

# Technical Bulletin



EIFS Council of Canada / (416) 499-4000

## Systems versus Components

### *Special Interest Articles:*

- ◆ Systems versus Components

It's EIFS not EIFC. The key word in the EIFS acronym which this bulletin focuses on is "SYSTEMS". Over the past several years there seems to be increased pressures being applied to the contracting community to buy certain components, namely, but not solely off-market meshes, from one supplier and other components from another and then mix these components on a single installation. The reason for this is believed to be financial, where certain suppliers price some components more attractively than others. This practice represents a breach of contract and is completely unacceptable to the EIFS industry at large, manufacturers and those that design and specify EIFS.

The objection to these still isolated practices stems from the following: In keeping with building code requirements, EIFS manufacturers are required to conduct full-scale fire tests on their "systems" to ensure that they perform under real life fire conditions. Successful completion of these tests assures the public that the EIFS assembly will meet the intent of the building code and perform in the event a fire should take place. Once a manufacturer has secured a listing on a given system, installations of that system must be in accordance

with the system as it was tested and subsequently listed. If there is any substitution of components within the system other than what is identified in the specific manufacturer's listing, the listing is likely rendered void and the installation suspect in terms of in-service performance.

Additionally, many manufacturers have pursued listings for their systems with CCMC. (Canadian Construction Materials Centre), an agency that serves to evaluate and recognize products and systems that are not specifically identified within the building code. When following prescriptive Articles of the codes, EIFS may be considered as unidentified and securement of a CCMC Evaluation Report by the manufacturer provides plan examiners and building inspectors with assurance that the EIFS assembly meets the intent of the code and can be accepted by them. If the system is not installed in accordance with the system as described within the CCMC report, the manufacturer is at risk of losing its listing, which would have a substantial cost to secure. All manufacturers in receipt of a CCMC report must be able to demonstrate some amount of control of its installations where a CCMC report is required.

### Systems versus Components

Manufacturers are in the business of providing quality products, produced by competent and reliable employees for the benefit of committed and recognized contractors. The earnings enjoyed by the manufacturer as a result of the contractor's support, allow manufacturers to grow and strengthen the EIFS market. This is to the benefit of the entire industry and those that consider component substitution should ask themselves; if it were not for the efforts of the manufacturing sector, would there be an EIFS market like the one we enjoy today? The lost revenue that results from selective component purchasing reduces a manufacturer's ability to serve and invest in this industry. Meaning the entire industry loses.

EIFS assembly performance doesn't just happen, it is engineered, developed, refined and tested before being introduced to the market. Owners, specifiers and general contractors all expect the performance attributes reported in whatever literature led them to design and build with EIFS to be applicable to the installation. Contract award assumes, if not outright charges, that a recognized and code compliant system will be delivered, despite whatever language used in accepted tender documents. A mixture of components from various suppliers is no longer a recognized system, nor typical practice and would be contrary to the spirit and intent of the contract. As such, the practice would and has been considered *in default of contract* and removal of the installation along with all associated costs, including those which may be incurred by any

delay of the project assumed by the EIFS sub-contractor. Further, the warranty of the system would be nullified if in fact the system manufacturer becomes aware of such substitution. Municipal inspectors can also deem the installation contrary to code and issue an "Order to Comply" notice, which would see the same remedy required as described above. None of this is worth the pennies thought to be saved by mixing of different manufacturer's components in a single system installation.

The integrity of today's EIFS marketplace is dependent upon the contracting community's commitment to quality and it is the ECC's experience that the commitment by its members is there. The isolated practice of component substitution by those that do not share in this commitment undermines the integrity of all contractors as much or even more than manufacturers.

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## Systems vs. Components

EIFS COUNCIL OF  
CANADA  
70 Leek Crescent  
Richmond Hill, Ontario  
L4B 1H1

PHONE:  
(416) 499-4000  
FAX:  
416-499-8752

E-MAIL:  
[info@eifscouncil.  
org](mailto:info@eifscouncil.org)  
WEBSITE:  
[www.eifscouncil.  
org](http://www.eifscouncil.org)

## Spreading the Word

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Manufacturer Members



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### Technical Bulletins

This is one of a series of Technical Bulletins that the EIFS Council of Canada has produced to provide guidance concerning the building 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

The EIFS Council of Canada (ECC) was formed in 1987 to help focus attention and awareness on industry accepted practices and quality in the installation of EIFS claddings in the Canadian construction marketplace.

The development of an EIFS Quality Assurance Program (QAP) is

expected to further enhance consumer protection through implementation of consistent guidelines and specifications for installers once its' development is complete and delivered to the marketplace.