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# Standard Guide for Limiting Water-Induced Damage to Buildings[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E241; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers building design, construction, commissioning, operation, and maintenance.

1.2 This guide addresses the need for systematic evaluation of factors that can result in moisture-induced damage to a building or its components. Although of great potential importance, serviceability issues which are often, but not necessarily, related to physical damage of the building or its components (for example, indoor air quality or electrical safety) are not directly addressed in this guide.

1.3 The emphasis of this guide is on low-rise buildings. Portions of this guide; in particular Sections 5, 6, and 7; may also be applicable to high-rise buildings.

1.4 This guide is not intended for direct use in codes and specifications. It does not attempt to prescribe acceptable limits of damage. Buildings intended for different uses may have different service life expectancies, and expected service lives of different components within a given building often differ. Furthermore, some building owners may be satisfied with substantially shorter service life expectancies of building components or of the entire building than other building owners. Lastly, the level of damage that renders a component unserviceable may vary with the type of component, the degree to which failure of the component is critical (for example, whether failure constitutes a life-safety hazard), and the judgement (that is, tolerance for damage) of the building owner. For the reasons stated in this paragraph, prescribing limits of damage would require listing many pages of exceptions and qualifiers and is beyond the scope of this guide.

1.5 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

1.6 *This standard does not purport to address the safety concerns associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.7 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*[2]

C168 Terminology Relating to Thermal Insulation
C717 Terminology of Building Seals and Sealants
C755 Practice for Selection of Water Vapor Retarders for Thermal Insulation
C1193 Guide for Use of Joint Sealants
D1079 Terminology Relating to Roofing and Waterproofing
E331 Test Method for Water Penetration of Exterior Windows, Skylights, Doors, and Curtain Walls by Uniform Static Air Pressure Difference
E547 Test Method for Water Penetration of Exterior Windows, Skylights, Doors, and Curtain Walls by Cyclic Static Air Pressure Difference
E631 Terminology of Building Constructions
E632 Practice for Developing Accelerated Tests to Aid Prediction of the Service Life of Building Components and Materials
E1105 Test Method for Field Determination of Water Penetration of Installed Exterior Windows, Skylights, Doors, and Curtain Walls, by Uniform or Cyclic Static Air Pressure Difference
E1643 Practice for Selection, Design, Installation, and Inspection of Water Vapor Retarders Used in Contact with Earth or Granular Fill Under Concrete Slabs
E1677 Specification for Air Barrier (AB) Material or Assemblies for Low-Rise Framed Building Walls
E1745 Specification for Plastic Water Vapor Retarders Used in Contact with Soil or Granular Fill under Concrete Slabs
E2112 Practice for Installation of Exterior Windows, Doors and Skylights

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[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

E2136 Guide for Specifying and Evaluating Performance of Single Family Attached and Detached Dwellings—Durability

2.2 *ASCE/SEI Standard:*[3]

ASCE/SEI 24-05 Flood Resistant Design and Construction

2.3 *ASHRAE Documents:*[4]

ASHRAE Handbook – Fundamentals

ASHRAE Handbook – HVAC Applications

ASHRAE Handbook – HVAC Systems and Equipment

ASHRAE Standard 62.1 Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality

ASHRAE Standard 62.2 Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality in Low-rise Residential Buildings

ASHRAE Technical Data Bulletin, Vol 10, No. 3 *Recommended Practices for Controlling Moisture in Crawl Spaces,* 1994.

2.4 *ISO Standard:*[5]

ISO 6707-1 Building and civil engineering—Vocabulary—General Terms

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Standard Definitions*—Refer to Terminologies C168, C717, D1079, and E631 for definitions of general terms.

3.1.1 *perm, n*—a measurement unit for time rate of water vapor migration by diffusion through a material or component. See Terminology C168 for the explicit definition.

3.1.2 *vapor retarder (barrier), n*—As defined in Terminology C168, a material or system that adequately impedes the transmission of water vapor under specified conditions.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—For low-rise residential construction, materials or components with a water vapor permeance not exceeding approximately one perm (60 ng/(s m$^2$ Pa) are generally considered vapor retarders (see Practice C755). What constitutes adequate restriction of water vapor transmission however depends on vapor pressure difference across the construction (which in turn depends on interior and exterior conditions), ability of the construction to dissipate moisture, and capacity of the construction to seasonally accumulate moisture without damage. Therefore, a material or system with a water vapor permeance exceeding approximately one perm (60 ng/(s m$^2$ Pa) may in some circumstances provide adequate impedance to vapor transmission.

