches on the same wall.
5. Check each new roll matches materials already hung for an acceptable colour match.
6. Use only the supplier's recommended adhesive system in strict accordance with the container's instructions.
7. Ensure that site conditions are conducive to a successful installation, such as adequate lighting which is required for proper installation before, during and after fixing (eg adequate lighting and cleanliness to ensure you can see and work safely to avoid costly soiling and damage).
8. The site should be of an ambient minimum temperature of 12C - 55F and there should be good ventilation during the hanging and drying of the wallcoverings.
9. At the start of the job, most manufacturers advise that you cut and hang three drops only, inspect before proceeding. Stand back after each drop to check you are achieving an acceptable finish.
10. Stop hanging if you think the result may not be acceptable.
11. Manufacturers advise that no claims can be accepted once three drops have either been hung, or once material has been cut.
12. Keep all roll labels until the work has been accepted.

Surface Identification

When you begin any decorating project it is important to have a close look at all the different wall surfaces onto which you will be working. Take a few minutes to walk around the job to check the condition of the walls.

In most cases this will be straightforward, particularly in new builds with new plaster or drylining. However, in older buildings that are being redecorated or refurbished, you are more likely to find walls that may need special attention and preparation due to their poor condition or build up of surface coatings.

Firstly, check that the wall surfaces are dry in depth and in sound condition. If there is flaking paint, crumbling plasters or if there is moisture (with mould staining or salt residues), you must attend to these problems before you start to decorate.

A detailed approach to all the relevant surface preparation is outlined under *Preparing the wall* – page 8.

Assuming that the walls are sound and dry, you need to ascertain whether the wall surfaces are absorbent or non-absorbent. This is a critical part of the surface preparation, as identifying your surface as either absorbent or non-absorbent determines which adhesive you should be using. Failure to correctly identify your surface type could lead to costly remedial works at a latter stage.

Here is a list of surfaces to assist you in determining your surface type and which category they belong to; absorbent or non-absorbent.

Surface directory

A directory of surfaces you may encounter:

Absorbent surfaces – uncoated

Typical surfaces will include:

- Plaster
- Plasterboard
- Sundeala board
- Supalux
- Glassroc
- Hardboard
- Chipboard
- Plywood
- MDF

Absorbent surfaces - coated

Typical surfaces will include:

- Emulsion paint (matt and silk)
- British Gypsum Gyproc wallboard primer
- Crosslining
- Old backing papers

Non-absorbent surfaces - uncoated

Typical surfaces will include:

- Glass

- Marble
- Fibreglass
- Laminates
- Ceramic tiles
- Existing vinyl wallcoverings

Non-absorbent surfaces - coated

Typical surfaces will include

- Oil based paints (gloss and eggshell)
 - Alkali resisting primers
 - British Gypsum Gyproc wallboard sealer
 - Lafarge drywall sealer
 - Knauf Diamond wallboard primer
 - Metals (ferrous and non-ferrous require appropriate metal primers)
 - Varnishes
 - Stove enamel
 - Portaflek
 - Lime wash/distemper
 - Cement/concrete
- } Require a coating of oil based alkali resisting primer

Once you have identified the surfaces you are dealing with, it is a simple process of following preparation instructions for the type of surface on which you are working.

However, if you have any doubts whatsoever, contact the manufacturer.

Preparing the Wall

Correctly identifying and carrying out the appropriate surface preparation is often overlooked, resulting in a poor standard of decoration. When hanging wallcoverings of any type, whether they are domestic or contract products it is very important to understand a few simple preparation and application methods. By following the methods outlined in this guide, you will help ensure you get a successful problem free installation every time.

Absorbent surfaces

- Remove all backing papers and ensure the surface is clean, smooth and dry in depth and in sound condition. Lightweight or lighter coloured wallcoverings may require a surface of uniform colour. On a dry absorbent surface apply a good quality matt emulsion or a pigmented primer (as recommend by some manufacturers, as matt emulsion can sometimes be unstable). Allow to fully dry.
- All surface contaminants such as dirt, grease, polish, water soluble stains, felt tip pen marks, etc should be removed by washing with a detergent solution. Rinse off with clean water and allow surface to fully dry.
- Efflorescence - brush down affected areas with a stiff brush to remove all the powdery salt residues and leave for 48 hours. Should the efflorescence reoccur, repeat this process until the efflorescence is remedied.
- Mould growth and algae - treat affected areas with a proprietary brand fungicidal wash used in strict accordance with pack instructions.

