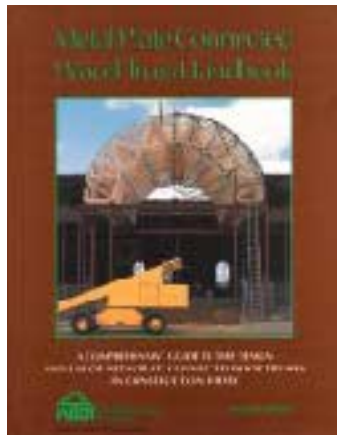


Wood Truss Handbook

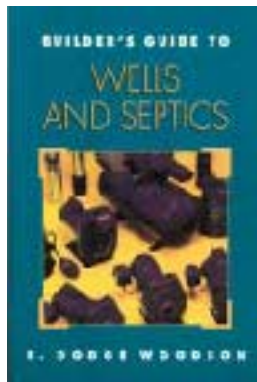
by Pete Young

The Wood Truss Council of America has released the second edition of its *Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Handbook* (\$49.95 from WTCA, 6425 Normandy Lane, Madison, WI 53719; 608/274-4849). This hefty publication covers wood truss construction from manufacturing and design to material handling and installation. If you have questions about floor or roof trusses, the answers are probably in one of the book's 125 sections, which are organized into 20 chapters. Contractors will be more interested in the second half of this handbook. Chapters 14 through 16, which focus on handling, storage, transportation, installation, bracing, and connection systems, are essential reading. The final chapters present troubleshooting strategies for repairing damaged trusses, avoiding common installation errors, and accommodating special situations. The appendices cover truss nomenclature, span tables, and a synopsis of the design process. Graphs, charts, and illustrations used throughout the handbook help clarify important concepts.



All About Wells & Septics

Building in areas without public water and sewer systems can be financially risky. On spec jobs, site geology may affect the suitability of the building lot, and the cost of drilling a well and building a septic system can bust any construction budget. If you're faced with choosing, specifying, or installing a well or septic system, R. Dodge Woodson's *Builder's Guide to Wells and Septics* (\$25 from McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, 800/722-4726) can help. At just under 300 pages, this book not only examines every type of common well and septic system in detail, it gives advice on how to protect against unknown costs. Woodson's central theme is keeping costs down while also installing a system that functions well and is appropriate for a given location. The table of contents clearly directs you to the chapter you want, and more quick reference is available in a useful glossary and index.



Free & Cheap

Ceramic Tile Installation

The Tile Council of America has published a 1998 edition of its *Handbook for Ceramic Tile Installation* (\$3 from TCA Inc., P.O. Box 1787, Clemson, SC 29633; 864/646-8453). The handbook first provides an overview of materials used for setting ceramic tile. The bulk of the 36-page booklet presents installation guidelines for a series of typical applications. Specialty treatments, such as swimming pools, refrigerator rooms, and steam rooms, are also covered.



Connectors

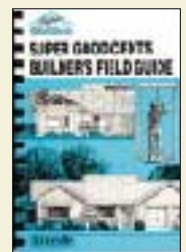
Part of Simpson Strong-Tie's series of technical publications, the *Wood Construction Connectors* catalog lists its entire line of steel connectors. The catalog includes color illustrations and charts which define dimensions, fastener schedules, and allowable loads. The catalog is free (4637 Chabot Dr., #200, Pleasanton, CA 94588; 800/999-5099; www.strongtie.com).

Grainger Web Site

Grainger, one of the nation's largest industrial and commercial equipment suppliers, has recently constructed a web site (www.grainger.com) for placing orders and checking inventory. Orders must still be paid for and picked up at local Grainger branches; company representatives say, however, that online payment and home delivery will soon be available.

Insulation Facts

The Oak Ridge National Laboratory has published a free primer on home insulation. The 19-page *Insulation Fact Sheet* reviews the pros and cons of various insulation systems. Zip code tables determine the proper insulation levels for various building assemblies and heating systems in particular areas of the country. To order, write or call Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearing House (P.O. Box 3048, Merrifield, VA 22116; 800/363-3732; www.ornl.gov/roofs+walls).

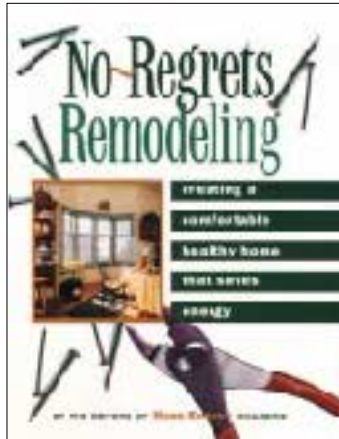


Energy Field Guide

Created in conjunction with a tax incentive program offered by electric utilities in the Pacific Northwest, the *Super Good Cents Builder's Field Guide to Energy Efficient Construction* (\$10 from Bonneville Power Administration, 905 NE 11th Ave, Portland, OR 97232; 503/230-4171) is aimed at both general contractors and subs. Chapter 1 focuses on design issues and includes a useful comprehensive checklist. Chapter 2 calls attention to the many details that a general contractor must specify with each subcontractor to ensure an energy-efficient final product. The remainder of the book explores the construction process trade by trade. Helpful sections are included on air leakage control and technical specs for energy-efficient building products. Although this guide is organized to suit the needs of the Pacific Northwest, builders from all cold and mixed climates can make use of its trade-by-trade presentation.