3.1.3 *water vapor permeance, n*—see Terminology C168.

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—Permeance is a performance evaluation and not a property of a material. Permeance is expressed in perms (IP units) or in ng/(s m$^2$ Pa) (SI modified units).

3.1.4 *water vapor permeability, n*—see Terminology C168.

3.1.4.1 *Discussion*—Permeability is a property of a material. Permeability is the arithmetic product of permeance and thickness.

3.2 *Other Definitions Found in ASTM Standards:*

3.2.1 *air barrier, n*—a material or system in building construction that is designed and installed to reduce air leakage either into or through an opaque wall or across a ceiling.

3.2.1.1 *Discussion*—Source of this definition is Specification E1677.

3.2.2 *opaque wall, n*—exposed areas of a wall that enclose conditioned space, except openings for windows, doors and building service systems.

3.2.2.1 *Discussion*—Source of this definition is Specification E1677.

3.3 *Definitions from ASHRAE*—The following definitions are consistent with those in Chapter 27 of the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals.

3.3.1 *exfiltration, n*—the uncontrolled flow of indoor air out of a building through cracks and other unintentional openings and through the normal use of exterior doors for entrance and egress.

3.3.2 *infiltration, n*—the uncontrolled flow of outdoor air into a building through cracks and other unintentional openings and through the normal use of exterior doors for entrance and egress.

3.3.3 *ventilation, n*—the intentional introduction of air, from the outside, into a building.

3.4 *Definitions from the U.S. Department of Energy:*

3.4.1 *cold climate, n*—a climate with between 5400 °F and 9000 °F heating degree days (HDD) (65 °F basis) (or between 3000 °K and 5000 °K heating degree days (18.3 °C basis)).

3.4.1.1 *Discussion*—This definition is consistent with the climate classification system adopted by the U.S. Department of Energy's Building America program. According to this classification system, a climate with in excess of 9000 °F HDD (5000 °K HDD) is considered a very cold climate.

3.4.2 *hot-humid climate, n*—a climate where annual precipitation exceeds 20 in. (500 mm) and one or both of the following occur: (*1*) wet-bulb temperature exceeds 67 °F (19.5 °C) for 3000 or more hours during the warmest six consecutive months of the year, or (*2*) wet-bulb temperature exceeds 73 °F (23 °C) for 1500 or more hours during the warmest six consecutive months of the year.

3.4.2.1 *Discussion*—This definition is consistent with the climate classification system adopted by the U.S. Department of Energy's Building America program.

3.5 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.5.1 *air leakage, n*—infiltration or exfiltration, in other words uncontrolled air flow into or out of a building through cracks and other unintentional openings and through normal use of exterior doors for entrance and egress.

3.5.1.1 *Discussion*—This definition is essentially the same as that in Terminology C168, although expressed with different verbiage.

3.5.2 *building component, n*—an inclusive term to collectively refer to building materials, products, or assemblies.

3.5.3 *capillary break, n*—a term applied to a material or system intended to inhibit liquid water transfer by capillary

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[3] Available from American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), 1801 Alexander Bell Dr., Reston, VA 20191, http://www.asce.org.

[4] Available from American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE), 1791 Tullie Circle, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329, http://www.ashrae.org.

[5] Available from International Organization for Standardization (ISO), ISO Central Secretariat, BIBC II, Chemin de Blandonnet 8, CP 401, 1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland, http://www.iso.org.

suction. The mechanism for inhibiting liquid water transfer is by insertion of, or provision for, a discontinuity of capillary suction force.

3.5.3.1 *Discussion*—A capillary break may be a membrane capable of blocking liquid water movement regardless of direction, or may be a coarse granular material capable of preventing capillary rise, while allowing drainage. An airspace may serve as a capillary break, where it is of such dimension and configuration that bridging of water drops across the airspace is prevented. Membrane capillary breaks are commonly composed of synthetic polymers but may also be composed of corrosion-resistant sheet metal, asphalt impregnated and coated felt, or, where lesser degrees of resistance to capillary transfer are required, asphalt-impregnated felt.

