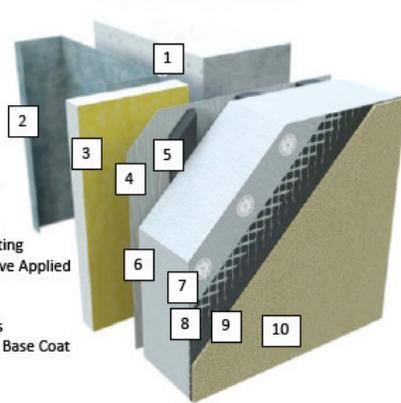


TECHNICAL BULLETIN

EIFS (Decorative Stucco)

Exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) are non-load-bearing, exterior cladding systems intended to provide a decorative barrier to water and other elements. They have been marketed as an economical, non-cracking alternative to other cladding systems such as traditional stucco. Stucco typically requires highly skilled labor to properly install, while EIFS installation may be more straightforward and cost-effective.



1. Concrete or Masonry Substrate
2. Wood or Steel Framing
3. Approved Sheathing/Substrate
4. Air/Water Resistant Barrier Coating
5. Vertical Notched Trowel Adhesive Applied to Insulation Board
6. Insulation Board
7. Approved Mechanical Fasteners
8. Reinforcing Mesh Embedded in Base Coat
9. Base Coat
10. Finish Coat

Components of EIFS

EIFS are multi-layer systems offering continuous insulation; barrier protection from water intrusion; and a customizable, aesthetic and decorative finish. While the exact makeup of the multi-layer system may vary, the diagram above shows a typical installation with both adhesive and mechanical fastening. (Source: EIFS Industry Members Association, www.eima.com) While EIFS are versatile and economical compared to traditional stucco finishes, proper installation and maintenance is required to minimize failures, particularly water intrusion, which can lead to significant damage, including mold growth. Historically, one of the main issues with EIFS arise due to the inability to clear moisture buildup behind the finish system.

Many modern EIFS installations are designed with an interior drainage system and a secondary weather barrier on top of the sheathing and behind the cladding, which limits the buildup of condensation behind the finish. When properly installed, they can offer superior insulation, energy efficiency and moisture-control performance vs. brick, stucco and fiber cement siding. EIFS also tend to offer more diversity in terms of available colors and surface textures.

Coating Considerations

EIFS may be coated or re-coated to meet various aesthetic and/ or performance criteria. A properly selected coating can protect the substrate and impart features such as weatherability, mold/ mildew resistance and dirt pick-up resistance. Due to the importance of maintaining the barrier to water, the exterior should be inspected for damage and potential areas for leaks prior to coating. Seals around openings should be checked and repaired with new sealant where necessary.

When considering surface preparation, EIFS are fragile compared to other cladding systems and harsh cleaning methods should be avoided, such as strong solvent cleaners, as well as high-temperature or high-pressure washes. A low-pressure, water or aqueous detergent wash (followed by water rinse) should be used to clean the surface prior to coating. In general, the EIFS manufacturer's recommendations for surface cleaning and preparation should be followed.

High-quality exterior acrylic or elastomeric coatings are generally suitable topcoats for EIFS and will be flexible enough to expand and contract with the substrate during temperature changes.

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