

# Contractor

Service & Industry

# Bulletin

January 2010



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## Safety Tips

### Before you climb a ladder

Going up? Tens of thousands of serious injuries involving ladders occur each year.

For safer ladder climbing:

**Select** the right ladder for the job. For example, don't use a metal ladder near power lines or electrical equipment.

**Choose** the proper height for the job. The correct ladder height is a minimum of 3 feet above the roof line or work area.

**Place** the ladder on a flat, level surface. Don't use an unstable base such as bricks or blocks to make it reach farther.

**Don't** place a ladder in front of an entryway or door.

**Set** up straight, single or extension ladders at a 75° angle.

**Inspect** the ladder before each use. Never step on a ladder that is shaky or slippery or that isn't well maintained. Make sure all rungs and hardware are tight and secure. If there are any safety defects, remove the ladder from service immediately.

**Clean** off debris from your shoes before using the ladder. Wear shoes with slip-resistant soles.



## Landscape Report

During the slow winter months, Oneonta Block Company is busy scheduling **Trade Shows, Certification Courses, Informational Seminars and Installation Classes**



Look for us  
February 18 – 21 at the Oakdale Mall Show  
and March 12 – 14 at the Binghamton Arena



These shows give us the opportunity to present new products and ideas for you and your customers. Stop by for a visit or send your customers in to get ideas and check out what's available. Our salespeople will be on hand to answer questions and offer ideas.

More information will follow, as details become available or give us a call at 607-432-6641 for updates.

**We are working to promote You**



Otsego Ready Mix

## Concrete Curing Blankets



**CG2625GR 6' x 25' Grip Rite Curing Blanket \$43.75**



Grip-Rite curing blankets are the ultimate insulator for cold weather concreting, keeping winter out and heat and vapor in the concrete...where you need it!

Bubble insulated: 2 layer 3/16 in. polyethylene bubble sheet.



## Anderson High-Performance Glass – How does it work?

It works through a special metallic coating bonded to the interior surface of the outside pane of glass. It's almost invisible, but this revolutionary coating actually detects radiant heat and restricts its flow through the glass. During cold weather, High-Performance glass keeps heat inside. In warm weather it keeps heat outside.

In the heating months, it is 35% more energy efficient than ordinary double-pane insulating glass.



## Dealing With the Elements Contributed by Rebecca Lloyd

The term "joy ride" does not apply when it's pouring and the wind is gusting. The best strategy for driving in bad weather is to avoid it. But if going out is necessary or you get caught in bad conditions once you're already on the road, follow these safe driving tips:

Make sure your headlights are on.

Increase your following distance — if you're going slowly because of bad weather, is there really a point to being only 2 feet behind the car in front of you?

Slow down. Braking takes longer on slippery roads — the slower you go, the easier it will be for you to stop.

Make sure your car is prepared for the conditions

(check your battery, antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, windshield wipers, headlights, tires).

Use caution near intersections. Never assume that because you have the green light or the right of way that the intersection will be clear — always scan ahead to spot potential hazards.

Stay in one lane as much as possible — avoid unnecessary lane changes (don't go zipping in and out of traffic, passing people, etc.).

Keep two hands on the wheel and two eyes on the road at all times.



### Put together a car emergency kit that contains:

- an ice scraper and a snow brush
- a bag of sand, salt, or cat litter (for traction if you get stuck in snow)
- warning flares or triangles
- blankets and gloves or mittens
- a flashlight and batteries
- a first-aid kit
- booster cables
- nonperishable snack foods
- a candle and matches

If you get stranded, stay with your vehicle and call for assistance. Run the heater occasionally to keep warm, but avoid carbon monoxide poisoning by making sure your tailpipe isn't stuffed or blocked with snow or other debris

Good to see you

Thanks for your call

Great Job!

The little things

Please come again

Nice idea!

How are you?

Most married folks and those with significant others have learned that the "little things" are important in maintaining an effective relationship. With that being said, most everyone appreciates small courtesies that we experience when each of us cares enough to show consideration, respect and concern, by doing the little things that are quite often neglected within our busy society.

Businesses look for ways in which they can develop a good image, show professionalism, build confidence and soundly bond with their customers. In economic times where each new business opportunity is extremely important, those who have made the best impression generally win the order and get a chance to retain a customer.

Here is a "little things" list, a gentle reminder that even though big things are important, little things make lasting impressions and should not be overlooked.

