EIMA Gets Interpretation from ICC

Falls Church, Va., January 30, 2013— The EIFS Industry Members Association (EIMA) recently requested an interpretation from the International Code Council (ICC) on the use of EIFS in the International Residential Code (IRC). The interpretation was requesting further clarification on Section R 703.9 of the 2009 and 2012 editions of the IRC and the use of "barrier" EIFS.

It was the initial understanding, and intent, of EIMA that the code language was to be consisted with the Evaluation Reports of its members, precluding "barrier" EIFS on residential framed/sheathed construction. EIMA's intent with the initial inclusion of EIFS in the 2009 and subsequently the 2012 code was for EIFS with Drainage ("New" EIFS) to be required on framed walls with sheathing when designing in accordance with the IRC. Further, "barrier" EIFS would not be included in this restriction when the substrate is concrete or masonry walls.

In the ICC's response to EIMA, they give confirmation that the intent of EIMA's initial request for inclusion in the 2009 IRC is as they intended. EIFS with Drainage is required for all exterior walls except for concrete and masonry walls, where "barrier" EIFS can be used as an appropriate system.

The entire question and answer from EIMA and the ICC is attached on the following pages.

Founded in 1981, the EIFS Industry Members Association (EIMA) is a national non-profit technical trade association comprised of leading manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and applicators involved in the exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) industry. For additional information please visit www.eima.com.
December 18, 2012

David A. Johnston  
Executive Director/ CEO  
EIIFS Industry Members Association  
513 West Broad Street  
Falls Church, Virginia 22046 - 3257

Re: 2012 and 2009 International Residential Code (IRC)  
Sections R703.1.1, R703.2 and R703.9

Dear Mr. Johnston:

In response to your question in your December 6, 2012 e-mail regarding Sections R703.9 and R703.1.1 of the 2009 IRC, we offer the following opinions of the meaning and intent of the code on this subject:

It is my understanding that your letter poses the following question:

Q: When the EIFS section was adopted into the 2009 edition of the International Residential Code (IRC) at the request of the EIFS Industry Members Association (EIMA), EIMA had the understanding that the section in the IRC would be consistent with EIFS manufacturer Evaluation Reports in that the use of EIFS (also known as ‘barrier’ EIFS) would be limited to a substrate of concrete/masonry.

In examining Section R 703.9 of the 2009 and 2012 editions of the International Residential Code (IRC), the language is not completely clear that the use of EIFS (barrier) is limited to concrete/masonry. Further, Section R703.1.1, Exception 2, allows an 'opt out' for the need for a water-resistive barrier by doing an E 331 test, which could result in use of EIFS (barrier) on residential framed/sheathed construction. As EIMA thought that the code language was to be consistent with the Evaluation Reports of its members, EIMA believes that the code should preclude use of EIFS (barrier) on residential framed/sheathed construction. It was EIMA’s intent that EIFS with Drainage shall be required on framed walls with sheathing when designing in accordance with the IRC.

EIMA respectfully requests a written ICC Staff Code opinion on this matter. Does the 2012 and 2009 IRC require EIFS with drainage on framed walls with sheathing?

A: Yes. Section R703.1.1 is the general requirements for all exterior walls of any material and method of construction. The general requirement is a water-resistive barrier behind the exterior veneer in accordance with Section R703.2 and a means of draining any water that enters the assembly to the exterior. Exception 1 exempts concrete or masonry walls from this requirement.

Section R703.9 is specific requirements for EIFS and EIFS with drainage. Since Section R703.1.1 requires a means of drainage except for concrete or masonry walls the EIFS with drainage requirements apply to all exterior walls except concrete or masonry.
Code opinions issued by ICC staff are based on ICC published codes and do not include local, state or federal codes, policies or amendments. This opinion is based on the information which you have provided. We have made no independent effort to verify the accuracy of this information nor have we conducted a review beyond the scope of your question. This opinion does not imply approval of an equivalency, specific product, specific design, or specific installation and cannot be published in any form implying such approval by the International Code Council. As this opinion is only advisory, the final decision is the responsibility of the designated authority charged with the administration and enforcement of this code.

Sincerely,

Larry D. Franks
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Codes and Standards Development
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