

WARPING

A major potential problem with the castings is warping. The setting process involves some heat and this, if not restrained, can lead to difficulties with the precision of the castings.

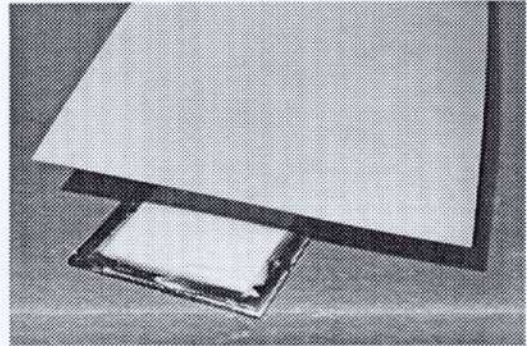
RUBBER MOULDS

1. USE A SMOOTH SURFACE FOR CASTING, SUCH AS FORMICA OR PLATE GLASS.
2. MAKE SURE THE BACK OF THE MOULD IS WET AND PRESS IT ON TO THE SURFACE - THE SUCTION COMBATS THE WARPING WHILE SETTING TAKES PLACE.

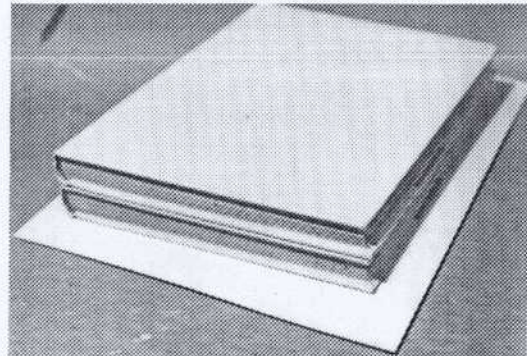
PLASTIC MOULDS

1. POUR THE MOULD AND SCRAPE OFF EXCESS IN THE NORMAL WAY.

2. PLACE A SHEET OF PLASTICARD OVER THE MOULD.



3. PLACE A SUITABLE WEIGHT ON TOP AND LEAVE TO SET.



4. AFTER SETTING, REMOVE THE WEIGHT AND SIMPLY PEEL OFF THE PLASTICARD. EXTRACT THE CASTING IN THE NORMAL WAY.

CASTING EXTRACTION

With practice, the extraction of most castings becomes straightforward. However, some door and window castings can be tricky and the finer castings take a very gentle touch to extract in one piece. The tendency is to throw a broken casting away, but it can be saved - the fracture is usually a clean break, so when the broken casting has dried out, it can be glued together and the join becomes invisible, leaving a perfectly usable casting.

CASTING FLAWS

AIR BUBBLES are caused by mixing the compound too vigorously. Stir more gently.

COMPOUND NOT REACHING CORNERS OR JOINTING TEETH - primarily avoided by making sure that the cavities are damp to help the compound spread out. Urging it into the corners or joints with a blunt point such as the handle tip of a small paint brush is helpful. Poor spreading can also be caused by mixing the compound too strongly - add a little more water.

A vibrating surface during the critical moments while the compound is being poured is the surest way of creating perfect castings - a spin dryer top is ideal, switched on for the moment or so it takes to pour the castings. (Protect the dryer and surrounding area from mess with newspaper.)

CASTINGS TOO THIN-caused by mixing the compound too weakly. Whereas such castings can often still be used, they tend to be slow setting and fragile.

CASTING DETAIL FLAWED - caused by foreign matter within the compound or mould cavity, usually soap or washing-up liquid from having washed out the moulds or tools without rinsing them thoroughly.

NOT ENOUGH PARTS

There is nothing more frustrating than finding that you are short of some vital castings while you are constructing a model. Try and build up as large a stock of castings as you can and have them well sorted into separate boxes or tubs. Other members of the family may help with casting while you are modelling (it can be fun!) and regular casting sessions soon build the stock up to a good level.

GLUE NOT STICKING

As long as a suitable adhesive has been used, castings that have not dried out is the only cause of glue not sticking. It normally takes 24 hours for the castings to be dry enough to stick, though this can be speeded up to as little as four hours if they are left to dry in a warm airing cupboard. If you cast well ahead of your model building, you will never have this problem.

INVERTED BRICKWORK

Just a small point, relevant to brickwork castings only. It is possible to assemble some brickwork castings upside down, leading to an annoying break in the symmetry of the mortar lines. The top row of any brick casting should always be whole bricks -if it starts with a half brick, you have the casting upside down.