

Instructions for Collecting a Mortar Sample

Collecting a mortar sample is simply a matter of chiseling out some mortar with simple tools, and enclosing it in one of the provided bags. If you have any questions about this process, please email us at info@lancasterlimeworks.com or call **717.207.7014** and someone will be able to answer your questions.

Tools Needed

- Hammer or mallet
- Narrow chisel (less than width of the joint) or a flat-head screwdriver
- Garbage bag, drop cloth, or bucket to catch mortar
- Collection container or bag

Procedure

1. Find an area of wall where the mortar seems characteristic of the whole building. If there are areas that look different, or areas that have weathered differently, take samples in different areas and mix them together.
2. Pay careful attention while you are chiseling out the mortar for the sample to any evidence of prior repointings. This may look like a layer of mortar on the surface that covers a deeper mortar that is a different color. These are important clues for understanding the history of the building and the reasons for deterioration. If you encounter this, try to keep the samples of different layers in different bags.
3. Chisel out the mortar using your screwdriver or chisel. Place the drop cloth or bucket underneath to catch the sample if it falls. Save the pieces along with any powder that comes out. Sometimes the mortar is very deteriorated and it falls into powder as you chisel it: that's OK. Save as much as possible.
4. Collect mortar until you have at least ½ cup of sample, or about a handful. More is better, so if you can easily collect 1 cup, do it. Collect this amount for each distinct layer of mortar that you find, placing them in separate bags.
5. Label the bags clearly with a marker or pen. If there is more than one sample, label them as to their location, like "Top layer" and "Inner layer" or "West side" and "East side". When you receive the results of the sample back from LLW, they will be labeled the same as we receive them.
6. It is always helpful if you take photos of the sample area and any areas with the same mortar. If you have digital photos, you can email them (clearly labeled to correspond with sample labels) to info@lancasterlimeworks.com. Print photos can be enclosed with the samples. If there are problems that you are trying to address (moisture issues, structural issues, deteriorated mortar, rotted wood, etc.) or conditions that you observe, use the note section to describe these conditions. The more data we have, the better.
7. Place the bags in the return envelope, place postage, and mail.