- Holes, cracks, etc should be filled with good quality filler in accordance with the pack instructions.
- When painting adjacent areas, avoid getting paint onto the wall to be decorated with the wallcoverings. If this has already occurred, thoroughly rub down the paint to provide a good key.

Uncoated absorbent surfaces

- Plaster, plasterboard, timber sheet materials such as chipboard or MDF - where necessary carry out the above preparation and then apply one coat of primer, diluted as appropriate with clean water. Allow to fully dry.
- Cement render or similarly alkaline powdery surfaces should be coated with a proprietary brand oil based alkali resisting primer (allow 48 hours to fully dry, following the relevant COSHH regulations). Then treat this surface as coated non-absorbent.

Coated absorbent surfaces

- Flaking paint - where flaking paint is present, ideally, remove all traces of the unstable coating from the walls. This will reveal either an uncoated absorbent surface or a non-absorbent surface, then treat as appropriate. (Jane – lower case t for then)
- If total removal of the flaking paint is not possible, scrape back to a firm edge and apply one coat of an oil based alkali resisting primer. Allow 48 hours to fully dry, following the relevant COSHH regulations. Fill out any undulations with good quality filler and allow to dry. Rub down with an abrasive paper to produce a smooth surface, spot prime filler with the alkali resisting primer. Allow 48 hours to fully dry, following the relevant COSHH regulations. Treat this surface as coated non-absorbent.
- Matt emulsion. Rub down to provide a key, apply one coat of manufacturer's recommended primer and allow to fully dry.
- Multi-coats of emulsion may impair the surface porosity and affect adhesion. Carry out a meths test to determine the type and or number of surface coatings. If in doubt contact the wallcovering manufacturer.
- If oil based paint forms part of the previously painted system, apply one coat of a proprietary brand oil based alkali resisting primer. Allow 48 hours to fully dry, following the relevant COSHH regulations. Treat as a non-absorbent surface.

Non-absorbent surfaces

- Remove all backing papers, ensure the surface is clean, smooth, dry in depth and in sound condition. Lightweight or lighter coloured wallcoverings may require a surface of uniform colour.
- All surface contaminants such as dirt, grease, polish, water soluble stains, felt tip pen marks, etc, should be removed by washing with a detergent solution, rinse off with clean water. Allow surface to fully dry.
- Efflorescence - brush down affected areas with a stiff brush to remove all the powdery salt residues and leave for 48 hours. Should the efflorescence recur, repeat this process until the efflorescence is remedied.
- Mould growth and algae - treat effected areas with a proprietary brand fungicidal wash, used in strict accordance with pack instructions.
- Holes, cracks, etc should be filled with good quality filler in accordance with the pack instructions.
- When painting adjacent areas, avoid getting paint onto the wall to be decorated with the wallcoverings. If this has already occurred, thoroughly rub down the paint to provide a good key.

Uncoated and coated non-absorbent surfaces

- Metal, laminate surfaces, glass fibre, oil based paints, plasterboard coatings 'dry wall sealers/top coat' etc. Rub down the surface to provide a key. Metal surfaces should be prepared and primed as appropriate to the type of metal in accordance with the metal primer instructions. Please contact your paint supplier for advice on metal primers.

Wide width wallcoverings

- Hang the specified wallcovering as recommended in the product information section of the Hanging Information Leaflet using an adhesive designed for sealed/non-absorbent surfaces.
- Adhesive designed for sealed/non-absorbent surfaces should be applied one drop at a time to keep within the open time of the adhesive.

Narrow width wallcoverings

- When hanging narrow width wallcoverings, after the above standard surface preparation has been carried out, the following recommendations should be followed.
- Apply one coat of manufacturer's recommended primer, diluted as appropriate with clean water and allow to fully dry. Crossline using at least 1200 grade lining paper and manufacturer's recommended adhesive, diluted to a workable consistency, keeping the moisture level to a minimum. Hang the wallcovering using manufacturer's recommended adhesive.
- Holes, cracks, surface defects etc should be filled with good quality filler in accordance with the pack instructions.
- When painting adjacent areas, avoid getting paint onto the wall to be decorated with the wallcoverings. If this has already occurred, thoroughly rub down the paint to provide a good key.

Primers, Adhesives and Toolkit

The next step is to identify the appropriate adhesive system for the surfaces you are about to decorate.

