

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS)

Key facts

- High risk of rapid fire spread.
- Typically not considered safe for use on multi-storey buildings.
- Increased usage over the past 20 years.
- Looks like rendered concrete.
- Usually white.

Expanded polystyrene is a type of cladding that increases the likelihood of fire spreading more quickly as it may shrink, melt or ignite when exposed to elevated temperatures.

When used on a building, it is typically covered with render and looks like rendered concrete.

If you tap on a building's rendered surface and hear a hollow sound, it may indicate a lightweight building material is covered by the render. This may be **expanded polystyrene**, however, it may also be a non-combustible product, such as fibre cement sheets.

The non-compliant use of EPS as external wall cladding presents an increased risk of fire spread, particularly in multi-storey buildings.

The National Construction Code allows the use of expanded polystyrene on townhouses and houses (class 1 buildings).

The Minister for Planning announced a prohibition on the use of EPS as external wall cladding for any building work in connection with Class 2-9 buildings of Type A and Type B construction. This prohibition took effect from 1 February 2021.

Want to know more?

For further information, please contact the VBA.

Telephone: 1300 815 127

Email: customerservice@vba.vic.gov.au

Victorian Building Authority
733 Bourke Street, Docklands VIC 3008
www.vba.vic.gov.au/cladding

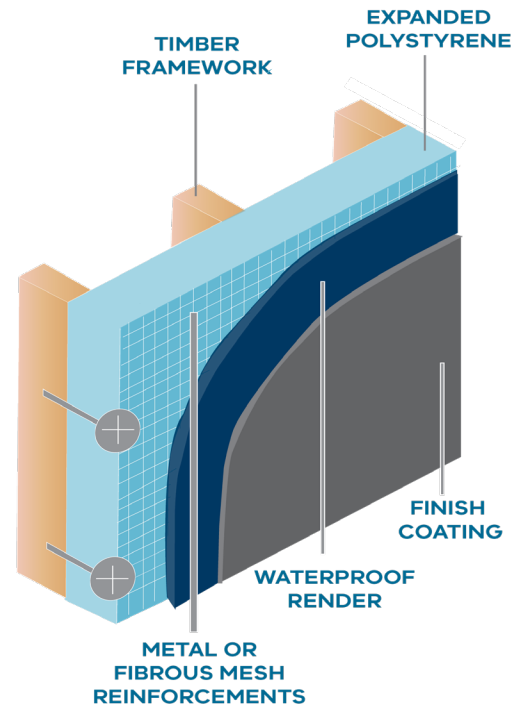
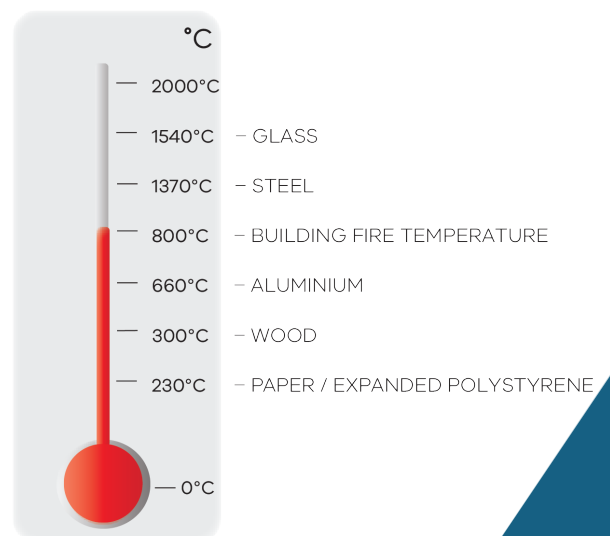


Diagram of EPS when used as external wall cladding

Melting and ignition temperatures



A thermometer shows EPS melting and ignition points