



Ensuring the Integrity of an EIFS (Synthetic Stucco) Home

What is EIFS?

Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS) is a synthetic stucco cladding material that has been installed on residential and commercial buildings nationwide over the past 25 years. EIFS is manufactured by several companies under brand names such as: DRYVIT®, STO® and SENERGY®. EIFS is popular for its versatility, style and insulation value. On most homes, EIFS is usually installed on a wood frame.

Issues Associated with EIFS

EIFS cladding performs well when installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications. However, serious damage can occur to buildings when EIFS is not properly installed and maintained. Basically, water can enter through gaps where the stucco joins other building materials (windows, door frames, etc.) causing potential problems.

It is important to have synthetic stucco homes inspected by professionals who have been trained on the unique issues of EIFS cladding systems. While many EIFS homes are well maintained and have no moisture or structural damage, there are numerous examples of buildings that required costly repairs because of the lack of maintenance and examination. Problems can include structural damage and mold growth caused by moisture intrusion. Our inspectors are trained to thoroughly examine the home, help educate homeowners, and **put into perspective** any maintenance or damage issues. Like brick or other siding, EIFS can be an excellent cladding system -- if properly maintained and periodically examined.

Provided by:

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 EIFS / Stucco Questions
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Scope of an EIFS Inspection

We have inspectors on staff that are certified by the Exterior Design Institute to perform independent inspections of new and existing EIFS clad buildings. To prevent future problems, a newly constructed EIFS clad building should be inspected to identify non-compliance issues with the manufacturer's specifications. An existing EIFS clad building is inspected periodically to identify developing deficiencies before the damage becomes serious. A quality EIFS inspection consists of three key processes:

1) A Visual Assessment- The Inspector will visually review the EIFS system from the roof to the foundation and everywhere in between. The inspection includes the roof flashing, sealants around doors and windows, surface damage as well as the the grade level back wrapping, which is checked to ensure the bottom of the EIFS has adequate clearance from the finished grade of the land.

2) A Surface Scan- As indicated by the visual assessment, the inspector performs a moisture analysis using a device that utilizes radio frequency to detect possible moisture intrusion.

3) Probing of Suspect Areas- A probe type meter is then used in areas suspected to have moisture infiltration as indicated in the surface scan. The probe will indicate the specific moisture reading in suspect areas. Any moisture above 19% is considered elevated; above 30% is saturated. After the EIFS is probed, the inspector will fill the holes with sealant to prevent water penetration. Sealant comes in a variety of colors to match the color of the surface as closely as possible.

Preparing an EIFS Property for Sale

If there are any deficiencies in the EIFS system, in most instances, the EIFS system can be successfully repaired by a qualified firm. If an EIFS warranty is a part of the transaction, it is important to check with the warranty firm before your inspection to make sure your inspector meets their specific inspection and reporting protocols.

We're working to be your expert -- we're working to earn your business.



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