

Construction Standards

by Pete Young

It took 14 editors to compile *Residential & Light Commercial Construction Standards* (\$60 from R.S. Means, Construction Plaza, P.O. Box 800, Kingston, MA 02364; 800/334-3509; www.rsmeans.com). Based on building codes, industry standards, and accepted best practices, this hefty 600-pager initially came together as a reference book for helping contractors avoid construction defect liabilities. Each of the 16 system-focused chapters begins with a list of common defects, then presents building code excerpts as well as reprints from other publications and industry guidelines. Every source is presented independently with a subheading that not only clearly identifies it, but also gives contact information for potential followup questions. Where necessary, the editors have inserted comment boxes to call attention or add detail to particular issues. The book's strength is that it compiles so much information from so many different sources. It does, however, have two minor shortcomings. First, for structural issues the book pulls almost exclusively from the *Uniform Building Code (UBC)*. Contractors working with other codes will have to cross-reference on their own. Second, while the book includes a number of helpful illustrations, it uses no photography and lacks illustrations in spots. Overall though, *Residential & Light Commercial Construction Standards* is worth the price just for the sheer quantity of information it brings together.



Structural Inspection

Ever wonder what home inspectors look at when they're checking for structural integrity? *A Practical Guide to Inspecting Structure* (\$50 from American Home Inspectors Training Institute, 212 Wisconsin Ave., Waukesha, WI 53186; 800/937-6387; www.ahit.com) follows standards set by the American Society of Home Inspectors.

Author Roy Newcomer drew on his construction and real estate background as well as his years of training home inspectors to put together this book. Comprehensive but fairly basic, the guide starts at the foundation and works its way up through the framing to the roof. These inspection procedures may



help you the next time you scout out an extensive remodeling job. For example, the foundation chapter gives information on how to interpret foundation cracks. Although this 100-page book is worth a look, it comes at a questionably high price.

K&B Style Guide

If you need to improve your design sense for integrating kitchens and baths with different home styles, the *Architectural Styling Guide to Kitchen and Bath Theme Design* (\$40; McGraw-Hill, 11 West 19th St., New York, NY 10011; 212/337-6097; www.books.mcgraw-hill.com/architecture) can help put things in perspective. The 240-page book spends its first 80 pages surveying historical residential architectural styles. From there, it moves on to the various theme styles for kitchens and bathrooms. This book won't tell you how to build them, but it will help you and your clients establish a common vision for theme kitchens and baths. Or, it might just give you a design edge the next time a potential client asks for suggestions that fit a particular style.



Safety Compliance Manuals

Safety regulations on residential construction sites have become more stringent in recent years. Seeing your way through the maze of regulations and reporting requirements involves as much work in the office as on the site. Mark McGuire Moran's *Construction Safety Handbook: A Practical Guide to OSHA Compliance and Injury Prevention* (\$79 from Government Institutes, 4 Research Pl., Suite #200, Rockville, MD 20850; 301/921-2323; www.govinst.com) methodically covers everything you need to know to get your company up to snuff safetywise. Weighing in at almost 500 pages, the book is organized into 23 chapters that make it easy to locate specific topics.



Bar Chart Scheduling

Using bar charts can be an effective technique for scheduling jobs. Thomas Love's *Bar Chart Scheduling for Residential*

Construction (\$33 from Home Builder Press, 1201 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005; 800/223-2665; www.builderbooks.com) explains the nuts and bolts of using bar charts to track job tasks and cash flows as well as daily, weekly, and monthly company planning. In addition, the book includes blank charts that can be photocopied, plus a disk of Excel spreadsheet templates that can be used to quickly create charts on a computer.



Sharp Smarts

Take advantage of *The Complete Guide to Sharpening* (\$35; Taunton Press, P.O. Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470; 800/888-8286; www.taunton.com) to learn the old-time skill of honing steel edges for optimal cutting. After explaining the basic techniques of sharpening, author Leonard Lee steers the book through a tool-by-tool examination of sharpening specifics. The guide covers hand tools exceptionally well, but power tools do not get the attention they deserve — drill bits, cutters, drill-press mortising chisels, power saw blades, and milling cutters are squeezed into 30 pages at the end of the book. All the same, you won't find many other options out there if you go looking for a how-to of sharpening.



FREE & CHEAP

Permanent Wood Foundations

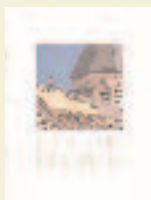
Two recent publications detail how to build permanent wood foundations (PWFs). The first, *Permanent Wood Foundations: Design and Construction Guide* (\$4 from Southern Pine Council, P.O. Box 641700; Kenner, LA 70064; 504/443-4464; www.southernpine.com) covers the range of issues involved in planning, building, and grading around a functional foundation built out of pressure-treated wood. This short 52-page guide packs in a lot of information along with supporting photos, tables, and illustrations.

For a more in-depth look at treated-wood foundations, you can spend \$20 on *Permanent Wood Foundations: Materials, Footings, Walls, Moisture Protection, Finishing, and Special Topics* (Canadian Wood Council, Suite 210, 1400 Blair Place, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; 800/463-5091; www.cwc.ca). At 125 pages, this PWF guide delves further into specific details. For example, this guide provides a clear procedure for evaluating a building lot for its optimal PWF location, taking into account depth and drainage of soils, elevation relative to waterways and watersheds, and so on. Information is provided in both imperial and metric measures so that this guide works both north and south of the border.



Roofing Pamphlets

Roof Alterations and Renovations is a free pamphlet that depicts 11 case studies of roof replacement jobs. Most involve replacing failed flat roofs with new pitched roofs. Although not much technical information is included, the variety of case studies makes the point that most buildings with failed roofs can be saved if the problem is caught early enough. Contact the American Plywood Association (P.O.



Box 11700, Tacoma, WA 98411; 206/565-6600) or the Southern Pine Marketing Council (P.O. Box 52468, New Orleans, LA 70152; 504/443-4464).

The Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association (ARMA) offers three free single-sheet roofing-related bulletins:

- *Ventilation and Moisture Control for Residential Roofing*
- *Reroofing With Metric Shingles*
- *Reroofing: Tear-Off vs. Re-Cover*

Each of these bulletins points to ARMA's *Residential Asphalt Roofing Manual* (\$25, ARMA, 4041 Powder Mill Rd., Suite 404, Calverton, MD 20705; 301/348-2002; www.asphaltroofing.org) for additional information. ARMA also puts out an 8-page pamphlet called *Torch Applied Roofing Do's and Don'ts* (\$6). This primer follows a checklist format for using equipment, safeguarding buildings, and protecting roofers during the installation of modified bitumen roofing membranes.



Particleboard Shelf Spans

A free technical bulletin, *Particleboard and MDF for Shelving* (Composite Panel Association, 18928 Premiere Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20879; 301/670-0604; www.pbmdf.com), provides single and multiple spans for six classes of particleboard and medium-density fiberboard under a variety of shelf loads. Additional engineering information is also included.

