



## **ADVISORY BULLETIN**

December 2014  
(updated March 2016)

### **Subject:**

Use of Exterior Insulation Finish Systems (EIFS) in Buildings  
Constructed Under Part 9 of ABC 2014

### **Advisory:**

The purpose of this document is to show under what conditions EIFS may be used in buildings governed by Part 9 of the 2014 ABC. The use of Exterior Insulation Finish Systems (EIFS) in construction of houses or other buildings under the requirements of Part 9 is not specifically addressed as an acceptable solution in Division B of the ABC 2014. Therefore in accordance with Division A, Clause 1.2.1.1.(1)(b), it would have to be shown that the EIFS system complies with the objectives of the 2014 ABC through the alternative solutions process. The use of EIFS also affects the spatial separation requirements in Division B, Subsection 9.10.15.

### **Material Requirements**

In accordance with Division A, Article 1.2.2.1.(2), a CCMC evaluation report may be used as a means of determining compliance with the 2014 ABC. There are a limited number of products for which Canadian Construction Materials Center (CCMC) has performed an evaluation to show that the EIFS system does comply with the objectives of specified articles from the NBC. Those EIFS systems may be permitted to be used as an acceptable solution providing the contractor constructs the system as indicated in the evaluation report. That includes using the materials that are specified in the report. There can be no mixing or substitution of materials, dimensions or methods indicated in the evaluation report. The report must be submitted as part of the building permit application submission. If the exterior finish changes between the time of building permit application and start of construction then there must be a change submitted to the building permit prior to the start of construction.

If there is not a CCMC evaluation of an EIFS system it may only be used in a building governed by Part 9 of the 2014 ABC where a professional Architect or Engineer registered to practice in Alberta provides a project specific letter that includes:

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1. A design sketch that includes the wall assembly and stipulates all of the components complete with the signature and stamp of the professional
2. Listings or evaluations for specific products used where there are limitations on product use and/or to demonstrate compliance with the ABC (i.e. CCMC evaluations for an insulation type).
3. How the designed system components achieve at least the minimum level of performance required by Division B in the areas defined by the objectives and functional statements attributed to the following:
  - a. Sentence 9.25.2.2.(1) Insulation Materials
  - b. Article 9.27.3.7. Flashing Materials
  - c. Article 9.27.4.2. Materials (caulking)
  - d. Sentence 3.1.5.5.(1) Combustible Components for Exterior Walls
  - e. Sentence 5.6.1.1.(1) Required Protection from Precipitation
  - f. Sentence 9.27.1.1.(5) Cladding General
  - g. Article 9.27.2.1. Minimizing and Preventing Ingress and Damage
  - h. Sentence 9.27.2.2.(4) Minimum Protection from Precipitation Ingress
  - i. Sentence 9.27.2.3.(1) First and Second Planes of Protection
  - j. Article 9.27.3.1. Elements of the Second Plane of Protection
  - k. Sentence 9.27.5.1.(1) Attachment (of cladding)
4. A commitment to conduct inspection(s) during construction, AND
5. A commitment to provide a letter of verification at the completion of the construction (including date of inspection(s)) that the wall assembly has been constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Alberta Building Code, the engineer design and the installation instructions for the products used (which may include CCMC evaluations for specific products)

## **Spatial Separation Requirements**

There are considerations in the use of EIFS regarding spatial separation of houses in Subsection 9.10.15. of Division B. The limiting distance (as defined in the ABC) that is most common and to which most issues occur is 1.2m. When the limiting distance is less than 1.2m, the cladding is required to be non-combustible or comply with CAN/ULC S134. The limiting distance is measured to the face of the exposing building face (as defined in the ABC). Ideally the face of the foundation or sheathing is set back a bit to allow for the designed cladding. However, in practice that distance is usually measured to the face of basement foundation or to the face of exterior sheathing. Division C, Article 2.2.2.4. permits a 2% variation in a dimension from the ABC. This clause has been used in the past to accept cladding to project into the 1.2m limiting distance by a maximum 24mm. This is the normal dimensional allowance for materials like vinyl siding, stucco or other thin claddings. We have traditionally accepted a real property report with the limiting distance shown as 1.2m to the face of foundation or sheathing providing the cladding is vinyl, stucco or other thin material.

EIFS would project more than the 2% allowance into the 1.2m. Therefore it is not permitted as a cladding where the drawings show a limiting distance of 1.2m to the foundation or

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sheathing or where the real property report indicates 1.2m or less to the foundation wall or sheathing. In order for EIFS to be permitted, the limiting distance would have to be indicated to be to the face of the EIFS and be not less than 1.2m or the EIFS would have to comply with the requirements of CAN/ULC S134.

Another concern with a cladding that projects closer than the 1.2m normal minimum limiting distance is in the area of glazed openings permitted. If the face of EIFS were to be located at less than 1.2m limiting distance then there would be no windows permitted in that building face. That would be regardless of whether the EIFS complied with ULC S134 or not.

Interpretation decision reached at Codes and Standards Technical Interpretation Committee meeting of November 17, 2014

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