3.5.4 *critical cumulative exposure time, n*—a moisture condition parameter, this parameter is expressed as a time sum when moisture conditions are above a level that results in cumulative damage to a building component, such that the level of cumulative damage is deemed unacceptable.

3.5.4.1 *Discussion*—cumulative damage to a component may occur over a range of moisture and temperature combinations, and damage is frequently more rapid at some combinations than at others. The differing rate of damage accumulation at different sets of conditions is accounted for with intensity factors, which are discussed in Chapter 26 of ASTM MNL 18 (**1**).[6]

3.5.5 *critical moisture content, n*—a moisture condition parameter. This parameter is expressed as a moisture content level above which immediate or virtually immediate damage will occur to a building component at a given temperature, such that the level of damage is deemed unacceptable.

3.5.6 *durability, n*—in constructions, the capacity of a building component or a construction to remain serviceable as intended with usual and customary operation and maintenance during the designed service-life under anticipated internal and external environments.

3.5.6.1 *Discussion*—This definition is similar to that found in Terminology C168 as a subheading under the term "building performance."

3.5.7 *flashing, n*—a term applied to elements, most commonly fabricated of sheet metal, but which may also be fabricated of synthetic materials, used at interruptions and terminations of water shedding systems of roofs and walls, and intended to prevent intrusion of liquid water at these points.

3.5.7.1 *Discussion*—This definition is consistent with, although not identical to, that found in ISO 6707-1.

3.5.8 *limit, v*—to keep the value or level of some parameter, which is recognized as being problematic or potentially problematic, below a value or level which is deemed to be objectionable.

3.5.9 *limit state, n*—a value which expresses a moisture condition parameter, generally a critical moisture content or a critical cumulative exposure time, that is deemed to be at the border of what is acceptable, and beyond which an unacceptable level of damage to a building component may be expected.

3.5.10 *serviceability, n*—in a construction, the capacity of a building component or a construction to perform the function(s) for which it was designed and constructed.

3.5.10.1 *Discussion*—This definition is similar to that found in Terminology C168 as a subheading under the term "building performance."

3.5.11 *water or moisture, n*—water as liquid, vapor, or solid (ice, frost, or snow) in any combination or in transition.

## 4. Significance and Use

4.1 Moisture degradation is frequently a significant factor that either limits the useful life of a building or necessitates costly repairs. Examples of moisture degradation include: (*1*) decay of wood-based materials, (*2*) spalling of masonry caused by freeze-thaw cycles, (*3*) damage to gypsum plasters by dissolution, (*4*) corrosion of metals, (*5*) damage due to expansion of materials or components (by swelling due to moisture pickup, or by expansion due to corrosion, hydration, or delayed ettringite formation), (*6*) spalling and degradation caused by salt migration, (*7*) failure of finishes, and (*8*) creep deformation and reduction in strength or stiffness.

4.1.1 Moisture accumulation within construction components or constructions may adversely affect serviceability of a building, without necessarily causing immediate and serious degradation of the construction components. Examples of such serviceability issues are: (*1*) indoor air quality, (*2*) electrical safety, (*3*) degradation of thermal performance of insulations, and (*4*) decline in physical appearance. Mold or mildew growth can influence indoor air quality and physical appearance. With some components, in particular interior surface finishes, mold or mildew growth may limit service life of the component. Moisture conditions that affect serviceability issues can frequently be expected, unless corrected, to eventually result in degradation of the building or its components. This guide does not attempt however to address serviceability issues that could be corrected by cleaning and change in building operation, and that would not require repair or replacement of components to return the building (or portions or components of the building) to serviceability.

4.2 Prevention of water-induced damage must be considered throughout the construction process including the various stages of the design process, construction, and building commissioning. It must also be considered in building operation and maintenance, and when the building is renovated, rehabilitated or undergoes a change in use.

