Pre-Wrapped EIFS Starter

Technical Bulletins

This is one of a series of Technical Bulletins that the EIFS Council has produced to provide guidance concerning the performance of EIFS installations. New bulletins, as well as updates of existing bulletins, are issued periodically, as necessary. The bulletins do not create regulations; rather they provide specific guidance for complying with the minimum requirements of manufacturer's recommendations.

About the EIFS Council of Canada

Founded in 1987, the ECC, a national not-for-profit industry trade association, represents the overall EIFS industry in Canada. The ECC membership is comprised of EIFS manufacturers, distributors, component suppliers, contractors, building science/design consultants, affiliates and financial services companies. The ECC serves as the "official voice" of the EIFS industry with a mandate to provide for the advancement and growth of the industry across the country, through advocacy, education and marketing

The development, formulating, manufacture and validation of EIFS' materials and components to the S716.1 EIFS Standard is an involved process and represents a significant application of resources by system manufacturers. Though certain aspects of an EIF system installation and the related materials may sometimes appear generic across the various manufacturer offerings, they are not. They are specific to the particular system manufacturer and have undergone codified conformity assessments to show they meet the S716 Standards and the applicable building codes. These performance assessments also apply to the production and use of prefabricated/pre-wrapped starter strips.

Pre-wrapping the edge of insulation board with reinforcing mesh and base coat is one of the three recognized termination methods (i.e. wrapping) of an EIF System. Typically, pre-wrapped starters are installed where a moisture egress point is provided (**Note**: The expectation is that bulk water will not be present within the system. Nevertheless, points of egress are provided as an integral part of the secondary plane of protection should incidental water migrate beyond the outermost plane), as well as at other terminations, such as around window and door perimeters and at expansion joints. It is an efficient method of terminating EIFS where the system abuts another component of the wall assembly or building envelope. Traditionally these pre-wrapped pieces have been created on site by the installer, using the manufacturer's components (insulation/adhesives/basecoats) specified on the project. Today, are also being commercially manufactured as an accessory product. Whether created on site by the applicator or off site by an EIFS manufacturers' approved 3rd party, there are specific requirements that must be met – that is what this bulletin is intended to address.

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The following requirements apply to the fabrication and installation of pre-wrapped starter pieces of insulation:

1. The base coat, reinforcing mesh and insulation used must be:
   a. provided by the EIFS manufacturer whose system is being used on the project and validated as compliant with ULC S-716.1,
   b. consistent with EIFS manufacturer's applicable fire evaluation reports (where applicable for use in noncombustible construction) and,
   c. part of the EIFS manufacturer's warranty coverage as applicable to the system being installed.

2. The reinforcing mesh is to be embedded in the base coat as per ULC S716.2. Embedment may be achieved by installation of mesh into the wet base coat, bonding self-adhering mesh between two separate applications of base coat or through a manufacturing process that results in the full embedment of mesh into a base coat application that is bonded to the insulation. Where fabrication method is at variance (e.g. partial embedment of mesh) to the above, the end product must be shown to conform to the applicable requirements of the standard (e.g. adhesion) as well as reflected within fire related design listing listings /evaluation reports or supplemented with an opinion from the independent third party testing authority that prepared the fire listing evaluation report(s).

3. The interface of the prewrapped starter and the WRB/substrate must be consistent with the requirements of ULC-S716.2. Meaning, the reinforcing mesh must be secured to the WRB/substrate with adhesive that is consistent with the materials tested according to ULC-S716.1.

4. The inner face of the pre-wrapped starter piece should be designed to accommodate transition membranes, flashings or other materials that may restrict the dimensions of the drainage cavity, at window head flashings and through-wall flashings. In such cases, the design of the pre-wrapped starter piece may require more than the 65 mm wrap on the back face of the insulation to ensure contact of the lamina to the LA-WRB to complete encapsulation of the insulation.

5. Installation of pre-wrapped starter pieces must be consistent with the requirements for mesh continuity and, as such, should be designed to accommodate minimum 65 mm mesh overlaps at each end of the starter piece. Where a manufacturer's related design listing describes a minimum mesh overlap of more that 65 mm (e.g. 100 mm), the described overlap shall be present for both joining pre-wrapped starter pieces together, as well as accommodating required mesh overlap on the face (i.e. field applied mesh over the starter's mesh).

Starter Strips incorporating foreign components (meaning anything other than the material produced and/or approved by the manufacturer of the system being installed) is strictly prohibited.

Starter Strips and/or the means of installation that impede drainage, fail to remain in place, or represent a departure from the manufacturer's installation requirements are prohibited.

The use of improper/non-approved Starter Strips are not covered within the scope of EIFS manufacturer warranties. The unsupported use can also void third party technical opinions and performance evaluations relating to code compliance. This may lead authorities having jurisdiction to demand their removal from any building. Such an action may also represent challenges to contractual obligations for which the user of unapproved Starter Strips would be responsible. Use of Pre-wrapped Starter Strips in general are supported by industry, but only within the expressed limits of this, or a respective manufacturer's bulletins where additional limitations may be applicable. Should you have any questions, please contact your system supplier.