

Letters



Is Recycling Solvents Legal?

To the Editor:

I just completed reading "New Ways to Deal with Old Paint Solvents," (JLC Eight-Penny News, 6/89) and must say the writer, Steve Carlson, did a fine job defining what can be a big problem for a lot of solvent users. There were two points of particular interest to me, however, that should be clarified.

First, Richard Molyneaux, of Dickson Painting in Endicott, N.Y., admits that he attempts to make his solvent recycling more cost-effective by recycling solvents from other contractors. He should be aware that a Commercial Treatment Facility Permit is required for performing this service. Second, there is no mention of how the bags of sludge are disposed. These bags of sludge are also considered hazardous wastes requiring ultimate transport and disposal by licensed hazardous waste contractors. To my knowledge, there is only one disposal option for these sludges and residues—incineration at RCRA licensed facility.

T.D. Herod, principal
DeWitt Consultants
Melrose, Mass.

We asked Mr. Molyneaux whether he had the Commercial Treatment Facility Permit to which Mr. Herod refers. According to Molyneaux, he is exempt from this requirement because he deals in such small quantities of material. He says that as long as he takes in less than 220 pounds of hazardous sludge, he does not need the commercial permit. He says he was granted this exemption from this New York State Environmental Facilities corporation (NYSEFC).

Harold Snow, project manager for NYSEFC, confirms that Molyneaux is a "conditionally exempted small quantity generator" of hazardous wastes, and as such, doesn't need the commercial permit—as long as he doesn't exceed the stated limits.—Editor



If the doorway is offset to keep traffic out of usable deck space, shouldn't the steps also be offset?

Better Deck Details

To the Editor:

A few thoughts on Scott Grove's article on decks ("All Decked Out," JLC, 6/89).

First, Figure 1 (shown below) is supposed to show how door placement can keep traffic from bisecting the usable deck space. But this isn't the ideal solution because the location of the steps more or less defeats the purpose of moving the door. In all likelihood people will walk diagonally across the deck to get to the steps, rather than marching straight out the door and making a military-style 90-degree turn to reach the stairs.

A better solution would be to move both door and steps to the side of the deck, creating a perfectly straight path off to one side. Even better would be to put the steps tight up against the house, right next to the door, yielding maximum usable space.

Figure 4 in the article shows a flashing detail with metal bent over the ledger strip. This is good as far as it goes, but Mr. Grove says he attaches joists with hangers, which will make Swiss cheese of the vertical face of the flashing. A strip of rubberized asphalt material under the metal would provide a self-sealing barrier. However, it's difficult to get in small quantities for a single job.

Finally, a 30-inch railing height does not meet code for platforms that are more than a short distance from the ground. Even a 36-inch railing falls just below the center of gravity of a typical adult. Guard rails on decks and porches should be at least 42 inches high for safety.

Paul Henke
Warren, Vt.

Geotextile Omitted

To the Editor:

I was disappointed to note that our product, Enkadrain, was not mentioned in your story about "Geotextiles and Geocomposites"

(JLC, 3/89). Nor was it listed in the accompanying "For Product Information" chart.

Enkadrain is designed to protect subsurface walls by providing relief from hydrostatic pressure. Over the years, it has developed an excellent reputation for keeping basements dry.

The product consists of a polyester nonwoven filter fabric heat-bonded to a compression-resistant nylon matting. When placed against foundation walls, with the filter fabric facing away from the structure, sediment is blocked out and water flow is channeled down through the geomatrix to a drainage pipe.

We never have received a callback from an Enkadrain user about a wet basement, a record that Akzo Industrial Systems is particularly proud of.

Tom Robrecht
Sales and Marketing Manager
Akzo Industrial Systems Co.
Asheville, N.C.

Poly Possibilities

To the Editor:

With all the talk about tight houses, there's been a great deal of discussion lately about vapor barriers. Since the best vapor barriers are ones that are totally unbroken, penetrations around doors and windows seem to be the most difficult to detail. During a condominium project several years ago, where I was superintendent, I provided the insulation contractor with specific vapor-barrier details around doors, windows, and ceiling/wall intersections, which have served me well ever since.

As work progresses, make sure you meet with the insulation crew leader to discuss detailing requirements. Prior to vapor barrier installation, the installers should stuff the window jamb cavity the full depth with fiberglass. Someone should randomly check these as well as the space behind outlet boxes.

I always request that the drywall be delivered prior to vapor barrier installation and stacked on inside walls. The reason for this will be clearly evident later.