Primer (sizing agent)

As you will see from the hanging instructions, manufacturers will always recommend the use of a primer as part of both the preparation process and adhesive system. This is because primer, which is a sizing agent, forms a vital part of their hanging advice and without using this product, various costly and time consuming difficulties could be experienced during the installation of the wallcoverings. Its major benefits are as follows:

- Aids adhesion and assists the final bond of the wallcovering.
- Fully compatible with all manufacturers' adhesives.
- Equalises surface porosity, reduces suction and grab.
- Cost saving, eg primer could cost 8-10 pence per m² dependant upon the dilution, whereas diluted adhesive dependant upon the type of adhesive would cost 12-24 pence per m².
- Gives slip and manoeuvrability, ideal for pattern match and butt join products.
- Gives adhesives 'good open time', allows good working time on porous surfaces.
- Forms part of the Fire Certification Process (Euro Class).

Wallcovering adhesives

Wallcovering adhesives are available in light, standard (medium), heavy, strippable adhesive, and adhesives for sealed/non-absorbent surface.

All are water based, high solids, low moisture content adhesives and are a blend of starch, PVA, fungicides and a fire retardant. These adhesives are specifically formulated for the full range of wall finishes to be used in the contract market. Using cheaper alternatives, which do not have the bond strength required, may be a costly compromise.

Strippable adhesive

A water based, high solids, low moisture content, blend of starch, PVA and fillers, which allows the dry stripping of fabric backed vinyls from absorbent plasterboards, drylining or partitions, without causing undue damage to the face of the plasterboard substrate.

Adhesive for sealed/non-absorbent surfaces

A very low moisture content adhesive, with a blend of synthetic polymers which will allow for the direct hanging of wide width wallcoverings onto a non-absorbent surface. As this adhesive has a quick drying time due to its low moisture content it should only be applied one drop at a time to keep within the open time of the adhesive.

Fire regulations and COSHH

As mentioned earlier, not using the appropriate adhesive may lead to adhesion problems but more importantly, could also negate any relevant fire certification. Contract wallcoverings that have fire certification to BS 476 part 6 and 7 or Euro Class EN 13501 are tested and approved by independent fire test houses in conjunction with the manufacturer's own recommended adhesives.

Product data sheets on adhesives and primers together with Fire Certificates should be available on request from all suppliers.

Toolkit

There are certain tools which are specific to hanging wallcoverings. Below is a list of the more common tools needed for successful installation. Remember, having good quality tools always pays, so contact your supplier to ensure you have all you need.

The tool kit required will include:

- **Large roller (synthetic pile sleeve)** - for the application of the adhesive.
- **2 inch – 3 inch paint brush** - for pasting tops and bottoms and around obstacles, such as doors, architrave and windows.
- **45cm steel spatula** – for a variety of uses such as caulking/filling, denibbing, trimming and as a paste guard.
- **Hard plastic spatula** - for smoothing out the wallcoverings.
- **Measuring tape or yardstick** - for measuring drops to an accurate size.
- **A pair of good quality decorating scissors/shears** - for cutting drops etc.
- **Soft lead pencil** - for marking out the walls and wallcoverings.
- **Joint cutter/shoe knife** - for making the joints with a fabric backed vinyl.

- **Protective plastic strip** - for making the joints with a paper backed or fabric backed vinyl.
- **Good quality snap-blade knife** - for trimming the wallcoverings.
- **Plumb line or spirit level** - to ensure that the drops are hung straight.
- **Sponge** - for cleaning down any adhesive residues.
- **A paste bucket** - always an essential piece of kit, with a variety of uses.
- **Overlap pins** - to help line up drops at 5cm overlap.
- **Sandpaper** or sandpaper block.
- **Good quality stepladder** (safe A Type).
- **Straight edge** - for cutting joints
- **Seam roller(s)** - for dressing the joint or seam. Care must be taken not to overwork joints if a seam roller is used.
- **Dust sheets** - for protecting floors and furniture.

Application (Hanging/Installation)

Before commencing application as a final failsafe check that you have the specified wallcoverings by looking at the roll label, the label will identify the design of the wallcovering, the colourway, the batch, whether the wallcovering should be reverse or straight hung and also the 'roll number'.

