

## WALLS AND CEILINGS

There are two basic types of walls used in home construction: bearing and non-bearing walls. Bearing walls support the weight of the ceiling, floor, upper floor and roof and should not be moved or removed. Non-bearing walls serve as partitions between rooms and do not support the main structure.

Walls have several functions. They protect the interior from the outside elements, give structural support, and conceal pipes, wires, mechanical systems and insulation. They define space, serve as backgrounds, and provide acoustics.

There are many types of interior wall coverings: stucco, plaster, mirror, glass, paneling and other woods, tile, masonry (brick and stone), paint, wallpaper, and fabric. Each wall covering has its own characteristics with respect to wear, maintenance, and appearance.

Wall coverings for a room should be selected according to the function of the room, the size of the room, the orientation of the room to a natural light source, existing furnishings, budget, and maintenance.

The most common types of wall coverings are paint and wall paper. Paint is the least expensive of these two and comes in two forms for residential use: latex (water base) and alkyd (oil base). Residential paint comes in four finishes: flat, semi-gloss, gloss, and eggshell.

Gloss paint reflects the most light. Semi-gloss is easy to wash and does not reflect as much light. Eggshell and flat paint reflects little light and are more difficult to maintain.

To estimate the amount of paint required to cover a room, compute the square footage of the walls, subtract the area of any large openings and divide by 400. This will yield the number of gallons of paint required per coat. A gallon of paint will cover approximately 400 square feet.

Wall paper can be used to alter the perceived shape of a room, camouflage architectural flaws, absorb sound, insulate, provide a background, and add color, texture, and pattern.

Some wall paper are washable or scrubbable. Some are prepasted and/or strippable. Wall paper comes in many textures, patterns, colors, and price ranges.

To estimate how many single rolls of wallpaper are required to cover an area, measure the area and compute the square footage. Subtract for all large openings such as doors and windows. Check the roll measurements to see how much wall paper is on one roll. Divide that number into the total amount of wall paper needed.

Moldings such as baseboards, window frames, and wainscot add a final touch to a room.