4.3 This guide is intended to alert designers and builders, and also building owners and managers, to potential damages that may be induced by water, regardless of its source. This guide discusses moisture sources and moisture migration. Limit states (or specific moisture conditions that are likely to impact construction or component durability) and design methods are also cursorily discussed. Examples of practices that enhance durability are listed and discussed, as are examples of constructions or circumstances to avoid. The examples listed are not all-inclusive. Lastly, field check lists are

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[6] The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to a list of references at the end of this standard.

given. The checklists are not intended for use as is, but as guides for development of checklists which may vary with specific building designs and climates.

## 5. Moisture Sources and Migration

5.1 Moisture sources for buildings can be broadly classified as follows: (*1*) surface runoff of precipitation from land areas, (*2*) ground water or wet soil, (*3*) precipitation or irrigation water that falls on the building, (*4*) indoor humidity, (*5*) outdoor humidity, (*6*) moisture from use of wet building materials or construction under wet conditions, and (*7*) errors, accidents, and maintenance problems associated with indoor plumbing. At a given instant of time the categories are distinct from each other. Water can change phase and can be transported over space by various mechanisms. Water may therefore be expected to move between categories over time, blurring the distinctions between categories. Chapter 8 of ASTM MNL 18 (**1**) provides quantitative estimates of potential moisture load from various sources.

5.1.1 High indoor humidity during winter is often a major cause of moisture problems in cold or temperate climates. Moisture-induced damage may be expected unless the building is designed to tolerate the levels of indoor humidity that occur in use. Conversely, moisture induced damage may be expected unless indoor humidity is kept within limits that the building will tolerate. Buildings should be designed and built so as to tolerate indoor humidity levels commensurate with their intended use. For some buildings (for example, those intended for habitation by persons with certain medical conditions or those housing swimming pools or textile production equipment), the levels of indoor humidity which the building should be expected to tolerate are moderately high, even if the building is located in a cold climate. Conversely however, most buildings are not designed nor built to tolerate high indoor humidities during winter. It is therefore unreasonable to expect such buildings to perform adequately if operated at high indoor humidities during winter.

5.1.1.1 The potential for indoor humidity to cause damage depends on the local climate. Occupant density, that is number of occupants per given unit of space, and occupant activities frequently have a large influence on indoor humidity levels. Among occupant activities that influence indoor humidity, cooking, bathing and laundry activities, and use of unvented combustion appliances are those most likely to be significant. Air exchange between the living space and the exterior can significantly lower indoor humidity levels during winter in temperate climates. Control of indoor humidity is discussed in greater detail in 8.3 and its subsections.

5.1.1.2 Mathematical evaluation tools (see 7.1.2 and 7.1.3) can be used to identify if a given building design in a given climate will tolerate a given level of indoor humidity or, alternatively, to estimate tolerable indoor relative humidities for a given building design and climate.

5.1.2 Although use of dry building materials is preferable, wet building materials are commonly used. With some building materials (for example cast-in-place concrete) a wet initial condition is an inherent characteristic of the material, and thus unavoidable. The influence of moisture from wet building materials must not be overlooked. With proper design, construction and operation, moisture from wet building materials can, within limits, be dissipated without causing damage.

5.1.2.1 When wood frame walls are constructed with wet building materials or under wet conditions, the walls should be allowed to dry by evaporation before they are enclosed. Wall designs that permit more rapid dissipation of moisture can accommodate being enclosed at higher moisture conditions than can wall designs with lower capacity to dissipate moisture. Computer models (7.1.2) can be helpful in predicting drying rate in walls enclosed at higher than ideal moisture contents.

5.2 Strategies to prevent or control moisture accumulation in buildings fall into three broad categories: (*1*) limit moisture sources, (*2*) minimize moisture entry into the building or building envelope, and (*3*) remove moisture from the building or building envelope. Moisture control strategies that combine these approaches are usually most effective.

5.3 Moisture can migrate by a variety of moisture transport mechanisms. A comprehensive treatment of moisture transport and storage may be found in Chapter 1 of ASTM MNL 18 (**1**). The following mechanisms are most significant in building constructions and are listed in order of potential magnitude: (*1*) liquid flow by gravity, air pressure, surface tension, momentum, and capillary suction; (*2*) movement of water vapor by air movement; and (*3*) water vapor diffusion by vapor pressure differences. These transport mechanisms can deliver moisture into the building or the building envelope, in which cases it is desirable that they be controlled. These transport mechanisms can also act to remove moisture from the building or building envelope, in which cases they may be used to promote drying.