- Arrange your order in roll number sequence, starting from the highest roll number and working in descending roll numbers eg rolls 65, 64, 63 etc. (This will maintain the manufacturer's production sequence, minimising the possibility of shading.)
- Wherever possible, use cut/part rolls in isolation, eg hang these to columns, pillars or piers.
- Handle all wallcoverings with care to avoid damaging pre-trimmed edges, especially materials that are designed to be butt jointed. Never store the rolls on their ends.
- When measuring up the wall(s) it is advisable to allow an additional 5cm at the top and bottom of the drop, totalling 10cm waste, giving you sufficient waste to trim into both the ceiling and skirting.
- As you cut your drops in sequence, number the top of each drop using a soft lead pencil; ensuring the product is reversed or not as appropriate. You will find the advice for reverse or straight hanging on the roll label and in the product information section.
- If you have a reverse hang wallcovering, unroll the wallcovering down the bench or clean working space and cut off drop one at the appropriate measured point. Spin the roll round at the end of drop one, then send it back down to the other end of the bench. This has achieved the reversal of drops one and two. Repeat these processes by cutting drop two at the end of drop one. Spin the roll round again and send it back up to the top of the bench, thereby achieving the reversal of drop three to drop two. Repeating this process is a fail-safe way of assuring that all drops on the bench have been reversed. Sending the roll up and down, the bench three times has achieved reversal of your first three drops.
- Hang the drops in numbered sequence around the room.
- When hanging the first drop, it is always wise to work out of an internal angle and to use a plumb bob or a spirit level to ensure that the first drop is hung straight.
- Usually, contract wallcovering adhesives are all a pre-mixed formulation, therefore all that is required before use is a good stir to break the adhesive up and make it more fluid. The use of an extension pole for the roller also aids the application of the adhesive. The adhesive should be used full strength and never diluted, as diluting the adhesive can weaken its bond strength. Load the roller with adhesive, starting from the ground or skirting level, roll the adhesive onto the wall to give an even coating.
- It is more time effective to start at the bottom and work upwards, as when you have finished rolling the adhesive on the walls at ceiling height, the steps are already in place and ready for the application of

the first drop of wallcovering. When applying the adhesive at ceiling and skirting levels and internal angles, use a paintbrush to cut into previously decorated skirting and ceilings and to get into those intricate corners for best results.

- Working quickly onto the wet adhesive allows sufficient time to slide the wallcovering into the right position. As a precaution peel back the top of each drop and check the number, to ensure that you are reverse or straight hanging (as specified) the product, and hanging the material in sequence.
- When applying the wallcovering to the surface use either a hard or soft plastic spatula, pure bristle smoothing brush or a felt roller. This should be done in an up and down direction only, smoothing out all the air bubbles to form a good bond with the adhesive system. Do not traverse down the drops as this can cause uneven stretching at the edges of the drops, or even force some adhesive out, which in turn will affect the quality of the joint.
- Check for shading as you proceed. Never assume shading is caused by moisture and that it will disappear on drying. It may be a fault that needs investigation.
- Wallcoverings need to settle for a minimum of 15 minutes before they are trimmed at the tops and bottoms of the drops. The ceiling and skirting edges should be trimmed using a sharp knife in conjunction with a steel or plastic spatula.
- Use only full width material. Cutting narrow widths above doors/window frames etc should be avoided. Do not infill with off cuts or out of sequence product, and never join middle to edge of wallcoverings.
- Contract width wallcoverings have a selvage running along the edge of the material which requires trimming off. This is achieved through the overlap and trim process. The tools used for this are a snap-blade knife, plastic protective strip for paper backed, or joint cutter for fabric backed vinyls. The joint cutter has a guard to protect the wall, as any damage or scoring of the substrate could result in the joints opening out at a later stage.
- Using three pins placed at the top, middle and bottom of drop one, 5cm in from the right hand edge, gives you perfect guidance when lining up drop two to drop one. The leading edge of drop two simply slides to the edges of the three pins placed on drop one. This is a quick and easy system of ensuring that both drops one and two are hung parallel to each other, and that a 5cm overlap is achieved. Alternatively use a straight edge.
- Overlap and trim material by a consistent minimum 5cm/2inches. Trim straight through the centre of the overlap. This should be done in accordance with the specific product instructions, using the appropriate tools in order not to damage or score the substrate you are hanging on to.
- FBV: Making the joint with a joint cutter/shoe knife. To start the joint, make a small incision at the top centre of the overlapped vinyl using a snap-blade knife to form a 'V' opening. The shoe of the joint cutter is set into the 'V' behind the two sheets of wallcoverings. This is because the cutting blade of the joint cutter is set at approximately 2.5 - 3cm from the top of the tool. Once the tool has been inserted into the joint, simply draw the joint cutter down the centre of the joint pulling it through the two sheets of vinyl. Ensure that the shoe of the joint cutter stays in contact with the substrate as you draw the tool down through the wallcoverings. At the skirting level, you may find that protruding skirting restricts the joint cutter from running to the floor. In these situations, finish the bottom of the joint by using a knife and a straight edge for the last 5cm or so. Once the joint cutter has been pulled through the joint from top to bottom, you should remove both the overlap and under lap from the joint.
- PBV: Making the joint with a plastic protective strip. Once the overlap has been produced, place a plastic protective strip behind the joint, ensuring the centre of the strip coincides with the centre of the joint. Using a snap blade knife and straight edge, cut through the centre of the joint onto the plastic strip, starting the cut from the top of the drop working down to skirting level. Once the cut has been made, remove both the overlap and under lap, also remembering to remove the plastic strip.

