

# Letters

## What About Sealing Cuts in Fiber Cement?

Regarding the question about whether back-priming is required on cement siding (Q&A, 12/09): We have completed cement-siding jobs using both factory-prefinished and site-finished material. None of it was back-primed, and all the installations are performing well. I believe the cement-siding manufacturers are correct in not requiring back priming.

However, there's a more important question: With factory coatings, should you hand-seal every cut? I believe the painful answer is yes. The factory finisher on our last cement job included a very small note in its warranty stating that if all cuts were not sealed, the 25-year warranty would be voided. So we hand-painted every cut, even though the extra labor had not been included in my estimate.

Although James Hardie's warranty does not discuss the vented rain screen, we always use Benjamin Obdyke's Home Slicker installed over Dow Weathermate house-wrap on all of our jobs. Cement siding is already an expensive choice, and these techniques only make the installation more expensive. On the other hand, a siding failure would be a lot more expensive.

**Brooke Rush**

David Brooke Rush Builders  
Perkasie, Pa.

## Epoxy From a Caulk Gun

What brand of epoxy is Gary Striegler using in his January article on installing iron balusters? It appears to come in a single-barrel tube.

**Howard DeRosa**  
Fullerton, Calif.

*Gary Striegler responds: That happens to be Red Head A7, a two-part acrylic adhesive that is available in a 10-ounce tube that fits regular caulking guns. There are also brands of epoxy that come in a single tube. For example, Sika makes one called Sikadur, and West System has a product called Six 10. Typically the tubes come with a couple of nozzles. The nozzle mixes the two parts together as the epoxy is being dispensed, so you have to change it after use, but the open tube is good for a month or two.*

## Reminder

Grinding on the side of a 14-inch cutoff wheel, as shown in the iron-balusters article (1/10), is not a good idea. The fiberglass fabric on the sides of the wheel is critical for keeping the wheel from breaking at speed and under load. If the fabric is worn away, the wheel can fly apart.

**Duncan Mahoney**  
USC School of Theatre  
Los Angeles

## Pricing of Kitchen Remodels Varies

While the premise of the article "Streamlining Kitchen Remodels" (*Business*, 1/10) is sound, I don't know of many markets outside the D.C. beltway where a business would be able to survive with this tactic. First, the authors quote their average remodel cost at \$34,000. Wow! Not here in Florida. I think I've sold one kitchen remodel at that price in the last 20 years. Second, they indicate that they don't do a lot of customization within this program. If I had a client who wanted to move an hvac or electrical item, it would be hard to say no just because the change did not fall into *my* program guidelines.

Finally, they mention that to control costs they try not to use any subs at all. While it may be cost-conscious, that practice doesn't work in Florida where licensed subcontractors are a must on most jobs.

So while the method seems to work for the authors in their geographic locale, I can't see it working for a lot of us around the country. It's a good article, just not applicable to my business — much like reading about roof design for snow loads.

**Mike Rimoldi**  
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### KEEP 'EM COMING!

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