Foam shapes are a popular and inexpensive decorative/architectural features. Easy to install and versatile, they are used as window surrounds, cornices, quoins or accents on all types of construction. Unlike their "wood" counterparts, they will not warp or rot and can come in any shape or form limited by the imagination of the designer. Not limited to just the “stucco look,” shapes can simulate stone, concrete etc. Companies specializing in the manufacture of foam shapes have sophisticated computer-aided cutting technology that can satisfy any specification or shop drawing.

**KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

- Many foam shapes are made out of expanded polystyrene (EPS) and can vary in density depending on their use, project location and type of specified finish decoration.
- Most installations involve adhesively applying the shape to a properly-cured plaster brown/base coat.
- Manufacturers of stucco and EIFS products are the best resource for adhesives, base coats and meshes.
- It is important the adhesive is compatible with the substrate (always check with adhesive manufacturer).
- Temporary fasteners can be used until adhesive sets.
- Larger shapes can involve mechanical locking mechanisms built into the shape by the manufacturer.
- A polymer-based basecoat and mesh will be applied followed by the decorative finish coat. Basecoat should be compatible and approved by finish manufacturer.
- “Same-source” or buying all coatings/adhesives from the same manufacturer is encouraged.
- 100% of exposed EPS shape shall be covered with basecoat and mesh.
- Coatings can be field-applied or purchased from foam shape manufacturer in various stages of the coating process.

**LIMITATIONS:**

- TSIB does not recommend foam shapes installed in high-abuse areas.
- Certain situations can allow shapes to span or hide control joints.
- Chapter 26 of the 2015 International Building Code allows foam plastic to be used with “non-combustible” construction. Foam plastic shall have a minimum flame spread index of 25 or less and a smoke-developed index of 450 or less as determined in accordance with ASTM E84. Exception 5 of section 2603.7 also allows the installation of foam plastic insulation in non combustible construction. Exception 5 stated “when a minimum 7/8 inch thickness of stucco complying with section 2510 installed over foam plastic insulation, ignition testing of the assembly is not required. When portland cement plaster [stucco] is installed exterior of foam plastic, ignition testing is not required.”
- The manufacturer/supplier of the foam shape should be able to verify the product meets ASTM E84.
- Tops of shapes should have a positive slope away from building.