

TIPS ON PASSING INSPECTION THE FIRST TIME

Through the cooperation of North Idaho Code Enforcers (NICE), we recently conducted a survey of the 10 most common corrections noted in the field by area building inspectors. The 6 jurisdictions that participated were Kootenai County, the City of Coeur d'Alene, the City of Hayden, the City of Post Falls, the City of Rathdrum, and the City of Moscow. From these jurisdictions, 16 building inspectors responded.

The intent of this survey is to provide both the jurisdictions and the contractors with information which we hope will help to achieve successful inspections on the first visit. There were 51 items which made the list. The top 16 were listed by at least 4 different inspectors. Due to space constraints, we won't list them all at this time, but we can combine some of them.

OK, number one on the list is: **NOT READY FOR INSPECTION**. We can combine this with **APPROVED PLANS NOT ON SITE**, **STAMPED TRUSS DATA SHEETS NOT ON SITE**, and **ADDRESS NOT POSTED**. We don't have to look very far to come up with easy remedies for this one: Have the address posted so the inspector can easily find the jobsite; Keep the approved plans in a safe and easily located place on the jobsite so the inspector can determine exactly what is to be inspected; And, of course, make sure the phase to be inspected is ready when the inspection is scheduled. If it isn't ready, it can't be inspected. These are the most common listed items, the easiest to avoid, and the most time consuming and frustrating for everyone.

Number two on the list is **IMPROPER WALL BRACING**. This includes **UNDERSIZED OR OVER-DRIVEN FASTENERS** (turn the air down or hand nail), if staples are used they must be placed vertically. Check the specs for the **CORRECT SIZE AND SPACING OF FASTENERS**; sometimes #8's spaced 6" and 12" isn't enough. Remember - galvanized fasteners **MUST** be used for any application into pressure treated wood. There seems to be quite a problem with **INCORRECT ASSEMBLY OF RIGID FRAMES** at openings (RF's). Every approved set of plans should have the details attached; study them. If they aren't built properly, they don't do what they are intended to do. **MISSING, MISPLACED, OR IMPROPER HOLD DOWN DEVICES** is also included here. Strap type hold downs should be in place at the stem wall inspection. Your approved plans should indicate the type and locations.

Number three on the list is **INADEQUATE ANCHOR BOLT PLACEMENT**. Anchor bolts must be spaced within 12" of the end of each board and no greater than 6' on center. Each board should have no less than 2 bolts. Half of the plate should not be chiseled out to get the washer and nut on. The remedy for this is also easy. Pull layout for the lengths of treated plate you will be using. For example, if you are using 14' stock, pull 14', 28', 42', etc. and place a bolt on either side of those marks, place one within a foot of each end, and fill in the middles. Leave at least 2 1/4" of the bolt exposed. It doesn't work to just put one every 6 feet. Also, some of the approved APA narrow wall designs require larger plate washers. Check your details carefully.

Next we have **INADEQUATE TRUSS BRACING**. The truss data sheets show the locations for the continuous lateral bracing, required bearing length, and uplift reactions. All of the lateral bracing must be restrained at the ends to transfer the load into the walls and on down to the foundation. There is also required gable end bracing, additional diagonal bracing, and roof diaphragm shear transfer which may not be noted on the truss data sheets. Make sure the hurricane ties you use are adequate. Check with your truss vendor or building department if you have any questions.

NON-COMPLIANT STAIRS are high up on the list. For residential construction, the maximum rise is 7 3/4", the minimum tread is 10" and the **MAXIMUM VARIATION IS 3/8"**. Minimum net **HEADROOM** is 80" measured vertically from a line along the nosings of the stairs. **HANDRAILS** must be within 34" – 38" above that same line along the nosings. **GUARDRAILS** must be no less than 36" above the finished floor. Handrails and guards must be **ADEQUATELY FASTENED** to withstand a 200 pound load.

INADEQUATE BEAM, HEADER, OR JOIST SIZES is another common problem. Always check the approved plans, the sizes should be there. Be careful not to **OVER-BORE OR NOTCH** any piece of lumber. Never cut or notch the flanges on I-joists. There should be proper **MECHANICAL CONNECTORS** at beam, column, and truss connections. Make sure all of the required **BLOCKING** is in place (check to see if any of the subs have knocked any out). Ask you building department for guidelines.

That covers the most common issues and about half of the entire list. A simple walk through to check for these items before the inspector arrives would save us all a lot of time (and time is money). While you are doing your walk through, you might even catch something else on this list. And finally, please don't forget that we are also a great source of information.