5.3.1 In control of moisture delivery to the building or building envelope, the transport mechanisms that have the potential for moving the greatest amounts of moisture should (where practical) be controlled first. In promotion of drying of the building or building envelope, the transport mechanisms that have the potential for moving the greatest amounts of moisture should (where practical) be utilized first.

5.4 Building assemblies can become wet in three ways: (*1*) moisture can enter from the exterior, (*2*) moisture can enter from the interior, or (*3*) the assembly can start out wet as a result of using wet building materials or building under wet conditions.

5.4.1 Moisture typically enters building assemblies from the exterior through three mechanisms: (*1*) liquid flow by gravity, air pressure, surface tension, momentum, or capillary suction; (*2*) movement of water vapor by air movement; or (*3*) water vapor diffusion by vapor pressure differences.

5.4.2 Moisture typically enters building assemblies from the interior through two mechanisms: (*1*) movement of water vapor by air movement, or (*2*) water vapor diffusion by vapor pressure differences.

5.4.3 Operation of mechanical equipment has not always been recognized for its potential influence on moisture transfer. This potential influence should not be overlooked. Most notably, air handling equipment can induce a moisture transport mechanism that is capable of moving large amounts of moisture, namely movement of water vapor by air movement. Unplanned pressurization or depressurization of buildings or portions of buildings by air handlers can result in substantial moisture accumulations in the building envelope.

5.5 Moisture can typically be removed (dried) to the exterior or the interior by three mechanisms: (*1*) liquid flow by gravity (drainage) or capillary suction, (*2*) movement of water vapor by air movement (ventilation), or (*3*) water vapor diffusion by vapor pressure differences.

5.5.1 Where condensation of water vapor or water leaks can occur, weep paths to drain liquid water to a place where it can be dissipated are often effective. Converting liquid water to vapor, and dissipating the vapor by air movement may also be practical.

## 6. Limit States

6.1 Identification of conditions that must be avoided in order to prevent degradation of building components is an important step in making design or operating decisions. However, precise guidelines for identification of such conditions are generally lacking. Rather rough estimates based on empirical experience are often used.

6.2 Time and temperature are factors that are interrelated with moisture level in the degradation of building components. The moisture/temperature/time combinations that result in material degradation furthermore vary with the type of material. For example, wood will not decay, even at elevated moisture content when its temperature is near or below freezing, and even at temperature conditions conducive to decay, wood can withstand intermittent wettings of short duration to elevated moisture contents without decay becoming established. Conversely, masonry units can generally be expected to withstand elevated moisture conditions at temperatures above freezing for extended time periods (conditions under which wood decay might be expected), but suffer damage if frozen in a saturated condition.

6.2.1 Many materials or constructions have threshold water contents below which deterioration may be slow enough to be negligible for designed life expectancy. As indicated in 6.1 these threshold values are often rather rough estimates. See "Humidity and Building Materials" (Connolly, 1993) (**2**) for estimates.

6.2.2 The concepts of critical moisture content and critical cumulative exposure time (see 3.5.4) are discussed in Chapter 26 of ASTM MNL 18 (**1**). Although these concepts are generally recognized by building scientists, organized use of these as limit states by designers has not yet become a well-recognized practice.

6.3 A limit state is frequently based on avoidance of damage to a component as the result of its getting wet. A limit state may also be based on avoidance of damage to a component as a result of moisture conditions in an adjacent component. For example, limiting moisture-induced dimensional change of plywood sheathing may be critical to prevent cracking of stucco cladding.

## 7. Design Evaluation Tools

7.1 Means for evaluating the design of building envelopes from the perspective of moisture management can be classified as follows: (*1*) conceptual, (*2*) mathematical using computer simulation models, and (*3*) mathematical using calculations that can be performed without computer software (sometimes referred to as manual design tools).

7.1.1 *Conceptual Design Evaluation*—This approach involves the following three-step procedure: (*1*) determine probable external and internal environmental loads (determine climate and interior design conditions), (*2*) determine the potential moisture transport mechanisms in each assembly, and (*3*) select moisture control strategies. This approach provides a qualitative perception of how a building will perform under the influence of all the moisture loads the building is likely to be subjected to. *The Moisture Control Handbook* (Lstiburek and Carmody, 1991) (**3**) provides a more comprehensive treatment of this approach. Conceptual design evaluation can be used to select a construction for a given climate, as well as to evaluate how a proposed construction may perform in a given climate.

