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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Moisture Content of Wood Framing Members

Code Sections: R318.2, R109.1.4.1

Code Edition: 2008 Oregon Residential Specialty Code, as amended by rule
OAR 918-480-0010(5)

Date: November 3, 2008

Subject: Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Moisture Content Requirements in the
2008 Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC)

Background: The 2008 ORSC requires that contractors or owner-builders provide the local jurisdiction with a written acknowledgement of the moisture content of wood framing members. Due to confusion over enforcement of this provision, the division adopted a temporary rule in July followed by a permanent code amendment, effective October 1, 2008, to clarify and simplify the compliance process. Since the adoption of this temporary rule, certain questions have persisted regarding what is required under this new code provision. This communication is designed to address the most common questions the division has received.

Question: As a contractor or owner-builder, am I required to test the moisture content of wood framing members?

Answer: No. Under the code, you are not required to test the moisture content of wood framing members. The code requires you to acknowledge that you took steps to ensure that the moisture content of the wood does not exceed the 19% threshold. You may choose to test the moisture content of wood framing members, however the code does not prescribe any particular method for conducting that testing.

Question: Am I required to hire a third party to test the moisture content of the wood I am using?

Answer: No. Again, the code does not require that the wood be tested, only that the contractor or owner-builder be aware of the requirement and take appropriate steps to address moisture.

Question: Is the requirement subject to inspection by the local jurisdiction?

Answer: No. The amended code clarifies that the requirement that wood framing members not have a moisture content of over 19% is not subject to inspection by the local jurisdiction.

Question: What can I do to minimize the moisture content of wood framing members?

Answer: While the code does not prescribe any particular method, there are several things you can do, including, but not limited to: Storing wood indoors or protecting wood framing products from the elements while stored outside, closing the building in a timely fashion to prevent additional moisture intrusion, or taking steps to allow wood framing members that are wet to dry before installing insulation and drywall.



- Question:** Am I required to purchase kiln-dried wood or other specialty products?
- Answer:** No. Special products are not required under the code. You may still use green lumber as long as the moisture content of the wood does not exceed 19% at the time of the installation of interior finishes.
- Question:** Does this requirement limit the moisture content of wood at the time of sale?
- Answer:** No. This requirement does not regulate the moisture content of wood at the time of sale. The code provision only requires that the moisture content of wood framing members not exceed 19% at the time of installation of interior finishes. Those who sell or purchase wood products do not have to alter their practices in any way as a result of this new code requirement. This requirement is to ensure that the moisture content of wood is at an acceptable level when the wall coverings are installed. This means that wet wood may be purchased and installed but must be at an acceptable moisture level when it is covered.
- Question:** When must notification be provided to the local jurisdiction?
- Answer:** Notification must be provided prior to insulation and vapor barrier inspection. According to the code, this inspection occurs after all insulation and required vapor barriers are in place, but prior to the application of interior wall coverings, such as drywall.
- Question:** How do I provide notification to the local jurisdiction?
- Answer:** The division has developed a simple form for contractors or owner-builders to supply to the local jurisdictions. This is the form that must be used and is available on the division's website at <http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd/programs/residential>
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