The insulation contractor should start the vapor barrier at the ceiling, lapping all outside walls by at least 6 inches. I insist on a minimum of 4-mil poly and 8 1/2-foot-wide rolls for walls. Starting at the corner, the poly needs to be run unbroken around the entire perimeter, lapping all joints by at least one stud bay. Some believe in taping these joints, but I believe that lapping one stud bay provides adequate protection. The 8 1/2-foot roll should be lapped 3 inches onto the

ceiling and the floor. At intersections of partition walls with outside walls, the stud can be pulled away (if you have asked the framer to nail only the bottom on the end stud) and the poly run right behind it.

At this point, many contractors want to cut out every window and door. With the Sheetrock already inside, only the main entry need be cut with a big cross-corner X and stapled back until later. Continue rocking, taping, and painting as usual, maintaining an uncut vapor barrier across windows and doors. This allows the painters to spray or roll without taping out windows and doors—a labor savings that painters should consider in their bid.

Once the trim crew comes on board, they apply the window and door casing directly over the poly and nail the inner edge thoroughly into the jambs. Then with a very sharp knife, the poly can be cut on the inner edge of the casing. This totally seals the potential infiltration that occurs between the door or window jamb and framing.

To date, this hasn't been an inconvenience to any of the subcontractors, but rather a plus in terms of money savings. Painters don't worry about overspray on window or door jambs, and window sash and jambs are kept immaculate behind the poly. If heating is needed during winter months, the poly acts as another thermal barrier.

Paul Lyman
Advanced Property Investigation
Essex Junction, Vt.

No Conflict of Interest

To the Editor:

I am in complete agreement with William Hurrell's home inspection article "Inspecting Homes is Risky Business" (JLC, 2/89), and with his comments appearing in the "Letters" section of JLC in a later issue.

As a builder who performs inspections and, if requested, repairs and remodeling, I find no ethical problem whatever with turning out a photographically documented, detailed, Macintosh-generated inspection report on the one hand and a preliminary proposal on the other. As with all of my proposals, I suggest to the client that he or she investigate thoroughly my competitors' evaluations and quotes.

Like Mr. Hurrell, I have a "wish list" for tools and equipment that will further my expertise, management, and profitability. Mine is nearly endless and includes numerous seminars I would like to attend. Tickets to an ASHI seminar, no matter how reason-

able and helpful, are, as practical consideration, pretty close to the bottom.

Timothy D. Chase, Builder
Grove City, Pa.

Classified Section Wanted

To the Editor:

I enjoy the Journal every issue—its vital building information and exchange of ideas seem unique in the business. I also have a suggestion—one of a selfish nature I'll admit.

I wish your periodical had a classified ad column. Nothing could be more valuable for builders and carpenters trying to communicate with each other from varied geographic locations.

My own situation is this. I am a lead carpenter with a reputable construction firm doing residential new homes and top-end additions in the Princeton, N.J. area. I have 12 years framing and finish experience, and managed my own business several of those years. Having worked 11 years in southern Rhode Island and on the offshore islands, and just one year in New Jersey, I'd like to move again! I'd like to try something new. The congestion and high price of living here is just too much.

I have North Carolina, Maine, and Prince Edward Island in mind, but because we're so busy I haven't the time to do an enormous amount of field work searching out a promising situation with a new builder. There are probably a number of other fellows like myself who also might benefit from a classified column, either looking for a job-switch within the trade, seeking help to add to their crew, or with unique materials to buy, trade or sell.

Dennis H. Lopez
Princeton, N.J.

Editor's Note: Thanks for the suggestion. We've had similar requests from others and plan to introduce a classified section as soon as we can work out a good system to process the ads.

Old Product Returns

To the Editor:

The Japanese toilets Paul Spring spoke of in his report on the Builders' Show (JLC, Eight Penny News, 4/89) are not new, after all. I heard about these toilets 50 years ago. If I remember correctly, they were developed in Switzerland and Germany for hospital patients.

Henry Blaaw,
Bellingham, Wash.

Correction

In the R.S. Means multi-family estimating report that appeared in Eight-Penny News (6/89), we printed the "overhead" figures in the wrong columns. The correct numbers are: materials—\$3.48; labor—\$2.28; total—\$5.76. Also, the total "mechanical" cost should read \$5.93, not \$5.57 as printed.

Credit Due

In the article "Skylights: Design & Installation basics," in the May 1989 issue, the opening photo as well as the installation photos 5a through 5d were provided courtesy of Ventarama Skylights. The Ventarama flashing system shown is available in copper and features the L-shaped rain gutter mentioned in the article. ■



Keep 'em coming... We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. The Journal of Light Construction reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to The Journal, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.