7.1.2 *Computer Hygrothermal Analysis Simulation Models*—These models have been developed to quantitatively predict moisture and temperature conditions within proposed assemblies using boundary conditions representative for the climate and interior design conditions. As stated in Chapter 6 of ASTM MNL 40 (**4**), the more detailed computer simulation models employ finite-element or finite-difference schemes. These models mathematically model moisture and heat transfer mechanisms at the inner and outer surfaces of the assemblies and within the assemblies. Some of the models predict moisture transfer by air movement and liquid water flow as well as by vapor diffusion. Use of such models requires knowledge of building physics and of the limitations of the model used. Most models allow estimates of the duration of a set of temperature and moisture conditions within assemblies. A discussion of available models is found in Chapter 2 of ASTM MNL 18 (**1**), in Chapter 6 of ASTM MNL 40 (**4**), and in Chapter 23 of the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals.

7.1.3 *Manual Design Tools*—These are termed "simplified hygrothermal analysis method models" in Chapter 6 of ASTM MNL 40 (**4**) and "simplified hygrothermal design calculations and analyses" in Chapter 23 of the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentalss. Manual design tools, like computer simulation models, provide quantitative estimates of moisture conditions within building envelopes. They only account however for moisture transfer by vapor diffusion. Their focus is on predicting the occurrence of sustained condensation within building assemblies. The calculations for manual design tools can be easily performed with a handheld calculator or in a computer spreadsheet. The traditional design tool used in North America is a manual design tool and is referred to as the dewpoint method. An example of the dewpoint method is outlined in Appendix X1.1 of Practice C755. The validity and usefulness of predictions made with manual design tools have limitations. Most notably, manual design tools do not provide estimates of the time period during which potentially damaging conditions may occur. Despite the limitations of manual design tools, some relatively unsophisticated analysis procedures, like dewpoint analysis, can be useful for rapidly comparing relative performances of many different proposed constructions. A discussion of manual design tools is found in Chapter 11 of ASTM MNL 18 (**1**) and in Chapter 23 of the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals.

## 8. Examples of Practices that Enhance Durability

8.1 *Drainage of Precipitation and Surface Runoff:*

8.1.1 *Surface Grading*—Ground should slope away from walls so that precipitation runoff from land areas does not pond near the foundation.

8.1.2 *Building External Drains*—Discharge from drains at ground level should be carried away from the foundation, and should flow away from it.

8.1.3 *Below-Grade Drainage Systems*—In some cases below-grade drainage systems may be required. In some cases, dissipation of collected water by pumping will be required. Below grade drainage systems are discussed in Chapter 2 of *The Moisture Control Handbook* (Lstiburek and Carmody, 1991) (**3**).

8.2 *Limiting Intrusion of Precipitation:*

8.2.1 Precipitation has the potential for delivering exceptionally large moisture loads to buildings, and is usually the largest potential moisture source (see Chapter 8 of ASTM MNL 18) (**1**). It is imperative that this source be controlled, specifically that precipitation be excluded from the building envelope. In some cases, entry of limited mounts of precipitation into the envelope can be tolerated provided that it is rapidly dissipated by drainage, or (typically more slowly) by evaporation.

8.2.1.1 Moisture from precipitation enters building envelopes almost exclusively in liquid form, either as rain or as melt water from ice or snow.

8.2.2 The water exposure of horizontal or sloped surfaces (that is, roofs) is almost always greater than that of walls. Shedding and drainage of water from roof surfaces is imperative. These surfaces must essentially be water tight (that is, not leak). Penetrations through water shedding membranes of roofs are common leakage points; flashings are almost always required at such penetrations. Design, installation and maintenance of roofs are very important. There is an entire volume of the Annual Book of ASTM Standards (Vol 04.04) that contains standards concerning roofing and waterproofing. Therefore, a comprehensive treatment of these subjects is not attempted in this guide.

