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BY LEE G. JONES

In last month's issue, I misquoted Dick Hopkins, a well-known proponent, highly regarded EIFS expert, concerning water damage. In my haste to go to press, I neglected to give Dick the opportunity to review the column and, in total compliance with Murphy's Law, I placed the barrier in the wrong place. Shortly after its publication, Dick gently pointed out my error. So to correct the record, Dick has set us straight:

"Many of the alleged EIFS-related failures in residential construction that resulted in lawsuits should be attributed to poor quality windows and their installations, omission of flashing at openings and roof wall intersections and other locations, omission of sealant at penetrations and failure to apply the EIFS in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

One possible quirk in the North Carolina building code may also be contributing to the decomposition of wood framing and wood sheathing. The North Carolina building code requires a vapor retarder between the inside face of the studs and the interior drywall. This requirement may be

appropriate in some geographical locations in North Carolina, but not in all.

In certain parts of North Carolina, predominate flow of water vapor (water in its gaseous state) is from the out side to the inside most of the year. Under normal circumstances, the vapor retarder may not be problematic because, during other parts of the year, the vapor flow reverses, and drying can and does occur. The problem arises when windows leak and sealant and flashing is omitted, allowing large quantities of water to enter the wall assembly.

In the case where the predominant vapor flow is from the outside to the inside within a short period of time, where the vapor flow is reversed, there is more water available than can be diffused through the EIFS. One must remember that EIF systems allow water in its gaseous state to diffuse or move through them. The decision to place or not to place a vapor retarder in a wall assembly should be made carefully. The decision to install a vapor retarder should not be an arbitrary decision, but one that is carefully thought out.

With regard to the use of EIFS, they

have been used in Europe for roughly 50 years and in the United States since 1969. Contrary to current press, EIF systems have been successfully used in residential constructions since the early 1970s. There are many EIFS-clad residences in the United States that have and continue to perform."

Thanks, Dick, for keeping me on the beam. I certainly did not intend to be part of the problem and inflict yet another blow to the world of EIFS. But Murphy wasn't done with me yet. Elsewhere in the same column, the word processing gremlins managed to launch the prior successes of EIFS originally mentioned into the 92nd century, making me appear as if I'm visiting an ancient culture using Mr. Peabody's Way-Back Machine. Dick's offering addressed that quite well too, and since he's been kind enough to include that in his correction of the facts, I'll let his comments stand for themselves. 📧

About the Author

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