

# LETTERS



## Excessive Regulations?

To the Editor:

Your article "OSHA Reform — Burden for Small Builders" (*Eight-Penny News*, 1/94) points out two things:

1. OSHA and EPA regulations are excessive — for example, rules requiring all windows and doors to be open in a house for installation of new carpet. Can you imagine doing this on a day with  $-15^{\circ}\text{F}$  temperature and a 30 mph wind? Or on a spring day with rain and wind? Or are we supposed to work only when weather conditions are dependable? This brings me to the second point:

2. The need to know. How does one keep up with the changes in OSHA regulations? This is more than most small builders have time to do. I recently asked six local builders, all with employees, about the OSHA requirement to post material concerning an employee's right for a safe workplace. The response? Not one had even heard of such a thing.

There is a real need for more information about these regulations. Your article was a very good start. I would like to see more on OSHA and EPA guidelines, starting with the basics and geared to the small contractor. This would help all of us create a safer workplace.

James Glover  
Glover Construction  
Pierre, S.D.

## OSB Weakness

To the Editor:

Your article "Rating OSB Performance" (2/94) was very informative, as were the other pieces I've read concerning OSB since Hurricane Andrew. Every article emphasizes the importance of "fastener performance." In other words, if the material is nailed correctly with the proper nails, it is equal or superior to conventional plywood.

However, it is almost impossible to tell if OSB is nailed correctly, because of its color and texture. We have been inspecting a 434-unit apartment complex, and we cannot see the nail heads in the OSB sheathing even standing 2 feet away from the wall. We will never specify OSB again for that simple reason. It would seem that the solution is to coat the exterior side with a white paint or stain at the factory.

M. L. Waller  
Charrette Design Group  
Baton Rouge, La.

## Nail Strength

To the Editor:

In "Holding It Together" (*Practical Engineering*, 2/94), Mr. Hyman referenced a table from UBC for nail strength. What edition of the UBC? If the 1991 edition, the withdrawal resistance in southern pine should be 35, 41, 46, 46, and 50 pounds per inch of penetration respectively for 6d, 8d, 10d, 12d, and 16d common wire nails. These values should also be specifically called out as common wire nail values, since box nails and spikes will have different diameters, thus different withdrawal values, for the same pennyweight designation.

For your readers' information, the latest UBC requirements are based on the American Forest & Paper Association's *National Design Specification for Wood Construction* (1991 edition). These differ somewhat from the 1991 UBC requirements.

Buddy Showalter  
American Forest & Paper Assn.  
Washington, D.C.

## Safe Blood Lead Levels

To the Editor:

This is in response to the item "Painters did not have excess lead in

the blood," (*From What We Gather*, 2/94). The reference to an "OSHA [blood lead] standard of 40 micrograms per deciliter" suggests that this is some sort of safety limit. One might reasonably conclude from your article that painters have little to worry about.

The OSHA "standard" refers to the point at which *medical removal* of the worker from the site is suggested. In other words, a blood lead of 40 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dl) indicates a medical emergency, not a comfort level; it's the point at which hospitalization and de-leading therapy are considered. Even "low" levels of lead (well below 40 mcg/dl) can damage numerous organ systems in the body, and can cause high blood pressure. Research on children has shown that learning problems can be caused by concentrations as low as 10 mcg/dl.

The bottom line is that for the health of both workers and occupants, lead paint is an important issue in pre-1978 housing, especially in homes built before 1950.

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Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
New Brunswick, N.J.

## Vital Necessity

To the Editor:

I have one comment regarding "Remodeler's Estimating Checklist" (1/94), by Art Prindle:

Art! You forgot the Porta-Potties!

Robert Wallace  
Berkeley, Calif.

Keep 'em coming .... We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to JLC, RR#2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.