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BPA INTERNATIONAL

JLC's

Letters

Code Minimums Defended

To the Editor:

Mr. Lacz's letter to the editor (3/98) attracted my attention, and Mr. Fisette's response was right on. I would add that the model codes are maintained through an open process of code development whereby anyone may submit a change proposal, which is subjected to open debate where anyone can participate in the decision making process. Any substantiation to support Mr. Lacz's allegation of the collapse of buildings complying with a contemporary model code would be of great interest to the many thousands of persons who participate in these processes and are responsible for applying and enforcing these provisions. Perhaps Mr. Lacz will step forward with information as yet unknown to the construction industry.

Paul K. Heilstedt, P.E.
Chief Executive Officer
Building Officials and Code Adminstrators International
Country Club Hills, Ill.

Replacing Two-Slot Receptacles

To the Editor:

I am writing in regards to the item titled "Receptacles on Ungrounded Electrical Circuits" (*On the House*, 2/98). Where there is no means of grounding in the receptacle enclosure, Article 210-7 (d) (3) of the current (1996) edition of the *National Electrical Code* permits replacement of worn out "two-slot" receptacles with three choices:

1) another nongrounding-type receptacle,
2) a GFCI receptacle (provided the receptacle is marked "No equipment ground" and no grounding conductor is connected from the GFCI to any outlet supplied from the GFCI),
3) a grounding-type receptacle that is supplied through a GFCI (provided the receptacle is marked "GFCI protected" and "No equipment ground" and no grounding conductor is connected between any grounding-type receptacles supplied from the GFCI).

Article 210-7 (d) (2) *requires* GFCI-protected receptacles to be used where replacements are made at receptacle outlets that are required to be GFCI protected by other provisions of the code. (For instance, you cannot replace a worn "two-slot" receptacle in a bathroom with another two-slot receptacle. It must be GFCI protected.)

I believe this solution can be an economical alternative to providing a separate ground in many instances. However, I would not recommend this approach for a dedicated computer outlet; these need a ground for surge suppression and static discharge.

James Conneman
Vermont Master Electrician
Barre, Vermont

Laminated Beams

To the Editor:

We were disappointed to see that Rosboro was left out of the article "Engineered Lumber Update" (3/98). Rosboro is one of the largest suppliers in the U.S. of stock laminated beams, and has been producing laminated beams longer than any other U.S. manufacturer. Our current line of products includes Redi-Lam, a stan-

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dard laminated beam, and RMT, a laminated beam designed to be directly substitutable for solid sawn lumber.

Fred Bauer
Sales & Marketing
Rosboro
Springfield, Ore.

In Praise of Power Master

To the Editor:

Regarding the article "New Clip-Head Nailers" (*Toolbox*, 1/98): We use a Paslode PowerMaster, three Paslode 5325s, a Porter-Cable, and an Atro. The PowerMaster is the best! But now I'm hankering to try a Senco FramePro.

The caption under the photo states that the depth-of-drive control is standard on the PowerMaster, and an option on the FramePro. Later Mr. Marti says it is standard on the FramePro, and an option on the PowerMaster. This is a simple misprint, right? The PowerMaster we have has no depth-of-drive adjustment, except the air pressure.

Mr. Marti says he was using 108 psi, with 50 feet of 1/4-inch hose and 50 feet of 3/8-inch hose. However, the PowerMaster is designed to be used with 120 psi; also, using 1/4-inch hose cuts the air flow down. We use a maximum of 50 feet of 3/8-inch hose connected to our 3/4-inch shop line. We don't use TimberStrand, but I do believe better results could be achieved with proper setup for the job.

One suggestion: Instead of putting your nailer down in order to position a work piece, try a hook on your belt, and a screw eye in the tool's head. It's much easier to "draw" the gun than to pick it up!

Also, we have yet to damage that "small exposed spring" after building several hundred barns on the unforgiving concrete floor of our shop. Numerous times in a day, I'll hear a "bang" of the tool contacting the concrete, as it gets let down to the floor via the air hose while the operator goes for more material. This may not be a good practice, but the tool doesn't flinch.

The article also mentions how easy it is to clear jams on the FramePro. Fortunately, the PowerMaster seldom jams, as it would be hard to clear. I did wonder if you gave Paslode a chance to comment on your findings, as it seems you did for Senco.

Sorry if it seems like I'm "stickin up" for Paslode. Guess I'm only "sticking to my guns!" Keep up the good work!

Luke Stauffer
Stauffer's Mini Barns
Leonardtown, Md.

Felix Marti responds:

You are correct, an error crept in somewhere. Senco's tool comes with the depth-setting adjustment; Paslode's is optional. Yes, I did send the draft of my story to both Senco and Paslode, though I never heard back from Paslode. Thanks for your comments.

Ladder Safety Warning

To the Editor:

The article "On Site With Fiber-Cement Siding" (1/98) was quite informative and well written. However, the related photographs on the cover and page 28 raise some serious and troubling questions in the mind of this old bull carpenter foreman. One thing I have learned in 47 years of experience is that working off of ladders is, in general, expensive, clumsy, inefficient, and dangerous.

As for cost: In the Seattle area, the extension ladders shown on the cover (assuming they are Type 1, with a 250-pound rating) would retail between $175 for a 24-footer to $260 for a 32-footer. So the three men doing the work are standing on roughly $700 worth of ladders (not counting the idle ladder underneath), when one ladder at $175 would be sufficient to get them up to the working deck of a proper scaffold, whether wood or pipe frame. The balance of $525 will buy quite a lot of scaffold, which will rapidly pay for itself with increased efficiency and safety.

That working off ladders is clumsy and inefficient is self-explanatory to anyone who will spend a few minutes looking at the pictures while they imagine themselves doing the work — constantly climbing up and down, constantly moving and adjusting the ladders, worrying about their footing and how far you can lean out at the top without the unsecured ladder skidding out from under you sideways and dumping you on the ground. Plus, the angle of that same long ladder on the cover would get you an instant ticket citation from OSHA, should one of their inspectors happen by — which would further add to the cost of doing business off of ladders.

As for danger: A major accident category is falls, most commonly from roofs, defective scaffolds, and ladders — especially ladders that have not been secured at the top. Such a ladder is simply an accident waiting to happen, all by itself. When you fall off a ladder, or it skids out from under you, (which has happened to me more than once), you are prone to serious injury and/or broken bones. That's because you are usually tangled up in the ladder and can't get clear quickly enough before you hit the ground. Or, worse yet, you can hit the concrete slab below. Should you have the misfortune to land on your head during your fall, death or serious crippling are likely.

In closing, should I chide one of my favorite publications for printing an "oops!" picture on their cover? No, I think not. Keep up the good work — but just remember there are a lot of old hands reading your magazine, whose numerous injuries and broken bones have given them very strong opinions on safety.

Sam Hill
Pt. Townsend, Wash.