- Using a seam roller to dress your joint(s) **Caution:** Care must be taken not to overwork joints if a seam roller is used. On vinyls use a soft foam roller. For textiles, use a hard seam roller in conjunction with a clean piece of waste material placed face to face on the wallcovering.
- Internal corners are best cut using a plastic spatula and sharp knife, allowing a return of 2mm around the corner. This is usually the depth of the spatula.
- Once you have hung your first three drops it is advisable to stand back and assess the result achieved to ensure you are happy with your finish.

Health and Safety

Construction sites have a poor record of safety and considerable legislation exists. Much is generalised, whilst some reflects particular risks such as working at height or the use of hazardous materials. Main contractors and specialist subcontractors will have developed their own health and safety regimes that take in current regulations. All members of the construction team have a duty of care to their site colleagues. Working to agreed programmes and to formalised method statements can contribute to site safety. Identifying hazards and assessing potential risks should cover the working environment, the work to be done, the tools to be used and the materials to be installed.

The Health & Safety at Work Act

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 imposes a general duty on employers to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees. The Act also provides, without prejudice to the generality of their duties, a list of specific duties of employers in respect of their employees. Contractors should play their full part in overall safety on site by adhering to the specific provisions and by making their site personnel aware of the need to conform to site safety rules at all times. Full co-operation should be sought from all other parties to the contract as far as site operations are concerned.

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 also requires that materials and products are safe and without risk to health when properly used. However, when materials and products that are potentially harmful are used, it is imperative to adhere to the manufacturers' instructions and recommended safety precautions. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) relate to these duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act and employers must meet their obligations in respect of this legislation.

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (amended 2000)

The CDM Regulations place duties on all those who contribute to health and safety on a construction project, including clients, designers, planning supervisors, principal contractors and contractors. They also require development of the Health & Safety Plans and creation of the Health & Safety File.

The CDM Regulations apply to most construction projects, although there are certain exclusions. In consequence, the contractor will be involved in projects that fall within scope, eg some new building contracts and projects that fall outside, eg some refurbishment contracts. The CDM Regulations apply except where:

- The construction work will last less than 30 days and involves less than 5 people (other than for demolition).

- The construction work is for a domestic client.
- It involves the maintenance or removal of pipe or boiler insulation, or other parts of heating or water systems.
- The construction work is carried out inside offices, shops or similar premises and does not cause any interruption of the normal activities carried out on the premises, and where the construction works are not physically separated from those other activities.

The aims of the CDM Regulations include the following:

- To ensure that all parties consider the hazards and risks associated with the work or location in advance.
- To encourage project planning, ie the co-ordination of activities.
- To ensure that a written control document, the Health and Safety Plan, is developed.
- And, that future work and maintenance issues are considered.

If there is any doubt as to whether or not a fit-out contract falls within scope of these Regulations, the advice of the local Health & Safety Executive representative should be sought. For further information on The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 and Risk Assessment, see AIS Fact File Information Sheets AIS 016 *The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 1994 (CDM)*; 004 *Health and Safety Policy*; and 005 *Risk Assessments*. See also *Managing Construction for Health and Safety*, The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 Approved Code of Practice HSG 224 (an update on the earlier L54 issue).

The importance of compliance with these regulations cannot be overstated as the authorities are looking for a responsible approach to be taken by all those involved in any form of construction related activity.

