

LETTERS



Manufacturer Opposes APA I-Joist Standard

To the Editor:

The article "Engineered Wood Group Pushes Standard I-Joist Code" (*Eight-Penny News*, 5/95) presents the American Plywood Association's perspective of the prefabricated wood I-joist issue. The APA is a trade association that would like to gain representation of the engineered wood products industry. Without their help, what we are doing is working, and it's working quite well.

The article stated they are working to establish a standard for us. The prefabricated wood I-joist industry already has a "standard." Performance standard ASTM-A-5055 was accomplished by consensus from all the manufacturers working with technical representatives of both the wood products industry and building code agencies. It is a highly successful performance standard, with proven demonstration of quality and adequacy for both builders and specifiers.

The wood I-joist industry already has a trade association — the Wood I-Joist Manufacturers Association (WIJMA) — dedicated to developing proper applications and standards for the industry. The membership understands the specific needs of this relatively complex structural product line and what is necessary to properly present it to the consumer. The answer is not to handle this product as a commodity nor to hand it over to a trade association so inclined.

Sherman A. Nelson
Vice President of Engineering
Trus Joint MacMillan
Boise, Idaho

Don't Caulk Toilet

To the Editor:

In your otherwise excellent article "Tricks of the Trade" (*Kitchen & Bath*, 4/95), one contributor advised sealing

the toilet to the floor "to prevent mop water from seeping under." Let me tell you why this is a risky practice.

A few years back I was called to repair the sagging floor in front of a toilet. When I arrived on the scene, the bathroom floor was dangerously spongy and the wallpaper was peeling from the walls on all three sides of the toilet enclosure. The toilet had been sealed to the vinyl flooring with a generous bead of silicone caulk — the standard approach, unfortunately.

I unbolted the toilet and removed it along with the old vinyl. The toilet's wax ring had obviously been leaking. The water could not come out from under the toilet so it spread out under the vinyl. The masonite underlayment was so wet it literally had worms living in it. The sheetrock on the walls was wet and crumbly and the floor framing was rotted. The bead of silicone cost the owners about \$700 in repairs.

If a toilet's wax ring is not properly sealed, you want to be able to see the water come out from under the toilet. That's easy to fix. Sealing the toilet to the floor keeps leaking water invisibly under the floor, setting the stage for later, more difficult problems.

Andrew Kirk
Independence, Calif.

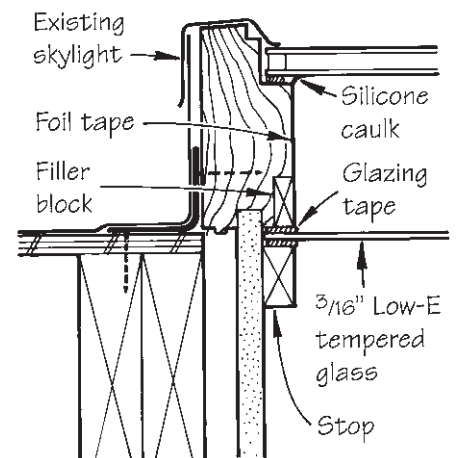
Ice Dam Solution

To the Editor:

In the article "Preventing Ice Dam Leaks" (3/95), Henri de Marne describes an ice dam failure similar to the one I too experienced for the first time during the winter of 1994.

My solution reduces heat loss through the skylight itself, the source of the ice dam. Skylights have poor thermal performance partially because the jamb, which has a lower insulating value than low-e argon-filled glass, is located entirely above the roof. I retrofitted an interior storm

panel of tempered hard-coat, low-e glass below the jamb of two fixed-glass skylights, thereby reducing heat loss through the jamb area (see illustration, below). To prevent condensation between the existing glazing and the new panel, I covered the interior of the jamb with foil-faced aluminum foil tape and ran a bead of silicone caulk at the glass/foil tape interface. The glass panel is sealed to the foil tape by the glazing tape.



Last winter, there were no opportunities to test the ice dam resistance of this detail, but there has been no condensation or fogging between the glazing layers. In fact, there was no condensation on the inside of the glazing panel, even on clear nights as low as -20°F, so it is clear that there is less heat loss through the skylight.

Marc Rosenbaum, P.E.
Energysmiths
Meriden, N.H.

Keep 'em coming! Letters 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 JLC, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477; or e-mail to 76176.2053@compuserve.com.