

Reaching Out To Specifiers

Requirements in some construction specifications can cause concrete contractors major problems. That's why Ward and I occasionally author articles for *The Construction Specifier* magazine so we can help both the specifiers and contractors to avoid disputes arising from specification requirements that aren't always achievable. Here are brief synopses of two recent articles.

The cover story for the October 2014 issue of *The Construction Specifier* was titled "Bridging the Specification Gap Between Divisions 3 and Division 9: Concrete and floorcovering associations unite."

In the article, we discussed the many differences in specification requirements that the concrete contractor must meet and those that the flooring installer must meet. The problem is not a new one. We've been writing about it for more than 10 years and have published ASCC Position Papers on the subject. By getting coverage of both the contractors' and flooring installers' needs in a magazine for specifiers allows us to increase awareness and to suggest ways to harmonize the requirements in Divisions 3 and 9. Major differences such as F-number flatness requirements for concrete contractors and gap under a straightedge requirements for flooring installers can result in costly disputes, rework, and schedule delays. But when the two parties agree on a solution that can be incorporated before the bid documents are finalized, many of the problems disappear. **It's worth noting that ASCC Position Statement #6 has now been endorsed by several flooring associations. So we're standing together in working out solutions for the problems, and we want the specifiers to know that as well.**

In the upcoming April issue of *The Construction Specifier*, another problem area is addressed. The article is titled "Specifying Broomed Exterior Concrete Surfaces" and Frank Salzano of CECO Concrete Construction was a third author. Too many architects believe broomed surfaces on large-area slabs, such as those in parking garages, should look the same as broomed surfaces on sidewalks. They expect to see minimal variations in texture depth, no overlaps in adjacent broom placements, and extremely uniform appearance of the larger surfaces. Because of the size effect, none of these expectations can be met. But it's important to explain why the expectations are unrealistic so the contractor is not perceived to be making apologies for what the architect sees as poor quality work. The article explains, in great detail, the effect of surface size on the broomed finish appearance and texture—the latter being important for slip resistance. Also covered is the effect of brooming on flatness and drainage characteristics. By providing data for some of these topics, we introduce a dose of reality that helps to control unrealistic expectations from owners or specifiers.

We take advantage of every opportunity to present the concrete contractors' viewpoint to specifiers, structural engineers, architects, and owners. Not by complaining about unreasonable or unattainable specification requirements, but by telling them why the requirements are unreasonable, and what the additional cost would be to produce the expected results.

You can visit *The Construction Specifier* web site at <http://www.constructionspecifier.com> and click on "archives" near the top of the page to download the October 2014 article. The April article will be available on the site some time that month.