Site safety rules

All employees should adhere to the following:

- Upon arrival on site they should report to the Project Manager, Site Agent or client contact and familiarise themselves with specific site safety and health regulations. They should also identify the nearest fire alarm point, fire exit, fire extinguisher and first aid box to their place of work.





















They should also:

- Work in accordance with any agreed Safe System of Work or Method Statement.
- Acquaint themselves with the fire procedures for the site or building and observe the relevant rules.
- Obey all site instructions regarding the wearing of personal safety equipment such as hard hats, safety glasses, ear protection, footwear, etc.
- Know to whom all accidents are to be reported and the procedures to be followed.
- Know to whom all defects in plant and equipment must be reported.
- Keep all gangways, exits and work areas clean and tidy and ensure that fire exits and staircases are kept free from any materials or debris, especially in occupied premises.
- Maintain good housekeeping throughout all areas of work by never leaving floors wet, and lifting and clearing waste regularly. Be aware that other site personnel may not be familiar with the working practices involved, for example, in the installation of partitions and/or suspended ceilings.
- Provide adequate protection and signs for the safety of others when their activities create a hazard.

- Never run, especially when on scaffolding.
- Obtain assistance when heavy items require to be lifted. Always bend knees and lift with a straight back.
- Follow correct hygiene and first aid procedures in the event of minor injuries. (Injection against tetanus for site operatives is recommended.)
- Ensure that machine and hand tools are used correctly and that worn tools and equipment are replaced.
- Acquaint themselves with the safety rules regarding the use of special machines and, where appropriate, use guards; avoid wearing loose clothing near moving machinery, and do not wear ties and rings when using power tools or similar equipment. (It is inadvisable to use special power tools if working alone on site.)
- Refrain from interfering with or adapting any equipment or service without proper advice or permission.
- Refrain from nailing objects to ladders and steps, do not remove guard or kick rails on towers or scaffolding.
- Obey site instructions concerning mobile plant and never ride on open hoists.
- Ensure electrical equipment is properly connected. Safe working practices require the use of 110-volt power supply. Where practicable, electrical plant when not in use should be isolated.
- Ensure all precautionary measures advised by the manufacturers are taken when lasers are to be used.
- Ensure that if hazardous materials are identified during the course of the work, the site Health & Safety Officer and the installer company is advised immediately.
- Wear safety glasses and gloves and other appropriate protection when handling glass, particularly annealed glass. Damaged glass should be broken into small pieces and placed into boxes or bins marked 'Danger - broken glass'; do not place into sacks or bags.

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

BS and International Wallcovering Symbols	
 Reverse hang	 Straight Hang
 Overlap & Trim	 Butt Join
 Peelable	 Strippable
 Lightfastness Good	 Lightfastness Very Good
 Wet Strippable	 Lightfastness Moderate
 Paste wall	 Paste wallcovering
 Random/Free Match	 Off Set or Half Drop Match
 Straight Match	 Impact Resistant
 Scrubbable	 Extra Scrubbable
 Washable	 Extra Washable

Batch

A quantity of wallcovering made at one time from the same base materials.

Fabric backed vinyl

Fabric backed vinyl is recognisably the most practical of wallcoverings for use in commercial interiors, deriving its strength from a vinyl surface reinforced with either a woven cotton scrim or non-woven polyester backing. Fabric backed vinyls have excellent impact and abrasion resistance and can be scrubbed clean.

Understandably, fabric backed vinyl is widely specified. Particularly for high traffic areas such as busy offices, corridors, lift lobbies and receptions, where its durable nature ensures a smart appearance for many years. At 130cm or more wide, it is ideal for covering partitioning panels without the need for joints.

Fabric backed vinyl is the best solution for clients who are looking for important long-term cost benefits in their buildings because it is longer-lasting, easily maintained and needs replacing less often.

Joint cutter/shoe knife

A joint cutter/shoe knife is recommended for fabric backed vinyls and some textiles. Using these tools will avoid damaging the substrate.

