
TECHNICAL SERVICES DIGEST**Rev. July 2014**

SUBJECT: Face Cracks on Brick

Dryer cracks or face cracks are normal in many brick blends and are a part of the distressed image of rusticated brick. They occur after brick are formed during the drying process and before they are fired. Dryer cracks are typically vertical and do not extend all the way through the brick. (See photos page 2.) The following questions and answers may help you better understand these occasional cracks when you see them:

Q – Will dryer cracks affect the structural capacity of the brickwork?

A – No, dryer cracks do not affect the brick's loadbearing capacity, which is normally much greater than is required in construction.

Q – Will dryer cracks allow water to get through the brickwork?

A – No, small cracks in the surface do not allow water to migrate through the brick. However, brick and other claddings are never intended to be water-tight. That is why flashing, weep holes and a water-resistant barrier, such as Tyvek should always be used to make the house water resistant before brick is installed.

Q – Will dryer cracks detract from the appearance of the brickwork?

A – No, dryer cracks, are a feature of certain bricks that add to their aesthetic appeal. They are inappropriate in very regular commercial brick, but are quite appropriate in distressed brick blends sold for the rusticated appearance that many homeowners prefer.

Q – Can dryer cracks be eliminated from the wall on my house?

A – No, not with heritage brick. These cracks are as much a feature of the brick surface as the small chips and dents from tumbling other rustication marks.

Dryer cracks are not considered to be defects unless they exceed the limits of ASTM C652 Type HBA, which is the specification to which these brick were made. We do not accept any liability for the cost of filling those cracks or for any damage resulting from doing so.

Reference:

ASTM C652 Standard Specification for Hollow Brick (Hollow Masonry Units Made From Clay or Shale)

"3.2.3 *Type HBA*—Hollow brick for general use in masonry selected to produce characteristic architectural effects resulting from non-uniformity in size and texture of the individual units."



Figure 1. Brickwork with dryer cracks viewed five feet away.
At twenty feet they are not visible.



Figure 2. Close-up of a brick in that wall with dryer cracks.