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BPA INTERNATIONAL

JLC's

Letters

Tension Strap Confusion

To the Editor:

I'm confused on one detail in the *Practical Engineering* article "Using Metal Connectors" (5/97), in which the author shows a steel strap tie, or "tension tie." Presentations I've attended about trusses, which I understand work differently from conventional framing, make a point that seems to apply in this case: When a wood member wants to sag, such as the ceiling framing shown in this article, the top of the wood is in compression and the bottom is in tension.

It looks to me from the drawing in Figure 2, page 56, that the bottom of the illustrated construction would be a better place for a tension strap than the top, where it is shown. An explanation would sure be helpful.

Dan Friedman
American Home Inspection Service
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Robert Randall responds:

It seems you missed the point of the tension strap in the detail. The strap is not intended to counteract any tension forces that might develop in the floor joists due to bending from loads imposed on the attic floor above. Keep in mind that those ceiling/floor joists serve another purpose as well: They are the ties that prevent the rafters from spreading under roof loading. The flush-framed beam interrupts their continuity in this purpose. The strap restores the continuity from eaves wall to eaves wall. For this purpose, it doesn't matter whether you put the strap on the top or the bottom of the joists; but if you put it on the bottom, you'll just get more bumps in your drywall.

All the same, I ran the calculations to verify my presupposition that putting the strap on the bottom would serve no purpose against bending moments induced from floor loading. In fact, the flush-framed beam would begin to crush before the strap would play any role at all. Such a use of steel strapping to resist bending loads would almost never be justifiable.

Roofing Nailer Comments

To the Editor:

While we at Max USA appreciate being included in any review ("New Roofing Coil Nailers," *Toolbox*, 10/97), we feel that you omitted key points that would give a more accurate assessment of the Max CN450R.

The CN450R can be either bump-fired or trigger-fired with no special tools or adjustments required to switch between the two modes. The CN450R can be bumped-fired like any conventional roofing nailer when speed is the primary requirement. When a more accurate placement is needed, the tool can also be trigger-fired. When the tool's safety is depressed and the trigger is pulled, firing the next fastener, the tool cannot be cycled again until the trigger is released. This comes into place when the tool is used for roofing around pipe collars and the installation of hardboard siding.

The CN450R is the only coil roofing nailer with a completely full-round driver blade. This prevents the nail head from curling around the driver blade (a curled nail head will more easily puncture the shingle surface).

Randy M. Hoy
Max USA
Garden City, N.Y.

Who's to Blame?

To the Editor:

The article "A Remodeler Takes On New Construction" (10/97) puts the blame of code compliance on the local

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building inspector. It has always been, and always will be, the designer or builder's responsibility to know the building codes in the area.

Asking the building inspector "What am I going to learn later that I wish I had know before I started?" is a lame excuse for saying "I'm too lazy to read the code. Please tell me how to do my job." A smart inspector will not fall for that trap and will suggest that the builder follow the approved plans that were submitted with the building permit.

Asking the local building inspector to tell you how to do your job makes me wonder if you are out of your realm with new construction.

Kelly Reynolds, President
Kelly Reynolds & Assoc.
Phoenix, Arizona

Paul Winans responds:

I don't know what you mean by "the blame of code compliance." I thought building inspectors upheld the code and that builders were to follow it. Where does blame come in ?

You suggest that it is the designer or builder's responsibility to know the building codes in the area. I agree with you. All I am suggesting is that one of the most useful things a building inspector can do is help the builders he is interacting with to become more informed builders.

As to your suggestion that the builder follow the approved plans, I'd like to point out that, unfortunately, plan checkers do not always catch potential code violations. The approved plans alone cannot prevent a builder from making code mistakes.

The spirit which I think is most productive on a job site is one of cooperation, not adversity. My suggestion that a builder speak to the building inspector in an open and honest way is based on the premise that the building inspector is interested in a dialogue and in having the work done once, right, the first time, according to code.

Unfortunately for all involved, it is apparent from your letter that not all building inspectors are interested in the spirit of cooperation.

JLC Cover Photo Questioned

To the Editor:

Thank you for printing the recent articles concerning Simpson Strong-Tie connectors. We are always happy to educate users on their correct selection and installation. Many contractors find themselves in a difficult situation when they install a connector in a way not approved by the manufacturer. If the inspector red-flags their job, they're faced with removing the connectors, or obtaining special engineering to justify the installation. If the installation goes unnoticed, it could pose a safety problem.

Unfortunately, the cover of the October 1997 *Journal of Light Construction* clearly shows several Simpson Strong-Tie connectors installed in a way that we cannot approve. The photo shows sloping rafters in unsloped HU series hangers. You can see the rafters have not been notched to seat in the hangers. This means the rafters are only bearing on the outer edge of the hanger. Further, the hangers are placed below the bottom of the ridge, which makes the lower nail holes unusable. Both of these problems will reduce the capacity of the hanger.

When this is shown on the cover of a respected publication like *JLC*, some contractors and even some inspectors and specifiers may consider it an approved installation without further question. It would be a service to your readers to point out that the October cover picture does not represent an approved installation.

Robert Bouchet
Simpson Strong-Tie
Pleasanton, Calif.

Don Jackson responds:

Thank you for your letter and the important issues it raises. Though it isn't apparent from the photo, the hangers you refer to are not playing their usual structural role. In describing the cover photo, I mistakenly referred to a ridge "beam"; in fact, the double LVL is more of a ridge "board." The floor plan made it impossible for the builder to use a true structural ridge for this portion of the roof because there is nowhere to bring a post down at one end.

What you can't see in the photo are the full-span LVL rafter ties that join every other pair of opposing rafters with bolted connections at the rafter ends. Thus the roof is framed more like a conventional stick-framed roof, with no necessity for a structural ridge. The hangers, installed first, were used as a convenience to help place the heavy LVL rafters during installation. The building designers chose LVL rafters instead of the usual framing lumber to ensure a flat, straight roof line and cathedral ceiling inside.

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.*