Energy-Wise Remodeling

With its appeal to both builders and consumers, this book would make a great presentation aid for a variety of construction issues. *No-Regrets Remodeling* (\$20 from Energy Auditor & Retrofitter, Inc., 2124 Kittredge St. #95, Berkeley,

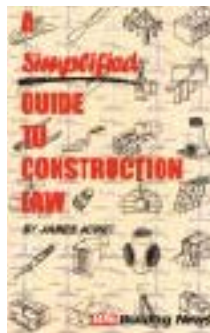


CA 94704, 510/524-5405; www.homeenergy.org), put together by the editors of *Home Energy Magazine*, focuses on energy-efficient building techniques for all types of remodeling. For starters, the book covers energy efficiency basics such as air sealing, insulation, ventilation, and solar design. The focus then shifts to residential systems, including heating, cooling, hot water,

lighting, and windows. The section on residential lighting is especially good because it covers the full range of lighting options and presents clear advice on how to determine what type and how much light is best for each room in a home. The final portion of the book examines different types of remodeling projects in more depth: kitchen, bath, home office, attic conversion, basement finishing, garages, porches, and additions. The book finishes with a decent glossary and a detailed index.

Legal Guide for Builders

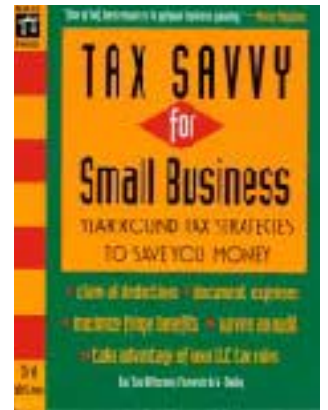
The format of James Acret's *A Simplified Guide to Construction Law* (\$29.95 from BNI Building News, 1612 S. Clementine St., Anaheim, CA 92802, 888/264-7665; www.bni-books.com) makes for an easy-to-use legal reference. Each of its 15 chapters focuses on a broad issue, such as contracts, liens, bonds, insurance, arbitration, and fraud, and is broken into short sections that combine brief descriptions of legal terms with telling examples. The rear of the book holds a 100-page glossary of legal and construction terms, followed by a brief index. As good as this book is, it lacks a table of contents, which makes it a bit of a trick to locate answers to specific legal questions. Nonetheless, taking some time to jot down chapter names on the inside cover makes up for this oversight and makes it easier to take advantage of the book's no-nonsense format.



Small Business Tax Savvy

Understanding how to best organize your business in light of the tax codes can be a daunting task, especially when it comes to monthly and yearly strategies for minimizing your tax burden. This year's third edition of *Tax Savvy for Small Business* (\$29 from Nolo Press, 950 Parker Street, Berkeley, CA 94710; 800/992-6656; www.nolo.com) is a comprehensive

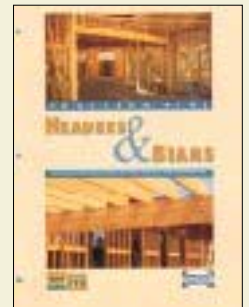
tax guide for small business people. The book explains the tax ramifications of different legal forms of business, such as sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, and corporation, then advises how to minimize taxes and avoid trouble with the IRS. The final chapters deal with problems such as what to do when a business can't pay its taxes or gets audited, and how to appeal audit findings. The detailed table of contents, along with various reference sections, make the book easy to use.



Free & Cheap

Southern Pine Header & Beam Sizing

Send \$2 to the Southern Pine Council (PO Box 641700, Kenner, LA 70064-1700; 504/443-4464; www.southern-pine.com) to get its *Headers & Beams* pamphlet. Straightforward tables cover all you need to know about sizing southern pine headers, floor girders, floor edge beams, and roof ridge beams. Allowable load tables for both floors and roofs are also included. Using the pamphlet is a breeze — A list on page one, which is actually set up as a table, quickly directs you to the page you need.



Canadian Species (and more) Span Book

The size of a spiral notepad, *The U.S. Span Book for Major Lumber Species* is the non-metric version of the Canadian Wood Council's standard span book. With a third of the lumber used in the U.S. coming from Canada, this span book proves handy because it covers four major Canadian species groups — S-P-F, Douglas fir-larch, hem-fir, and machine stress-rated (MSR) lumber — and three major U.S. species groups — Douglas fir-larch, hem-fir, and southern pine. (Species groups with the same names but from different sides of the border have different span ratings.) The span tables cover joists, rafters, headers, and design values for most common scenarios. This is a freebie (CWC, 1400 Blair Place, Suite 210, Ottawa, ONT, Canada, K1J 9B8; 800/463-5091; www.cwc.ca).



Accessible Building Products

Although by no means comprehensive, the free *Directory of Accessible Building Products 1998* is a good primer on building homes with products and designs that make living easier for people with disabilities. Put together by the National Association of Home Builders Research Center (400 Prince George's Boulevard, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774-8731; 800/638-8556; www.nahbrc.org), the directory covers accessibility standards and products for kitchens, laundry areas, bathrooms, doors, and windows, in addition to assistive hardware and devices, such as ceiling lifts and climate controls.

