TRI-COUNTY SERVICE CENTER

Clackamas
Multnomah
Washington
COUNTIES

News Site

A quarterly newsletter for homebuilders and contractors

April-June 2004

The Home Builders Association to sponsor April 8 code forum

The Home Builders Association is sponsoring a free forum on one- and two-family structural code issues, 4-7 p.m., Thursday, April 8, at a new location: the Multnomah Board Room in the Multnomah Building, 501 SE Hawthorne, Portland. Qualified participants may receive three hours of code-related credit from BCD, three hours of HSW credit from AIA or a certificate for three HSW hours, or three hours of home-inspector continuing education credit from CCB, or three hours of Master Builder continuing education credit from the Home Builders Association..

The purpose of the forum is to discuss regional code applications and reach consensus on standards for the tri-county region. All area contractors, remodelers, architects, and building-department personnel are invited.

Agenda

- Code update
- New interpretations and update on low-rise residential board
- Questions and answers

Jan. 28 code forum questions and answers

Local buiding officials have agreed to use the code panel's determination for inspection standards in the tri-county region.

If you are working in a jurisdiction beyond the tri-county boundaries, please check with your jurisdiction for its standards. Contractors and building-department personnel may submit questions to the code forum by sending e-mail to joanie.m.stevens-schwenger@state.or.us or faxing questions to the center, (503) 872-6735.

An answer-request form is available on the BCD Web site, www.oregonbcd.org. Click on "Tri-County" and then "Code Forum Program."

Q Fasteners for pressure treated wood: With the banning of CCA-impregnated wood products by the Environmental Protection Agency and the introduction of new chemicals for this treatment process, which some say are more corrosive, will the requirements in the *Oregon Dwelling Specialty Code (ODSC)* Section R323.3 for fasteners still be appropriate? Can you enlighten us on the changes to pressure-treated lumber products and how this change will affect the industry?

> **Section R323.3: Fasteners – Fasteners for pressure preservative and fire-retardant treated wood shall be of hot-dipped galvanized steel, stainless steel, silicone, bronze, or copper. Exemption: Half-inch-diameter steal bolts, or larger.**

A The following Q &A addresses the changes in the industry practices.

Q Why is the industry making this transition?

A Although treated wood represents a tiny fraction of all the *natural* sources of arsenic in the environment, it's estimated that nearly 40 million pounds of arsenic is used in this country every year, and a large portion is used in pressure-treated wood for decks and playground equipment. Preservative manufacturers, in cooperation with the EPA, will no longer use chromated copper arsenate as a preservative on wood for residential use. Manufacturers plan to complete the transition to new preservatives for non-industrial wood products by the end of 2003. CCA-treated lumber will still be available for industrial and agricultural use.

Q What effect will these new preservatives have on the fasteners and hangers we use?

A Boosting the copper content makes pressure-treated wood more expensive and more corrosive — five times more corrosive to common steel, according to American Wood Preservers Association test results.

Because of the high risk of galvanic reaction between the copper-impregnated wood and any dissimilar metals, it is recommended that fasteners and flashings be stainless steel or copper, or a combination of the two, whenever possible. It may be preferable to avoid aluminum flashings altogether. Aluminum corrodes quickly in the presence of high copper concentrations.

Continued…

A BCD field office, the Tri-County Service Center administers the minor label program and coordinates forms, processes, and application of code for building programs in Clackamas, Multnomah, & Washington counties.

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & BUSINESS SERVICES

There is a need for better galvanized fasteners. Fastener grades aren't always marked on boxes of nails and screws. Electro-galvanized stock is rated from 5 to 110. Hot-dipped galvanization ratings are based on the actual weight of the coating; for example, a G-60 rating means 0.60 ounces of zinc per square foot of metal. G-60 and G-90 hot-dipped coatings have been used until now, but engineers suggest G-185 coatings for hot-dipped galvanized products and class ratings of 40 or above when using electro-galvanized fasteners, such as expansion bolts. Currently, G-185 is the best galvanized protection you can buy. As for nails and screws, verify that composite coatings will work. Pressure-treated bottom plates in slab-on-grade construction may also offer weak links. Cumulative effects of corrosion could be catastrophic in seismic, tornado, and hurricane zones.

Q Will production-framing crews switch to galvanized nails for studs and sheathing? And what about foundation anchor bolts that attach pressure-treated mudsills to basement walls?

A Galvanized versions aren't commonly available. We are researching this topic. Nails for power-actuated tools and retrofit expansion bolts have zinc plating, but may need more electro-galvanizing. The manufacturers of fasteners and hangers are developing materials for new pressure-treated wood products.

Q If CCA-treated wood is safe, why change?

A The fundamental safety of CCA-treated wood has not changed, but perceptions in the marketplace have. The preserved-wood industry stands by its CCA-treated products.

Q What are the new preservatives?

A Taking CCA's place are two waterborne compounds, alkaline copper quat (ACQ types B and D) and copper azole (CBA-A, CA-B). Sold under the trade names Preserve, NatureWood, and Natural Select, they have been used around the world for about 15 years. These EPA-approved low-toxicity products resist bugs, mold, and rot as effectively as CCA.

Q Are the new preservatives safe?

A The new preservatives have been studied extensively and approved for use by the EPA. Like CCA, they protect and extend the life of wood products for decades.

Q Will the new wood products cost more?

A To make the new preservatives effective, their copper content has been boosted substantially — from around 18 percent to 96 percent. Because ACQ and copper azole contain so much more copper, expect to pay more, somewhere between 10 and 35 percent more. Cost will vary depending on chemical treatment . CCA wasn't that expensive, so most CCA lumber was given a maximum dose of preservatives and rated for ground contact.

To keep down the cost of the new pressure-treated wood, manufacturers will produce different levels of protection (chemical-retention levels) for different uses. End-use categories will be on the tags stapled to the end of the board, but generally will be determined by the dimension of the lumber itself.

Q Are these products available today?

A There are limited supplies of wood products treated with the new preservatives on the market, that will change as the industry retools. For more information, visit www.preservedwood.com.

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Questions? Call Mark Munson, Web coordinator (503) 373-7404.

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