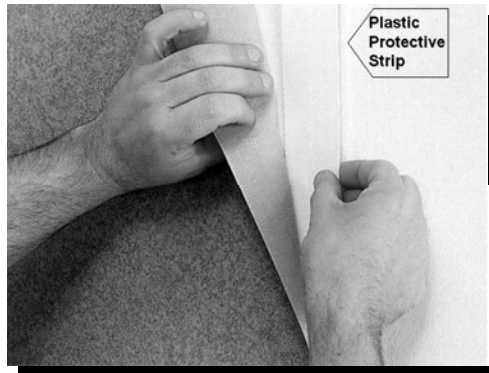
Overlap and trim joint – splice – double cut

Contract wallcoverings, which are not factory trimmed at the edge, are recommended to be overlapped at the joint of the wallcoverings by a minimum of 5cm/2inches. Cut through the centre of the overlap; remove selvage and make the joint.

Certain manufacturers may recommend specific tools such as the plastic protective strip for paper-backed vinyls.

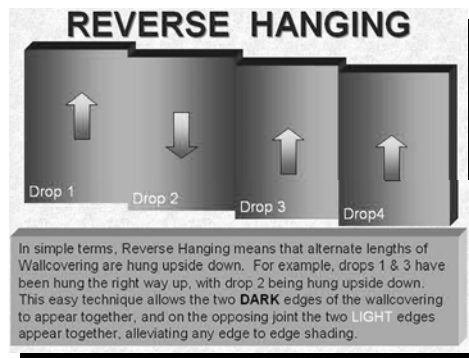


Protective plastic strip



Reverse hang

This is where alternate drops are hung upside down to previous drops. This counteracts any slight shade variances across the width of the product.



Roll and drop sequence

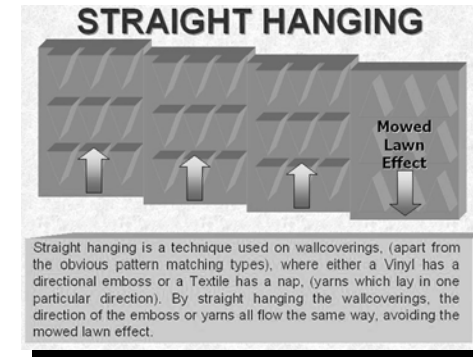
Most contract wallcoverings are made in large batches. Because of manufacturing tolerances, subtle colour variance can be experienced from the beginning of the batch to that of the middle and end of the batch. Therefore, manufacturers will number each roll, and recommend the materials are hung in roll sequence and drop sequence. This minimises the chances of shading when changing rolls.

Roll labels

Supplied fixed to the wallcovering and contains important product information like product name, design, colourway, batch number. The roll label will also contain the roll number, required to maintain the sequential hanging of the produce. Roll labels are best kept unit work has been completed.

Straight hang

All drops are hung in the same direction from the roll.



Three drops

This is recommended because most contract materials are generally reverse hung. By hanging three drops you see both edges of the centre drop abutted to subsequent drops, any problems which may have occurred will become apparent.

Wide width paper backed vinyl

The wide width paper backed vinyls are especially suitable for use in partitioning systems. Not as durable as the FBVs, they are nonetheless manufactured to superior contract standard and offer good value for money. 130cm or more wide, they have the advantage over narrow width products of faster wall coverage with fewer joins and are thus economical to apply.

Appendix 2

List of references

- BS 476: *Fire tests on building materials and structures*
- Part 4: 1970 (1984) *Non-combustibility test for materials*
- Part 6: 1989 *Method of test for fire propagation for products*
- Part 7: 1997 *Method for classification of the surface spread of flame of products*
- Part 22: 1987 *Method for determination of the fire resistance of non-loadbearing elements of construction*
- Part 23: 1987 *Methods for determination of the contribution of components to the fire resistance of a structure*
- Part 31.1: 1983 *Methods for measuring smoke penetration through doorsets and shutter assemblies: Section 31.1: 1983 Method of measurement under ambient temperature conditions*
- BS 5234: *Partitions (including matching linings)*
- Part 1: 1992 *Code of practice for design and installation*
- Part 2: 1992 *Specification for performance requirements for strength and robustness, including methods of test*
- BS 5492: 1990 *Code of practice for internal plastering*
- BS 6180: 1999 *Code of practice for protective barriers in and about buildings*
- BS 6206: 1981 (1994) *Specification for impact performance for flat safety glass and safety plastics for use in buildings*
- BS 6262: 1982 *Code of practice for glazing for buildings*
- Part 4: 1994 *Code of practice for safety related to human impact*
- BS 8000: *Workmanship on building sites*
- Part 5: 1990 *Code of practice for carpentry, joinery and general fixings*
- Part 7: 1990 *Code of practice for glazing*
- Part 8: 1994 *Code of practice for plasterboard partitions and drylinings*
- Part 10: 1995 *Code of practice for plastering and rendering*
- Part 11: *Code of practice for wall and floor tiling*
- Part 12: 1989 *Code of practice for decorative wallcoverings and painting*
- BS 8212: 1995 *Code of practice for drylining and partitioning using gypsum plasterboard*
- BS 8214: 1990 (1992) *Code of practice for fire door assemblies with non-metallic leaves*
- BS 8300: 2001 *Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. Code of practice*
- BS EN 235: 1997 *Wallcoverings in roll form. Terms and symbols.*
- BS EN 235:2002 *Wallcoverings - Vocabulary and symbols.*
- BS EN 266:1992 (1997) *Specification for textile wallcoverings*
- BSEN 259-1:2001 *Wallcoverings in roll form - Heavy duty wallcoverings - Part 1: Specifications*
- BSEN 259-2:2001 *Wallcoverings in roll form - Heavy duty wallcoverings - Part 2: Determination of Impact Resistance.*
- BS EN 717-1: 1997 *Airborne sound insulation*
- BS EN 717-2: 1997 *Impact sound insulation*
- BSEN 13501-2:2003 *Fire classification of construction products and building elements. Classification using test data from reaction to fire tests, excluding ventilation services.*