1. Be sure to please your customers and friends with prompt replies to their, phone calls, e mails, request for quotes, and follow up on whatever you have agreed to well within the time frame of your commitment.
2. Any time you provide written or verbal quotations be sure to include literature and details that clearly explain what products or services are being provided in your proposal. Attached notes and highlighting is helpful.
3. Ease customer's anxiety by confirming when you will be starting the project, or other details they may become concerned with.
4. A quick response to problems goes a long way in the problem solving process. It builds confidence. Problems tend to undermine confidence so a responsive action will help make customers feel that their problems will be solved to their satisfaction.
5. Display yourself and your vehicles with your name & logo neatly attached to your clothing, equipment and vehicles. It provides an appearance of professionalism and organization.
6. Have estimate sheets, business cards, quotations, and other materials displaying your name, address, phone, email and website. This provides a feeling of confidence and assurance that you are proud of your company.
7. Be sure your business, home answering system, or cell phone provides the caller with easy access to you, or to someone who can confidently field your business calls.



Greetings and praise are important. Remember to say, "Hello, Hi, Good to See You, Have a Great Day, Thank You, Thanks, I appreciate your help, or I appreciate your business".



## Tri County Builders Exchange

Many choose to take advantage and benefit from becoming members of the Tri County Builders Exchange.

Pickett Building Materials & Oneonta Block Company take part by maintaining a plan room where members have access to plans and specifications of the majority of commercial construction projects in our area. This area covers several counties.

Members receive a monthly newsletter featuring construction information, legislative issues, OSHA & Safety information and program & training offered by the Exchange. This is a great way to get a feel for the pulse of our industry.

To sign up, or for more details, contact Sherry Hall at 432-6641. She can provide you with additional information and help you get on board.



### Hardwood Flooring Preventive Care Tips

Hardwood flooring can be kept looking new, regardless of wear, with a minimum amount of effort. To protect against damage, just follow some basic, common sense guidelines. If your floor happens to get damaged, don't panic. One of the benefits of wood flooring is that because it is a natural flooring material, it can be repaired and/or refinished to look just like new. Adhering to the following preventative care guidelines will lengthen the time between (and perhaps even eliminate the need for) major renovation or restoration such as recoating or refinishing.

#### Protect Your Floor with Rugs and Mats

Don't allow dirt and grit to be tracked on your floor. Place doormats at all door entrances to trap dirt. Dirt and grit are a floor's worst enemy. Make sure you keep doormats and rugs clean.

#### Use the Right Cleaning and Maintenance Products

Make sure you follow all product labels and use only products designed for wood floors. A damp mop may be used for clean-up, but don't use excessive water that can stand on your floor. Sweep, dust-mop or vacuum your floor regularly, but do not use household dusting products, because they can cause your floor to become slick and may damage the finish. To achieve the best results, we recommend that you only use cleaners, polishes and care products that are recommended by the manufacturer for care of their flooring.

#### Use Furniture Protectors

To avoid scratching and damaging the floor's surface, place self-adhesive felt furniture pads or other protective pads such as gray rubber non-marking casters on chair and table legs and any other furniture surface that could possibly cause damage when moved across the floor. Be sure to keep the pads clean and free of grit and dirt. Don't use ball-type casters or casters made of hard materials such as plastic or metal — these can damage your floor.

#### Watch Your Shoes

Make sure the heels of your shoes are in good repair — especially high heels. Heels that are missing their caps or are worn through exposing metal or other abrasive surfaces can cause scratches and dents on any floor's surface. And, of course, never walk across your floor in shoes that have cleats or spikes.

#### Wood and Water Don't Mix

Never allow water to stand on a hardwood floor for any length of time. Also, don't ever pour water on your floor — it can cause damage to the wood's structure and to the finish. A slightly damp mop or rag may be used for clean-up, but the floor should be dried thoroughly afterward and no excessive water should be present on the floor.

#### Protect from Spills in the Kitchen

Place rugs or mats in areas that are prone to spills, such as in front of the sink, refrigerator and stove. Cotton mats are recommended because they're easily cleanable. Mats with rubber backings can trap moisture on the floor and cause damage.

#### Move Area Rugs Regularly

When exposed to ultraviolet (sun) light, wood's natural oxidizing properties can cause the color of your floor and finish to change, taking on an age-worn patina. To keep a consistent color across your floor, rotate area rugs on a regular basis and use window coverings to protect against sun exposure.



# Wood's Moisture Cycle / Change in Size

When kiln dried lumber arrives from the mill it immediately starts to adjust its moisture level to its new environment. Moisture levels will vary depending on the area of the country where it is located, the average temperature levels, how it is stored, if it is protected from rain and sun light, how soon it is used, and its position within the structure. Once it is installed into a structure it will continue to adjust to the current relative humidity. When heat is introduced into the new structure generally a drying condition occurs, causing material to stabilize and adjust to new moisture levels. This change can cause the material to expand if moisture levels increase or shrink if moisture levels decrease while stabilization occurs. Understanding how to work with materials that have a propensity to change in size under various conditions is important to reduce or eliminate problems in maintaining a level of quality.

