

Letters

Okay to Use Stainless With Copper

While I still consider *JLC* to be a trusted disseminator of valuable information in the ever-changing world of building technology, I can't imagine how Milton Grenfell's letter was deemed fit for print ("Don't Use Stainless Steel Screws With Copper," 4/09).

Mr. Grenfell cites the galvanic (electrochemical) scale to make his point. There are many versions of this scale — which shows reactions between dissimilar metals — and there are several different common alloys of stainless steel. Copper's reaction to some types of stainless steel is actually less severe than its reaction to lead, which Mr. Grenfell notes "can live comfortably with copper." Some charts show stainless steel next to copper.

The inclusion of this letter is even more surprising in light of the article in the same issue that describes the high corrosion resistance of stainless steel fasteners in copper-based pressure-treated lumber.

For a practical example, we in the lightning-protection industry have been using stainless steel fasteners with copper and copper alloys for many decades with greater shear strength and less seizing than is possible with copper alloy fasteners, and with no adverse effects.

Will Priestley

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Window-Seat Safety

Another likely code interpretation regarding glazing at window seats ("Window Seats and Safety Glass," Q&A, 4/09) comes from IRC 2006 Section R613.2, which addresses sill heights above exterior grade. In our jurisdiction, if the interior sill height is less than 18 inches above the window seat and the exterior grade is more than 72 inches below the sill, the building official might require a guard rail on the inside of the window. The rail would have to be of a type that could be easily and quickly removed without the use of tools, in case the inhabitants needed to escape a fire. This is especially likely to be enforced with second- and third-floor window seats.

Charles Shade

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Hanging Loads From Beams

When I faced a similar situation to the one described in Mr. Vetter's article "An Upside-Down Beam" (*On the Job*, 5/09), an engineer at Simpson Strong-Tie guided me to HWU top-flange hangers. These steel brackets, which have a 90-degree lip that rests on top of the carrying beam, hang down below the face to support the ceiling joists from their bottom edges. According to the engineer I spoke with, using short clips — as shown in the article — could induce cracks in either the beam or the joists. This is because the hardware is picking up only the bottom few inches of the Parallam and the top few inches of the joists below. Admittedly the approach I took might be overkill: The brackets I used were 18 inches tall and cost \$38 apiece (ouch!). On the other hand, a callback could cost a lot more.

John Hobby

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True Cost of Regulation

I've been a sole proprietor for 27 of my 37 years in the construction business. I spent another six years doling out HUD renovation funds to nonprofits. The lead-paint issue ("New Rules for Lead-Safe Remodeling," 5/09) has been around almost as long as the turmoil in the Middle East. The government keeps jacking up the requirements, but few pay attention. The true cost of safe work practice is not in the actual work; most contractors who keep a clean job site are 90 percent of the way there. The cost is in the record-keeping and work lost to noncompliant contractors. I realize we're just supposed to factor in this additional paperwork as part of "the cost of doing business," but every hour I spend doing that is a nonproductive hour. One has to wonder if it's worth the extra expense to the customer.

Warren Currier Jr.

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KEEP 'EM COMING!

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