

What's Happening in Masonry

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Weeps- How the Water Gets Out

The masonry code describes water issues as “Water will penetrate the veneer and the wall system should be designed, detailed and constructed to prevent water penetration into the building” (see TMS 402.12.1.2) Flashing and weeps are used to allow water to exit the masonry wall.

Last week I observed a newly completed masonry project in Park Ridge, IL with lots of weep ropes protruding from the brick wall (see pics). These weep ropes were spaced at 8” on center! This caught my eye and to me this looks like too many weep ropes!



The Brick Industry Association Tek Note #7 – Water Penetration Resistance Design and Detailing, actually recommends leaving an open head joint formed by leaving mortar out of a head joint. These openings need to be at least 2” high. It further explains that non-corrosive metal, mesh or plastic screens can be installed in the open head joints. Spacing of these weeps are recommended at 24” on center.

Spacing of wick and tube weeps, if used, are recommended to be spaced at no more than 16” on center. Most building codes allow up to 33” on center. In this case, these wicks need to be at least 16” long and extend through the brick into the air space and along the back of the brick.

As a result, the building in Park Ridge is in compliance with the local code and BIA Tek Note #7 as the spacing is less than the recommended spacing for rope wicks. Some experts in this field recommend the open head joints as sometimes the rope wicks can get clogged with mortar dropped into the cavity if not properly installed.