EIMA Issues New Requirements for Mesh

High-Impact Mesh Is Now Required by the EIFS Industry Members Association, Which Requests Compliance from All

By Peter R. Payne

Although high-impact mesh has been available for more than a decade, and extensive testing has shown that heavier weight glass fiber mesh ensures the long-range durability of exterior insulation and finish systems, lighter weight meshes have continued to be specified and chosen for ground floor and high-traffic areas. Now, with a recent revision to guidelines specifications for class PB Systems set forth by the EIFS Industry Members Association, Clearwater, Fla., it is expected that the industry’s use of high-impact mesh will become the rule and not the exception.

The guideline specification now requires that all ground floor elevations and all facades exposed to abnormal stress or deliberate impacts shall have the base coat reinforced with a double layer of glass fiber mesh consisting of a 14-ounces-per-square-yard minimum first layer and a 4-ounces-per-square-yard minimum second layer. This first layer is where the high-impact mesh is now required. With the announcement of this requirement, EIMA has taken a major step to emphasize to everyone involved in the EIFS industry—manufacturers, distributors, contractors, architects and building owners—that the use of high-impact mesh is vital to the long-term performance and durability of the system.

An EIF system has never had to
be repaired or replaced simply because it wore out. The potential for problems begins when the system is exposed to abnormal abuse or deliberate impacts. To counteract this threat of damage to the ground floor and high-traffic areas, EIMA is now stating that high-impact mesh needs to be applied to reinforce the basecoat component of a typical EIF system and increase its impact resistance. If the requirement is met, the integrity of a building, as well as the industry in general, will be assured.

Now it is up to everyone in the industry to do his part to follow and support this specification.

Dryvit, for one, is committed to promoting the use of Panzer™ Mesh. The company has formulated a strategic plan that includes presentations to the architectural community, advertising and public relations activity, all aimed to educate the architectural and owner communities about the necessity of high-impact mesh. The company has also entrusted to its distributors and contractors assistance with the pull-through.

The product has a great potential for expansion as 25 percent to 30 percent of all non-residential EIFS is on the first floor. The best way to promote the use of high-impact mesh is to include it in the bid. By educating the architect and building owner of the benefits of high-impact

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Although EIMA has recommended the use of high-impact mesh in the past, up to now it has never been a requirement. As a result, many manufacturers, distributors and contractors didn't completely support its use. Manufacturers neglected to appropriately educate the architect and owner on the benefits of high-impact mesh, and its higher installed cost discouraged contractors from bidding the mesh for fear of being underbid by competitors.

Now it is up to everyone in the industry to do his part to follow and support this specification. Manufacturers, distributors and contractors need to take a strong leadership position and educate the architectural and owner communities about the significance of high-impact mesh to the long-term durability and efficiency of the system. The industry needs to point to the architects and owners who have witnessed the effectiveness of high-impact mesh on completed projects. If successful, we will have answered our harshest critics' concerns about the systems impact resistance and durability.
If cost cutting is needed to bring projects within budget, high-impact mesh is not one of the areas that should be sacrificed.
realize a reduction in the amount of call-backs for time-consuming repairs and an increase in their pool of satisfied customers—a benefit for both future business and the industry’s future. CD

About the Author
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