

Post Attachment Resists 500-Pound Load

In testing done in November, Testing Engineers of San Leandro, Calif., found that using an EZ Stairs Bracket in a post-support assembly met the code requirement for a lateral load applied at the top of a guardrail.

The test was performed on a 24-inch-wide three-stair assembly made with Douglas fir (below). A 4x4 post was attached to



two parallel 2x6 stringers with two $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch-by-6-inch galvanized bolts inserted through an EZ Stairs bracket (top right) and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch O.D. malleable steel washers and nuts on the outside of the post (bottom right). Progressively greater loads were applied 42 inches up the post from the tread until the assembly failed. Of three test trials, the lowest point of failure was at 570 pounds; the highest load withstood was 617 pounds.

The 2006 IRC requires that a guardrail or handrail withstand "a [200-pound] single concentrated load applied in any direction at any point along the top." But as discussed in *Question & Answer* in the May/June 2007 issue of *PDB*, accepted engineering practice calls for a safety factor of 2.5 when testing structural connections — thus the need to test to a 500-pound load.

Adam Burch of EZ Stairs notes that the bracket can be used in retrofits, as well. — *Laurie Elden*



Prices for certain steel nails were driven upward in January after the U.S. Department of Commerce imposed duties on producers and exporters from the People's Republic of China and the United Arab Emirates that it determined were selling the nails in the United States at unfairly low prices, a practice known as "dumping." Though the final ruling won't be made until June, the department has already instructed U.S. Customs and Border Protection to begin collecting deposits based on the preliminary determinations.

The ICC Evaluation Service issued a report (ESR-2325) in December based on its review of SustainWood, which is treated with a micronized copper-azole preservative (Sustain 20T) manufactured by PhibroWood of Ridgefield, N.J. The service found that SustainWood was compliant with a number of codes, including the 2006 IRC and the 2006 IBC, when used "in aboveground, ground-contact, and freshwater-contact applications and to resist attack by rot, fungal decay, and subterranean termites, including Formosan termites."

In recycling news, producer of Moisture-Shield and Weyerhaeuser ChoiceDek, Advanced Environmental Recycling Technologies (AERT), is building a polyethylene plastic-recycling plant in Oklahoma with the cooperation of the Cherokee Nation. The plant is being designed to earn LEED certification and is expected to be operational by the end of 2008. In its 2008 letter to shareholders, Arkansas-based AERT noted that the facility would "create a proprietary source of lower cost raw materials and help insulate AERT from raw material price fluctuations in the future" — significant because petroleum prices drive the cost of plastics, and especially noteworthy after oil prices exceeded \$100 a barrel in February.

In protest of what it sees as Congress's failure to effectively deal with the housing slump and credit industry problems, the National Association of Home Builders announced in February that it was withholding contributions to congressional campaigns until further notice. The NAHB continues to lobby for housing incentives, reforms to increase the availability of larger mortgages, and modernization of the Federal Housing Act. Brian Catalde, 2007 president of the NAHB, said in a press release, "Housing and related industries account for more than 16 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. More needs to be done to jump-start housing and ensure the economy does not fall into a recession."

Help for small businesses may be found in the economic stimulus bill, H.R. 5140, passed in February. In addition to authorizing an individual tax credit, which is intended to encourage consumers to spend money, the new law increases the amount of expenses that small businesses can deduct — from \$128,000 to \$250,000. It also allows businesses to deduct 50 percent of the cost of certain depreciable equipment purchased in 2008.

BagSmart is a new initiative in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to reduce the use of plastic bags and increase the recycling rate (www.bebagsmart.com). Penn Jersey Paper will provide bins to participating supermarkets; Goodwill Industries

will collect, sort, and ship the bags; and Trex will recycle the bags into decking. According to Trex, about 140,000 bags are used to make the decking for a 500-square-foot deck.

For its MicroPro micronized-copper wood treatment, Osmose earned a "green" nod in December from Scientific Certifications Systems, a certification and standards development company. SCS certified MicroPro as an "Environmentally Preferable Product," noting that compared with ACQ, the production of MicroPro emits fewer greenhouse gasses and its transport uses fewer trucks.

2008 Shows & Events

March 26–29

JLC Live Residential Construction Show

Hanley Wood Exhibitions*
Providence, R.I.
800/261-7769
www.jlclive.com

April 2–3

Residential Design and Construction 2008

Boston Society of Architects/AIA
Boston
800/544-1898
www.buildboston.com

April 4–6

CHBA National Conference

Canadian Home Builders' Association
Whistler, B.C.
613/230-3060
www.chba.ca/conference/index.php

April 10–13

Kitchen/Bath Industry Show 2008

National Kitchen and Bath Association
Chicago
800/933-8735
www.kbis.com

April 16–18

Atlantic Builders Convention

New Jersey Builders Association
Atlantic City, N.J.
609/587-5577
www.abconvention.com

May 11–13

National Green Building Conference

National Association of Home Builders
New Orleans
800/368-5242
www.nahb.org

May 13–16

JLC Live Residential Construction Show

Hanley Wood Exhibitions*
Long Beach, Calif.
800/261-7769
www.jlclive.com

June 24–27

PCBC 2008

California Building Industry Association
San Francisco
800/956-7469
www.pcbc2008.com

*Hanley Wood Exhibitions is owned by Hanley Wood, which also owns *Professional Deck Builder*. ♦