

Letters

Photos Prove the Point

I enjoyed “Photography for Contractors” (7/07). We photograph for other reasons. Our business sells lighting and plumbing fixtures to builders; we make an average of 10 deliveries a day. In the past, some contractor would call nearly every week saying he was missing a chandelier or a ceiling fan. Believing we had delivered the items, we would assume the electrician was taking them home instead of installing them. So I bought inexpensive digital cameras and we began to photograph every delivery, making sure to capture the house in the background so that the builder could see what was delivered to the job.

The word soon spread among the subcontractors, and we did not have a report of a missing item for the next four months. The next time it happened, the photograph proved that we had actually made an error. In another case, a builder claimed a shortage six months after a delivery, but the photo clearly showed the missing item.

So now, just in case, we save the pictures on our computer for at least two years.

Ken Landes

The Fixture Gallery
Blue Springs, Mo.

Flashing, Not Caulk

The article “Replacing Doors in Stucco” (7/07) was very informative. One simple improvement I would make is to place a piece of copper flashing over the PVC head casing, slipping it under the stucco and behind the existing building paper. That way, you’re not relying on a bead of caulk to waterproof the joint, especially on the ends where water might get around the peel-and-stick membrane. This is also an added architectural enhancement.

P. Scott McCracken, GC

Vero Beach, Fla.

Shimming Jamb Extensions

The technique described in “Faster Jamb Extensions” (5/07) is interesting and could have a variety of applications.

My own approach when installing vinyl windows is to first rip strips of waste material ranging in thickness from 1/16 inch to 1/2 inch by 16ths, then cut the strips to the width of the jamb. I then slide a shim or shims of the right thickness between the window frame and the rough frame, inserting them about 1/8 inch into the gap. I put shims at the corners and a few points in between. After preassembling the jambs, as the author of the article does, I slide them between the shims and nail them in place.

This has the advantage of providing support across the width of the jamb, so that the casing isn’t the only thing holding the outer edge straight.

Chris Whalen

Missoula, Mont.

Energy Code Follow-Up

In “A Builder’s Guide to Energy Codes” (6/07), I was quoted as saying that “fewer than 10 percent of new houses [in Vermont] are in compliance with the code.” My quote could be misinterpreted, and I would like to clarify it.

From a purely technical perspective, I believe that my estimate of 10 percent code compliance is about right. However, “code compliance” in Vermont means not only building to the correct technical standards, but also filing paperwork with the town clerk and the Vermont Department of Public Service. While most new homes probably meet the technical compliance standards, I believe that the filing levels are somewhere around 10 percent.

If the goal of codes is to get homes to save energy, I believe that Vermont is doing a good job. However, we could do better at keeping track of our progress by filing the right paperwork.

Richard Faesy

Vermont Energy Investment Corp.
Starksboro, Vt.

KEEP 'EM COMING!

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