

General Shale disclaims any and all responsibility for coating failures or other wall problems associated with “mortar wash” techniques.

“Mortar Wash” is a common term for a masonry technique of giving brick a unique and artistic look by applying mortar at varying degrees of coverage onto the face of the brick. There are several ways to apply a ‘mortar wash’. While the application can be achieved using a trowel, some old timers began using a piece of burlap bag or carpet to dab and spread the mortar into the desired areas, thus the term “gabbing” or “sacking”, is also understood to be the process of applying a mortar wash.

The success of this particular application depends a great deal on the artistic ability of the mason. There is a lot of flexibility as to how much or how ‘heavy’ the mortar wash will be, and what areas will, and will not, receive mortar coverage. It should be stressed that mortar washing is a learned skill. It is recommended that you first apply the mortar wash to a test panel before it is applied to the residence. Mortar wash applications can further be described by the degree of mortar coverage; Light Mortar Wash, Medium Mortar Wash, or Heavy Mortar Wash.

Light Mortar Wash

To achieve a light mortar wash, the mason will need to cut off the mortar as he lays the brick, in the normal fashion. Intermittently, depending on how quickly the mortar is drying out, he then takes a bag, or small scrap of carpet, and pulls mortar from the joints between the laid brick, onto the face of the brick with a rubbing motion. The affect is a very light haze, with all of the architectural features of the brick still quite prominent and easily seen. Examples of this light mortar wash technique are shown in photos 1, 2, 3, and 4.



Photo 1 – Light



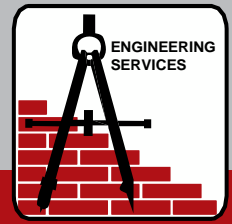
Photo 2 – Light



Photo 3 – Light



Photo 4 – Light



Medium Mortar Wash

If a bit thicker application, or medium mortar wash, is desired, the mason will lay the brick, and cut the mortar as described above. While the mortar between the brick laid in the wall is still quite plastic, he will then dip the bag in the same mortar he has been using to lay the brick, and dab it onto the wall. Depending on the amount applied, with this application it is common for most of the features of the brick that receive mortar to be hidden by the wash. The head and bed joints are easily seen, however, so you still get the effect of brick veneer. Examples of this medium mortar wash, technique are shown in photos 5, 6, 7, and 8.



Photo 5 – Medium



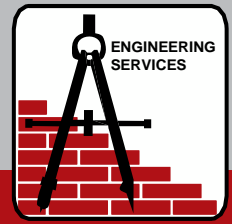
Photo 6 – Medium



Photo 7 – Medium



Photo 8 – Medium



Heavy Mortar Wash

The thickest application, or heavy mortar wash, gives the impression of a brick veneer that has been stuccoed, with a minimal number of brick 'peeking' through the stucco, randomly around the home. To achieve this look, the mason does not cut the mortar as he lays the brick in the wall. After several courses have been laid, with the mortar still hanging from the head and bed joints, using his trowel, the mortar is pulled onto the brick, completely covering some areas of the veneer. In areas that he wants the brick to be seen, he merely cuts the mortar off. Examples of a heavy mortar wash application are shown in photos 9, 10, 11, and 12.



Photo 9 – Heavy



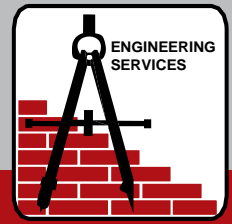
Photo 10 – Heavy



Photo 11 – Heavy



Photo 12 – Heavy



This process does not call for any special tools or types of mortar. Since the brick are not tooled, applying the mortar wash takes little or no extra time at all. This application is more often seen in warm coastal areas. Harsh winter temperatures and wind driven rains could also raise durability concerns, in that the mortar wash (not the brick) will wear over time and could be affected by freeze-thaw cycles. Because the mortar joints are not tooled in a conventional manner the resistance of the wall to water penetration and long term durability could be reduced. For these reasons General Shale Brick does not endorse or recommend the use of mortar wash techniques. This information is provided solely for the convenience of our customers.

Some masons prefer to begin applying the mortar wash after all the brick have been laid. Typically within 3 days after the brick are laid. A standard type N bagged mortar mixed 3:1 (sand:mortar) is common. The "wash" is often applied in three steps. Example of this process is shown in photo 13.

1. Apply 1/8" skim coat with a trowel
2. Apply a second 1/8" skim coat
3. Apply a very thin coat with a rubber float worked with water to achieve the desired degree of coverage.



Photo 13