

Currently the Building Code in Massachusetts requires R=38 of insulation or 10.55" of Icynene. I believe that this same requirement is or will be in effect for all of the New England states by the end of the year. Our testing states a "Maximum of 5.5"" with the "Koffel Letter" possibly extending us to 8". The "Koffel Letter" may work but as the going gets tougher and we are taking jobs of size from firms like Manville, OCF, Knauff and CertainTeed we will encounter some counter punching. We need testing from a recognized authority (i.e. FM) that allows us to meet that R-38 value without any dancing around. Icynene has been presented with this problem before and the responses have been:

1. NES Report: NER-420 of 9/1/95
2. ICC Legacy Report: NER-420 of 5/1/2003
3. Koffel letter of 8/18/2003
4. Other assorted responses that indicate this is not a priority.

We can try to dance around the code by saying that under the MEC (Model Energy Code) our system at 5.5" or maybe 8" creates "an assembly equal or better in energy use." This will work on smaller jobs but when we are working on public buildings or larger projects we must have real testing. The message that I get from large architectural firms is that they will be reluctant to specify us with only that 5.5" test (NER-420 w/Legacy update.) The "Koffel letter" and such are usually discounted as the work of partial, paid consultants ( I have not had that happen yet with the Koffel letter but I have had that reaction in other similar circumstances.) Mike Payne of Jones-Payne Architects is a recent example of a firm that likes the product but is leery because our testing is stalled at 5.5". His point is that if it's not a "big deal" why not just go ahead & get the tests done for 12"? I have pointed out that the specified test cubicles are limited to 5.5" and he has responded that Owen Corning seems to have no problem testing at greater thicknesses. I have learned to avoid that subject with others who are likely to be less patient/charitable. The issue of FOAM INSULATION in New England looms large - especially in the reflection of the West Warwick Nightclub Fire and the 4 year old Worcester Warehouse Fire. Huge law suits reaching back to code officials, fire inspectors, sales people, etc and no one will be immune to the threats implied by others(i.e. our competitors from OCF, etc) when the code guy allows an "untested product" for that application - i.e. 10.55".

There are many other testing areas for Icynene where I would like to see some progress but none of them trump this 5.5" limitation.

Moreover, this topic was covered in the Rep Council meeting with Gary Brown in Chicago. Gary took those notes (I still have a copy of mine) and I believe that Alan told me in Las Vegas that he had those notes and would review them. My recollection is that all of the members of that Rep Council were in agreement that Icynene must quickly address this issue. We also were in agreement that the issue had been repeatedly raised with Icynene but that nothing had happened. Much was made of the Legacy report coming out but that is simply a reaffirmation of the 1995 NER-420 report.

I don't like to keep bitching about this but if I didn't keep at it I would not be telling you what's going on in the market - don't shoot the messenger!

Jack Sheehan