Glass Mat Gypsum Sheathing in Residential Construction (GMGSRC) Task Group (TG)

MEETING NOTES

6/13/2023

The GMGSRC TG came to order a little after 11 a.m. In attendance were TG members Mitch Schittler, CertainTeed Gypsum, Inc., Bill Fraser, PABCO Gypsum, Warren Barber, National Gypsum Company, Jay Watt, National Gypsum Company, Matt Gallagher, National Gypsum Company, Barry Reid, Georgia-Pacific Gypsum LLC, Kyle Flondor, United States Gypsum Company, and Kara Bosnic, United States Gypsum Company. Michael Gardner, M Gardner Services, and GA staff Susan Hines, Michael Schmeida, Steve Meima, and Greg Woolley were on the call. Outside counsel John Fedele, Baker McKenzie, was in attendance throughout the call.

The call focused on Michael Gardner's draft document describing how to use glass mat gypsum sheathing in residential construction. That document was distributed to the TG on 6/6/2023. Some TG representatives expressed confusion over the purpose of the document, noting that the piece needs to generate interest in using glass mat gypsum sheathing first. It was suggested that because the document is aimed at varied audiences it may need to be tailored to specific audiences e.g., builders, architects, etc.

Gardner explained that this would be the first of many drafts and that development would be an iterative process. A slide was referenced noting that an aspect of this initial effort would describe how a baseline single-story, 1,200 square-foot house already can be built in a code-compliant manner in low seismic and wind regions. He pointed out that these conditions prevail in roughly 60% of the United States. From there, an additional section will address how a second story could be added with adjustments to the baseline design, with subsequent sections describing what to do in higher wind and seismic regions. With appropriate engineering disclaimers, such a document could be distributed prior to testing specific wall systems.

Next, the TG discussed the document itself. One member noted that the use of the phrase "resists moisture" is very appropriate. Another suggested that when describing how glass mat gypsum sheathing complies with ASTM C 1177, emphasis should be placed on assured "quality and performance," rather than a consistent level of quality only. There was general agreement that increased "interest" or "focus" on glass mat gypsum sheathing use in residential construction is a more positive framing device for delays in advocating use of gypsum sheathing in residential construction than attributing the lag to "a lack of technical information supporting its use as an IRC-compliant exterior sheathing." The TG decided that formaldehyde should be deleted in favor of language emphasizing that the product is low emitting. Staff agreed to investigate to determine what VOC-related claims can truthfully be made when encompassing all manufacturers. [Update: only interior panels have been tested by manufacturers.]

Also discussed: How to describe the value glass mat gypsum sheathing provides because it does not expand, contract, or swell. Gardner is hesitant to use the term "dimensionally stable," but

the group agreed that description was appropriate. A member suggested noting that sheathing contributes to control layers of wall systems i.e., air and moisture layers are reinforced when exterior glass mat gypsum sheathing is used.

A TG member suggested that the GA consider eventually engaging an advertising / marketing agency to assist with promotion strategy and messaging as the initiative evolves. Several firms were referenced by TG members and staff. Staff agreed to investigate.

The performance role exterior glass mat gypsum sheathing bring to code compliant residences in International Wildland Urban Interface jurisdictions was also positively noted on the call.