

## CHANGES TO THE ONTARIO BUILDING CODE IMPACT ON FIRE-RELATED REQUIREMENTS FOR EIFS

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### INTRODUCTION

In January 2025, a new version of the Ontario Building Code came into effect, the 2024 Ontario Building Code. A significant number of changes were made, but the most important one affecting the EIFS and combustible cladding industry is the height limitations and sprinkler requirements for buildings utilizing combustible cladding.

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### PREVIOUS ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

In the previous version of the Ontario building code, Article 3.1.5.5 was titled “**Combustible Components for Exterior Walls**”, and provided provisions for the allowance of combustible components in a building required to be of noncombustible construction. This regulated where Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) in Dryvit EIFS could be installed.

In particular, EPS could be used

- in buildings not more than 3 storeys, or
- in buildings not more than 6 storeys if sprinklered, **and**
- when the system is tested to the **CAN/ULC S134** standard meeting the requirements of 3.1.5.5(b)(i) and (ii), which dictate the pass/fail criteria.

In addition, 3.1.5.5(4) stated: The above noted requirements **do not apply** where foamed plastic insulation is used in an exterior wall assembly of a building and the insulation is protected in conformance with Sentences 3.2.3.8 (1) and (2).

3.2.3.8 (1) and (2) **were the provisions that allowed the use of our NC, noncombustible, systems** using Primus DM and Genesis DM.

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### NEW ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

The new Ontario Building Code now follows the same requirements as the National Building Code and all other provincial codes. Article 3.1.5.5 has been renamed “**Combustible Cladding on Exterior Walls**” and the requirements for the use of combustible cladding, in our case EIFS with EPS, with regard to maximum height, and requirement for sprinklers, has changed.

In particular, EPS can be used provided the building is

- not more than 3 storeys, or
- sprinklered throughout **and**
- the wall assembly is tested to the **CAN/ULC S134** standard meeting the requirements of 3.1.5.5(b)(i) and (ii).

The exception to use article 3.2.3.8 and our NC systems has been removed.

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## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF DRYVIT OUTSULATION SYSTEMS

The implications for Dryvit are the same as for our competitors, and include:

- In unsprinklered buildings over 3 storeys, systems with EPS cannot be used. This will primarily impact the retrofit market. Non-combustible mineral wool EIFS will need to be used. Dryvit has the Exsulation 5000 mineral wool system, and is nearing the end of the development of a new mineral wool system which will be introduced as soon as testing is complete.
- Dryvit's Category 2 fire listing will no longer be applicable as the exemption that used it is no longer available. It will remain an active listing while existing projects that are being built and/or have been permitted to the previous building code are still active.
- Starter boards manufactured with Primus DM or Genesis DM in order to meet the Category 2 listing can be manufactured with any approved base coat when building to the new Ontario Building Code.
- There will be a period of time where diligence will be required to confirm which version of the building code is applicable. The designer will be responsible for this; if the permit was issued before January 1, 2025, the previous code will still apply.

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