

Letters

New Deck Code Confusing

The addition to the 2009 IRC about lateral load connections for decks is confusing. Section R502.2.2.3 states that the required lateral load connection “shall be permitted to be in accordance with Figure R502.2.2.3,” which shows a pair of hold-downs — one on a house floor joist, one on a deck joist — connected by a threaded rod. The phrase “shall be permitted” is rather abstruse if you don’t have a legal education! Looking at the code, you may think that these hold-down devices are *required*. Combined with the requirement that the floor sheathing inside has to be nailed at 6 inches on-center rather than the usual 12 inches, this detail makes decks a lot more difficult and expensive to build.

It’s a shame that this clause has clouded the really great advance the code made when it finally included a prescriptive fastening schedule for the ledger. Looking ahead, this code section will most likely persuade homeowners to build patios instead of decks.

Brice Hereford
FastenMaster
Agawam, Mass.

Quick Drywall Patches

“The Eight-Hour Kitchen Remodel” (8/10) mentions that patching holes in the drywall was one of the most time-consuming parts of the job. On my last kitchen remodel, I learned a great trick from the lead carpenter who, instead of letting the electrician and plumber knock out the drywall, was using an adjustable hole cutter — a Hole Pro — to make access holes. He made 6-inch-diameter access holes for the electrician and 8-inch holes for the plumber. Then, using a scrap piece of drywall, he made perfect plugs in a few seconds. He did the same with the access holes he needed for installing a pocket door in the kitchen.

Bryan Sanders
Chicago

Facing the Future

Sometimes it seems like trade subcontractors view a new product like SharkBites the way buggy-whip makers feared the automobile (“Leave Plumbing to Plumbers,” *Letters*, 11/10). I’m sorry, but a code-approved connector is not inappropriate in many situations. I often marvel at the skill and effort that went into installing galvanized DWV pipes, yet I doubt there are many plumbers who are eager to throw away their PVC fittings and buy 1½-inch dies.

Paul Zvirblis
Avalon Home Improvement
Elyria, Ohio

Seeks Thermographer

Your recent article on thermography (“Solving Moisture Mysteries With an Infrared Camera,” 10/10) was very interesting. The technique may be helpful in a building I own. Where do you find a competent thermographer?

Scott McDaniels
Buena Park, Calif.

Author Peter Hopkins responds: Submit your request at moisturefindir.com, and it will be forwarded to a technician in your area.

Builder Education Essential

A recent *JLC Update* newsletter referred to the truss bracing section in the *JLC Field Guide*. This brought to mind how important education is, and how good the *Field Guides* are. As a contractor for over 35 years in the same locale, I see a lot of the problem cases. It continually amazes me how often roof and floor trusses are improperly installed. It’s relatively simple to do it right, but to correct problems after the home is finished can be extremely expensive. Your guides provide a great overview. Though the information may not be comprehensive enough for every installation, reading the *Field Guide* chapter first makes it much easier to understand a product manufacturer’s instructions. These books are a must for anyone setting out in the light frame industry.

Jim Glover
Pierre, S.D.

KEEP 'EM COMING!

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