

Synthetic Stucco (EIFS): Problems & Solutions

By Gino Streato

What is it?
EIFS is short for Exterior Insulation and Finish System, which is fast becoming the next “problem child” of the siding industry. EIFS is composed of foam insulation boards installed on top of plywood or OSB sheathing with a stucco-like finish applied over the insulation itself. Problems with EIFS stem from moisture getting trapped between the insulation against the sheathing, creating dry rot and toxic mold problems for the homeowner. Unfortunately there are no easy fixes for EIFS problems. It must be removed, the dry rot and mold repaired, and quality siding installed to replace the defective EIFS.

What to do?

The key to getting your EIFS or any siding replaced is to find a qualified contractor with your interests in mind. There are a few tricks that will ensure you are choosing the right company to replace your siding. Homeowners should request 10 or more references with

addresses and phone numbers. It is imperative that you speak with customers who have had an experience with the company that you are considering hiring. This will ensure they're as good as they are claiming.

Installation.

Once you have attained 10 or more quality references, demand to know the installation techniques and materials that the company uses to install the siding. Good companies will offer you: graded plywood (not OSB for re-sheating), a rain screen system instead of a basic moisture barrier, stainless steel nails that won't rust, elastomeric caulk guaranteed to last 20 years or more, and high-quality paint guaranteed to last as long as you own your home.

In-house crews or sub-contractors?

Another point to consider is whether the company you are hiring is subbing out the work to another company. It is meaningless to get a great presentation from a salesperson,

only to find that the sub-contractor installing the materials is cutting corners with zero accountability, and has no real knowledge of the product and/or the correct way to install it.

Hiring a siding contractor can be a bit like gambling: you may hit the jackpot, or you might get cleaned out. In order to avoid having a nightmare remodeling experience it is necessary to follow the steps outlined above. By doing so, you will have ensured that you've hired a company with your best interests in mind, and that you've received a remodeling job that lasts as long as you own your home.

For more information on EIFS removal and residing, you can contact Gino Streato by e-mail at gino@lifetime-remodeling.com, by phone at 503-242-4242, or at the website www.lifetime-remodeling.com. All Lifetime Remodeling crews are continually educated and tested on correct installation practices. CCB#170747, LIFETRS947NB.

After ▼

Before ▼