8.2.3 Water intrusion through building facades (in low rise construction, this primarily means walls) can be of substantial consequence. There are two broad strategies for controlling rainwater intrusion into walls: (*1*) reduce the amount of rainwater deposited on building walls, and (*2*) control rainwater that is deposited on building walls.

8.2.3.1 Reducing rainwater deposition on wall assemblies has traditionally been a function of siting and architectural design. The following measures have historically proven effective: (*1*) site buildings so they are sheltered from wind-driven rain, (*2*) provide roof overhangs and gutters or other piped roof drainage systems to shelter walls from direct rain exposure or roof runoff.

8.2.3.2 As suggested in 8.2.1, roof runoff is usually an exceptionally large potential water source. In temperate and cold climates, exposure to roof runoff is one of the most common causes of freeze-thaw spalling of masonry cladding systems. Wood and wood-based cladding systems are widely recognized as being incapable of performing adequately if exposed to roof runoff. Among the more common water intrusion points in walls are the interfaces of walls with roofs, especially with level or nearly-level roofs. Thresholds of doors that open to balconies represent one of the most common sites of serious water intrusion into walls. Serious water intrusion at these sites can generally be expected unless the balcony surface is pitched to drain water away from the wall. For the reasons stated in this paragraph, it is generally accepted that walls of buildings must not be exposed to roof runoff.

8.2.4 Walls are most susceptible to water intrusion at joints in and penetrations of the exterior cladding system. Joints between the cladding system and windows and doors are locations susceptible to water leakage. Junctures of walls with large horizontal or sloped surfaces (for example roofs, decks, or balconies) are susceptible to leakage. Therefore, particular care is required at these locations.

8.2.5 Strategies for control of rainwater that is deposited on building walls can be broadly categorized as follows: (*1*) strategies to prevent water penetration of the outermost face of the wall system, (*2*) strategies to dissipate water that penetrates the outermost face of the wall system. Strategies in these two general categories often are effectively used in combination. Strategies for control of rainwater deposited on building walls are discussed in Chapter 2 of *The Moisture Control Handbook* (Lstiburek and Carmody, 1991) (**3**). Further discussion on the subject, as well as recommendations concerning design details are found in "Nail-On Windows" (Bateman, 1995) (**5**). It is important that the strategy or strategies selected by the designer be clearly understood by construction contractors and those responsible for maintenance of the building.

8.2.5.1 *Exterior Mechanicals*—Penetrations of this type (for example, electrical equipment) should be of a type suited for exterior service and be installed with adequate moisture seals.

8.2.5.2 *Fenestration*—Important consideration in selection of fenestration units (windows and doors) are (*1*) the ability of the units themselves to shed water, and (*2*) the ability with which the units can be integrated into the building's water-shedding system.

*(1)* A unit's resistance to water penetration can be identified, in part, by laboratory tests such as Test Methods E331 and E547. Third party certification of a product's water resistance is highly recommended to help identify whether the product is appropriate for its intended application (anticipated in-service exposure of the unit to wind and rain).

*(2)* Proper installation and integration of the product with the building's water-shedding system are essential. Practice E2112 provides guidance for proper installation and water-shedding system integration for simple fenestration products. For more complex systems (such as mulled units, stacked units, or new designs), pre-construction mock-up testing and field testing early in the building project can be valuable for purposes of risk reduction and quality assurance. Field testing

is especially valuable where water management and integration details are unclear or are not provided. Test Method E1105 outlines a useful field testing technique.

*(3)* Cladding termination accessories, window installation accessories, or site-fabricated trim may provide a transition between fenestration units and the surrounding cladding system. Water penetration can occur at the interfaces between these entities and either the fenestration unit or the surrounding cladding system. Adequate building design and adequate workmanship during construction are both essential to reducing the potential for water intrusion and water-induced damage to the building.

*(4)* Appropriate maintenance of the fenestration product and its interfaces with the wall system will help ensure long-term delivery of the desired water penetration resistance. If the water-shedding capabilities of a unit are compromised by mechanical damage or deferred maintenance, water intrusion into the wall can occur.

NOTE 1—The considerations mentioned previously in this section as applicable to fenestration units in walls (doors and windows) also apply to skylights. Skylights, which are installed on roofs, can be expected to have greater weather exposure than fenestration units in walls.

