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TRACKING TRENDS | WATERPROOFING &amp; INSULATION



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## Western Builders Go Green with Sheathing, Protective Coatings

April showers may bring May flowers, but they also bring many potential problems on the job sites.

By Kim Singletary

**N**ot a friend of building schedules, rain is always a concern for builders because when mixed with organic materials, it can create the most problematic four-letter word in the industry: mold.

"Mold has become what asbestos was in the way of a very costly litigation problem," says Dan Rosenblat, COO of SEI Chemical. "At least with asbestos, though, people knew where they put it so it was easy to go back in and take it out. With mold, it's just everywhere."

### The vulnerable building stage

SEI Chemical offers a wide range of products designed to put builders on the mold offensive. "Before a home is

ever finished it is subjected to moisture, whether it's rain or humidity," Rosenblat says, noting that this is a problem that can be solved very inexpensively. For only about \$50 to \$60 per home, builders can coat all of the organic material on a site with a product called SMP 80, a light sealer that contains a mildicide, fungicide, and often an algicide that protects for 10 to 12 months.

"For that cost, if a builder saved just one in 200 homes from a mold

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problem, it would be worth the money spent," Rosenblat says, noting that a mold problem the size of a quarter can contain billions and billions of spores. The company also offers more durable sealers, both water based and solvent based, that protect the organic materials, as well as concrete and OSB board in finished homes. Pricing increases with the amount of years of protection. "The technology is exactly the same across the product line," Rosenblat says. "But it is only as effective as the durability or longevity of the coating it is mixed into."

Rosenblat says the company's biggest seller is its water-based acrylic paints. Used in place of regular primer paint, this product provides extensive protection for walls — with a fungicide, mildicide and algicide — at a cost of just 10 to 15 percent above a standard primer paint.

#### Green and easy

Protective coatings are found everywhere in new home construction, from the driveway to the basement. Dave Maietta, president of Multicoat Corporation, a manufacturer of coatings used for waterproofing, concrete restoration, stucco and replastering swimming pools, says that the trend in the industry is moving toward not only protecting surfaces,

▼ The bright color of Multicoat's coatings ensure thorough application — waterproofing every nook and cranny of a wall.

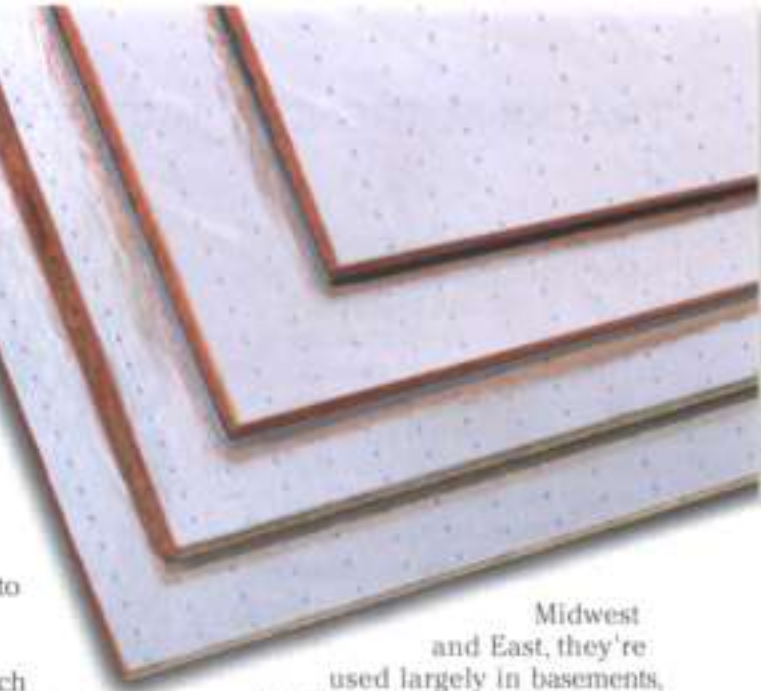


but doing it in an environmentally friendly way that also cuts down on labor costs.

The company's water-based product can be easily sprayed on to basement walls, stucco walls or, as is popular in California, onto retaining walls. An alternative to sheet membrane coatings, which have problematic seams and are more difficult to conform to the steps found in retaining walls without creating air pockets, Multicoat's product is comparable to its competitors. Ease of application of these coatings cuts down time — in the case of protecting stucco, by about 60 percent.

#### Below the surface

Another trend hitting the Western residential building industry is something that's been a staple in other homes across the country: basements. At the moment, waterproofing products differ in where they're used, mostly depending on the region of the country. In the



Midwest and East, they're used largely in basements, and in the West, mostly for retaining walls. This may begin to change.

According to Tom Cullivan, national sales manager for Tremco Barrier Solution Inc., the leader in residential new construction basement waterproofing in North America, company executives are starting to notice more need for their products for basements in the Western states.

"We're currently trying to educate builders in this region about the value of basements," Cullivan says. "For one, they can add approximately 50 percent more space to the average



▲ Multicoat's below grade waterproofing coatings are water based, thus more earth friendly, and can be applied in only hours. The company's coatings can be used to prevent water damage and mold in everything from concrete restoration, to stucco, to use in replastering swimming pools. For more information, visit [www.multicoat.com](http://www.multicoat.com).