ATTENTION: ALL HOMEOWNERS CONSTRUCTED WITH EXTERIOR STUCCO

READ THIS VERY IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FACTUAL INFORMATION
STUCCO PROBLEMS

This notice is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be alarming-only factual.

Our company was asked to investigate deteriorated plywood sheathing behind the stucco.

The exterior walls are framed with 2 x 4 studs. There is ½ inch wood sheathing installed on to the studs. The sheathing has felt paper, wire, mortar and stucco applied to the surface of the sheathing.

When we first visited the home, there was no visible evidence of deteriorated wood sheathing. The homeowner had no knowledge or any reason to believe that there was a problem. There was no evidence of water on the walls or ceilings of the home. There was no evidence of any mold growth.

The only issues we noticed from visually looking at the home were staining on the stucco around a number of windows and at the fireplace chimney.

During the inspection of this home, a home inspector probed the stucco with an instrument that measures the amount of humidity behind the stucco. The inspector learned from his investigation that there were numerous locations having either high humidity readings or where he could not “feel” wood sheathing.

The homeowner authorized our company to open up a small portion of the wall-approximately a 5" x 5" square at one of the locations where the inspector thought there was a problem. We learned that the sheathing had deteriorated. This means, at that location, there was no sheathing.

This is a serious problem.

WHY THIS DID HAPPEN AND WHEN DID IT START TO OCCUR?

1. The windows were not flashed properly during construction. This means that as a result of poorly installed flashing, water was able to get behind the stucco and drain down the wall.

2. The felt paper was not installed properly during construction. Properly installed felt paper will allow water to flow down on top of the paper and prevent it from getting onto the wood sheathing.

3. As a result of the current building codes, homes today are much more energy efficient then they were years ago. Windows are more energy efficient, insulation requirements are more stringent, HVAC equipment is more efficient, etc. The result is that the exterior walls of the home can not “breathe”.

This deterioration of the wood sheathing and studs is a problem that takes many years to manifest itself.

Once water has an opportunity to enter into an area such as has been described, the water starts to deteriorate the wood sheathing and wood studs. Unfortunately once it starts, it continues to get worse and worse. The wood sheathing starts to act like a sponge.

I would be more then happy to talk to you about any questions that you may have regarding this issue.

I hope that this information is helpful to you.

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