



DECADES OF COLOR
Merlex Stucco
KEEPING IT PREMIUM SINCE 1963



NOVEMBER 2014

The recent Building Industry Show held a panel discussion on *Adapting to the California Energy Code and Facing Challenges in the Field*. The speakers included a builder, a plastering contractor, and a stucco manufacturer (Merlex), all of whom shared their expertise on how the one coat stucco system incorporating continuous insulation (CI) can help meet or exceed Title 24 requirements.

We thought the information may be useful for other builders, so we have summarized the panel participants' key points below.

Scott Ort, Project Manager with BMC Construction

Scott explained that he only bids one-coat stucco because they are proficient at the system. He emphasized that constant training is critical for builders because the labor force in California is mostly trained on 3-coat.

He also addressed how foam is difficult to handle on windy days and some solutions for mitigating problems. One technique is to cut the legs off of staples that missed studs and then caulk those holes. Then feel behind the water lines to make sure a staple hasn't caused a hole.

Jared Hendricks, Purchasing Agent with Meritage Homes

Jared talked about why Meritage finds value in the Continuous Insulation (CI) system. He stated that *surpassing* Title 24 standards was important to setting them apart from other builders. They use CI on all single family housing they build, along with foam insulation in the attic and other energy saving advances.

He explained that he wants to eventually use CI on multi-family but first must show compelling evidence that the savings are worth changing their existing processes. He indicated that fire ratings were one obstacle to this change. Jared said that CI reduces the curing period from 7-10 days to 5, resulting in dramatic savings. This enables him to only have one gun crew, allowing his superintendents to schedule subsequent trades that much sooner.

Nick Brown, President of Merlex Stucco

Nick focused on the larger goal of working toward net zero in 2020. He reasoned that CI would continue to be at the forefront as it has become the standard wall system for new residential construction in California. While CI is the standard, builders can still build with 3-coat stucco like they always have, but must equal the overall performance of a one-coat stucco building by using other methods. Examples include more insulation, tighter windows, and more efficient water heaters.

Nick cited the natural resistance to change as why builders are continuing with three coat stucco. The challenges are the natural shift from a 100-year old proven product (3-coat) to a 30-year old system that has been used in many markets, but is significantly different.

One coat has image problems in some circles... maybe because it is installed cheaply in some markets. But it actually has some key benefits over field-mixed scratch and brown coats. One coat has factory-mixed fibers, which are difficult to mix on a jobsite. It also has other additives for increased performance such as water-reducing agents for crack reduction and slump-reducing agents to improve performance and strength.

One coat is an important product that stops thermal bridging through the studs. One coat is approved through ICC reports to perform equivalently to 3-coat stucco. These products have a long track record, and are an important tool for California builders to reduce the energy usage of their homes.

Resources:

- [Learn more about Insulex](#) (Continuous Insulation One Coat Stucco System) on the Merlex website.
- Download a PDF of the [Title 24 flyer](#)
- Request a Title 24 presentation at your office by [emailing Melissa Higgins](#) with Merlex or calling her at 714-637-1700.

Visit merlex.com or [contact us](#) for more information.

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