The Journal of Light Construction has assembled some information which you may find helpful regarding dealing with movements in materials related to moisture change.

## Cracked Drywall

Drywall cracks when the framing moves. This happens most often at the upper corners of windows and doors.

**Cause:** If the drywall joints fall at the edges of a window, the finished joint will crack when the header shrinks. Headers with a moisture content of 19% can shrink ¼" inch across their width.

**Cure:** Don't break drywall sheets at the corners of an opening. Instead, lap the sheet over the corner so the joint falls in the center of the window or door span, and then cut out the opening (Figure 12).

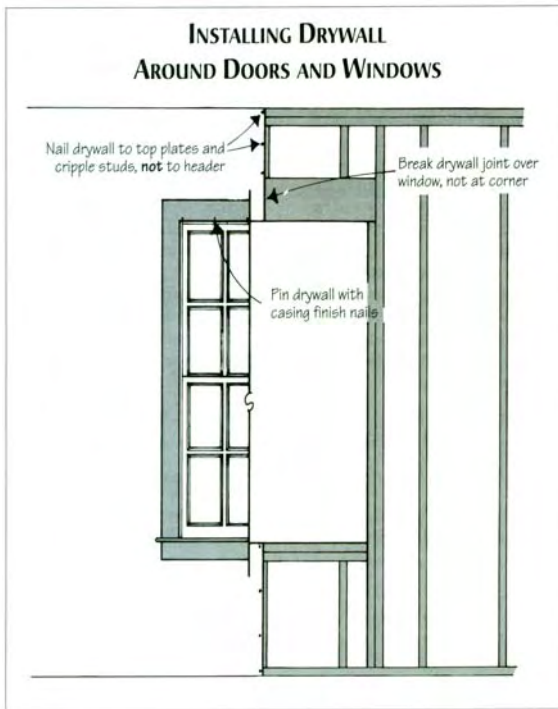


Figure 12. To prevent drywall joints from cracking at the corners of windows and doors, place the sheet so the joint falls in the center of the opening, and then cut out the waste. Also, do not fasten the drywall to the header, but use the interior casing to secure the loose edge of the drywall.

**Important: Do not fasten the drywall to the header.** Screw the drywall into the cripples and wall plate above the headers. This lets the wallboard float down over the header. Use the interior window casing to hold the loose edge of the drywall secure.

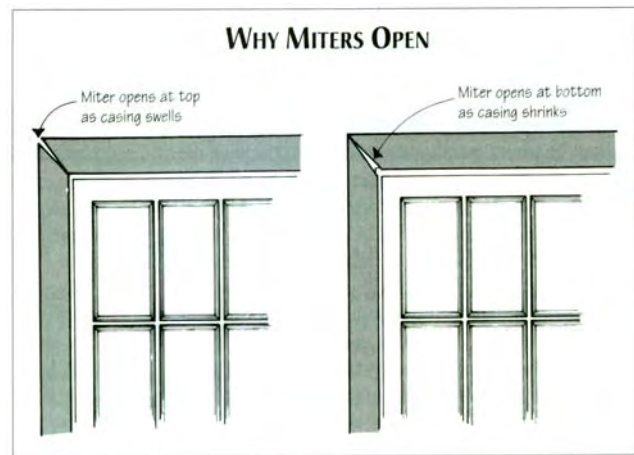


Figure 11. As indoor humidity fluctuates, wood casings shrink and swell, causing miters to open up. As the casing swells, miters separate at the top but remain tight at the bottom (left). As the wood shrinks, the opposite occurs (right)

In future editions of the contractor bulletin, we will include other tips which JLC offers to deal with other problems that expansion and shrinkage create as wood materials adjust to changing moisture levels.

## Market Report

Paul Barnhart



It's the 'center part of winter' and we're all looking for the slightest indicator of Spring around the corner such as longer daylight, even by as little as five minutes. Our nature is characterized by eternal hope.

While most markets are slow enough that pricing adjustments have little meaning, various industries still seek to position themselves for a general increase in business by trying to balance small increases with an analysis of what the market will bear. In fact, some recovery from a long-term eroded price trend is probably due.

At this time, the following announcements have been made.

- 1/2010 – Gypsum 15%
- Steel Studs 10-15%
- 2-2010 – Roof Shingles 5-7%
- Rigid Insulation 5-8%