8.2.5.3 *Sealant Joints*—In contrast to high-rise construction, design of sealant joints in low-rise construction has generally not become a well-developed discipline. Design of reliable sealant joints can include many factors such as: sealant-substrate compatibility, avoidance of 3-sided adhesion, joint geometry and anticipated movements in joints (see Guide C1193). Workmanship, including conditions under which sealant joints are installed, is also important. Maintenance of sealant joints must not be overlooked, since anticipated life of sealant joints will almost certainly be substantially less than design life of the building.

8.3 *Control of Indoor Humidity:*

8.3.1 From the standpoint of building durability, indoor humidity control is primarily of concern during winter in temperate or cold climates. It may also be of concern however in air conditioned buildings in hot humid climates, particularly if the building is designed to dry toward the interior. In mild weather in any climate, humidity control may be of importance from the standpoint of preservation of property within the structure or from the standpoint of indoor air quality (for example, preventing mold growth that releases spores and musty odors or inhibiting the propagation of dust mites), but generally is not of great concern to durability of the building structure.

8.3.2 Indoor humidity can be limited by controlling moisture sources or by removing humidity by air exchange with the exterior or by dehumidification.

8.3.3 As indicated in 5.1.1 and 8.3.1, the indoor humidity (RH) level that a given building will tolerate is climate-dependent. Experience and computer simulation models suggest that damaging moisture accumulations can be expected in many buildings of customary design in cold climates if winter indoor RH in heated buildings is maintained at levels in excess of 35 to 40 %. When indoor humidity levels above 35 to 40 % are necessary or desired during the heating season in cold climates, particular attention during design and construction is necessary so that the building will tolerate such levels.

8.3.4 In most heating climates during cool or cold weather, air exchange with the exterior can significantly reduce indoor humidity (Chapter 15 of ASTM MNL 18 (**1**) and Chapter 24 of the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals). Chapter 24 of the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals suggests that at normal rates for residential occupancy and moisture generation and in all but mild humid climates, ventilation to a level of 0.35 air changes per hour (as recommended in ASHRAE Standard 62) will usually be sufficient to prevent excessive indoor humidity. Mechanical dehumidification is rarely used for indoor humidity control during cold weather. In mild humid climates, air exchange with the exterior may be of limited effectiveness for control of indoor humidity. In these climates, dehumidification may be more effective than ventilation for controlling indoor RH, but as indicated in 8.3.1 is more likely to be deemed necessary for reasons other than that of durability of the building structure.

8.3.4.1 In designing for provision of air exchange between the living space and the exterior, energy efficiency and air quality considerations as well as durability considerations are usually important.

8.3.4.2 In buildings constructed prior to 1970, air exchange between building interiors and the exterior during winter in temperate and cold climates has occurred primarily by a combination of infiltration (much of which occurred through fenestration units) and escape of air up chimneys (a combination of air movement through furnaces, draft hoods, and barometric draft dampers). The effect of chimney draft has often been sufficiently great that the buildings have operated at a negative air pressure relative to the exterior, causing air leakage through the building envelope to be predominantly infiltrative. Infiltrative air leakage is not capable of transporting interior moisture into the envelope. Air exchange rates have been uncontrolled, responding to air temperature differences and wind effects. During cold windy weather, air exchange rates have often been well in excess of the amounts recommended as necessary by ASHRAE Standard 62. In some cases, the air exchange rates during cold weather have been overly effective at reducing indoor humidity levels (sometimes to levels below 25 %). Although substantially less than ideal from an energy use perspective, buildings that operate in this traditional mode generally have not suffered significant moisture-induced durability problems. Many existing buildings, perhaps a majority of existing buildings, operate in this traditional mode during cold weather.

8.3.4.3 Since the 1970s, buildings have generally been built so that they can be heated with less energy. For a building of a given size, the increased energy efficiency has resulted in furnaces of smaller size or furnaces that run a lower percentage of the time during the heating season, or both. The result has generally been a greatly reduced rate of furnace-induced exhaust of interior air via the chimney. In addition, the building envelope, including fenestration units, have become more resistant to air leakage. The result is that some buildings now operate at much lower air exchange rates than recommended by ASHRAE Standard 62, and the low air exchange rates have