- BS EN 1364-1: 1999 *Fire resistance tests for non-loadbearing elements - walls*
- BS EN 1364-2: 1999 *Fire resistance tests for non-loadbearing elements - ceilings*
- BS EN 1365-4: 1999 *Fire resistance tests for loadbearing elements – columns*
- BS EN 1366-1: 1999 *Fire resistance tests for service installations – ducts*
- BS EN 1366-2: 1999 *Fire resistance tests for service installations – fire dampers*
- BS EN 1991-1-1:2002 *Actions on structures. General actions. Densities, self-weight, imposed loads for buildings*
- BS EN 12825: 2001 *Raised access floors*
- BS EN 13964: 2004 *Suspended ceilings. Requirements and test methods*
- BS EN ISO 140: *Acoustics. Measurement of sound insulation in buildings and of building elements*
- BS EN ISO 140-3: 1995 *Laboratory measurement of airborne sound insulation of building elements*
- BS EN ISO 140-4: 1998 *Field measurements of airborne sound insulation between rooms*
- BS EN ISO 717: *Acoustics: Rating of sound insulation in buildings and of building elements*
- BS EN ISO 9000 (formerly BS 5750) *Quality systems*
- The Building Regulations (England and Wales)
- Approved Document B - *Fire Safety*
- Approved Document E - *Resistance to the passage of sound*
- Approved Document K - *Protection from falling, collision and impact*
- Approved Document L2A - *Conservation of fuel and power. New buildings other than dwellings*
- Approved Document L2B - *Conservation of fuel and power. Work in existing buildings that are not dwellings*
- Approved Document M - *Access to and use of Buildings*
- Approved Document N - *Glazing – Safety in relation to impact, opening and cleaning*
- Regulation 7 - *Materials and workmanship*
- The Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations
- The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland)
- The Health & Safety at Work Act
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM)
- Health & Safety Commission (HSC) Approved code of practice on Management of health and safety at work
- Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF) Codes of practice on Glass handling, storage, transport, and safety in the flat glass industry
- Property Services Agency (PSA) Method of Building Performance Specification - *MOB PF2 FS/SP: Platform Floors (Raised Access Floors)*

Association of Interior Specialists references

- AIS Profile*
- AIS Fact File of Information Sheets*
- AIS Health & Safety Handbook*
- AIS Site Guide for Drylining*
- AIS Site Guide for Partitioning*
- AIS Site Guide for Raised Access Flooring*
- AIS Site Guide for Suspended Ceilings*
- AIS Website: www.ais-interiors.org.uk

Note: Information contained within this site guide is current at the time of going to press.

Notes:

Notes:

The information and guidance contained in this site guide are provided in good faith in the interests of improving safety and good practice.

Whilst every care has been taken in its preparation, the Association of Interior Specialists cannot accept any responsibility for injuries to persons or damage to property, or for any violations of laws or regulations which may arise from the use of or reliance upon the information and guidance contained herein.

The information is for general guidance on good practice only. Each case must be treated with due regard to the location and circumstances prevailing.



Site guide

Wallcoverings

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