MORTAR RECIPE FOR HISTORIC MASONRY REPAIR AND POINTING

Developed by the Kentucky Heritage Council: 1/81

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4 cups white, non-staining Portland cement

1 five-gallon bucket hydrated lime

2 five-gallon buckets sand

Enough water to form workable mix

NOTES

Repointing mortar for most historic buildings should ideally be composed only of sand and lime. A proportion of 1 part lime to 2 parts sand is a useful starting point. The addition of Portland cement increases workability and achieves a whiteness of color. The National Park Service recommends that no more than 20% of the total volume of the lime and Portland cement combined should be Portland cement. Any greater amount of Portland cement increases the hardness of the repointing mortar to a potentially damaging degree.

Since this is a very light-colored mortar, it should be tinted to match the original. Color matching should preferably be accomplished by using buff-colored sand such as that available from the Ohio River. Tinting powder should only be used if the color is otherwise unreproducible. Its appearance is likely to change over time as the mineral ingredients leach from the surface of the mortar.

This mixture is also suitable for exterior stucco over brick. It has been tested and used successfully in Kentucky for both pointing and stucco work. If possible, the Portland cement content can be further reduced. Its chief function is to increase workability and slow the setting-up of the mortar. Any amount of Portland cement can cause damage to the historic masonry.