Contractor Service & Industry Bulletin

February 2011

Pickett Building Materials | Oneonta Block Company
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607-432-8391, Fax 607-433-6284

Otsego Ready Mix, Inc.
2 Wells Avenue
Oneonta, NY 13820
607-432-3400

An opening is available in our Port Crane location. This is a great opportunity for someone looking to work full time doing sales and yard work. Contact Frank O'Donnell for more information at 607-432-6641.

Propane Safety

Propane or LPG (liquefied petroleum gas – or LP gas) is a liquid fuel stored under pressure. In most systems, propane is vaporized to a gas before it leaves the tank. Propane is flammable when mixed with air (oxygen) and can be ignited by many sources, including open flames, smoking materials, electrical sparks, and static electricity. Also, severe freeze burn or frostbite can result if propane liquid comes in contact with your skin.

Safety matters

If you smell gas:

1. **NO FLAMES OR SPARKS!** Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or a fire.

2. **LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY!** Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.

3. **SHUT OFF THE GAS**. Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank if it is safe to do so. To close the valve, turn it to the right (clockwise).

4.**REPORT THE LEAK** from a neighbor's home or other nearby building away form the gas leak, call your propane retailer right away. If you can't reach the propane retailer, call 911 or your local fire department.

5. **DO NOT RETURN TO THE BUILDING OR AREA** until your propane retailer, emergency responder, or qualified service technician determines that it is safe to do so.

6. **GET YOUR SYSTEM CHECKED.** Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane retailer or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak-free.

Otsego Ready Mix

Dusting Concrete Surfaces

What is dusting?
Chalking or powdering at the surface of a concrete slab is called dusting.
The characteristics of such surfaces are:

- They powder under any kind of traffic
- They are easily scratched with a nail or by sweeping

Why do concrete floors dust?
A concrete floor dusts under traffic because the wearing surface is weak. This can be caused by:

- Any finishing operation performed while bleed water is on the surface. Working bleed water back into the top ¼" of the slab produces a very high water-cement ratio and therefore, a low strength surface layer.
- Placement over a non-absorptive subgrade or polyethylene
- Insufficient or no curing.
- Floating and / or trowelling of condensation moisture.
- Inadequate ventilation and / or protection from weather.

How to prevent dusting

- In general, use a concrete with a moderate slump (under 5")
- Never sprinkle or trowel dry cement into the surface of plastic concrete to absorb water.
- Do not perform any finishing operations with water on the surface.
- Avoid direct placement of concrete on polyethylene or non-absorptive subgrades.

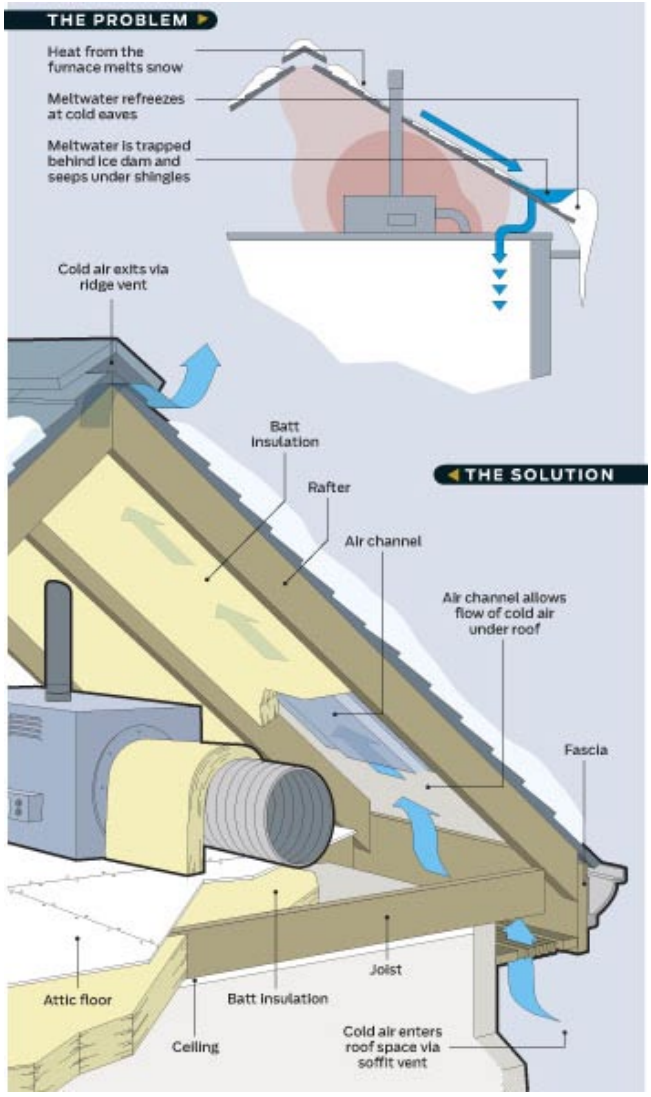
How to repair dusting

- Apply a chemical floor hardener on thoroughly dried concrete.
- In severe cases, a serviceable floor can be obtained by wet-grinding the top surface, followed by proper bonded placement of a topping course.

National Ready Mixed Concrete Association |Concrete in Practice Technical Bulletin 2

How to Prevent Ice Dams, and What to Do If You Get Them

The cold season brings snow-packed roofs across the country and with snow melt can come damaging ice dams. Without properly insulated attics, however, homeowners could find themselves with an ice dam upstairs. Heat from the attic melts snow on the roofs, and the melted water pools and gets in the house. Here is how to avoid these, and what you should do if they do appear on your roof.



How to prevent ice dams

To prevent an ice dam, don't heat the roof, keep it cold. That way, the snow on the roof eventually dissipates without making large amounts of meltwater. The underside of the roof deck should not exceed 30 F. The best way to maintain low temperatures is by ensuring that there is adequate insulation and sealing gaps that let warm air pass into the attic from the house. The attic must also be ventilated, so that cold air is introduced into it and heated air escapes rapidly. Some remodeling contractors are under the impression that heat passing through the attic helps prevent ice dams, when just the opposite is true. Although excess heat moving from the attic through the roof rapidly melts snow, once the meltwater touches the cold eaves, it quickly freezes and forms an ice dam.

If you have a furnace in the attic, it may not be possible to prevent ice dams. Increased insulation, however, should help. First, insulate the areas between the roof rafters. It is important to keep an air space between the roof deck and the insulation in order to prevent a condensation buildup that can delaminate the roof deck. Prior to insulating, install polystyrene rafter air channels, which are available at home centers. Next, lay unfaced insulation batts or blankets over the furnace's heating ducts to help reduce the heat buildup in the attic. If there's a hatchway into the attic, build a cover for it out of rigid poly-styrene insulation.

If the gable and ridge vents do not generate sufficient air movement to dissipate the heat, you will need a motorized vent at one end of the attic to exhaust the heat, and an adequately sized vent on the opposite end of the attic to draw in cold air from the outside.

What to do if you get an ice dam

Homes with ice dams on the roof also often get parallel lines of moisture on the ceiling. The dark lines in the ceiling are called shadow lines. Although there may be insulation on the attic floor, the bottom chords of the trusses are not usually covered. They are exposed to the low winter temperatures and act like a thermal bridge to the ceiling below. This creates a cold strip on the ceiling on which condensation forms. Over time, this moisture traps dust and results in mildew growth, which shows up as shadow lines. First, clean off the mildew with a solution of 1 quart of bleach and 3 quarts of warm water. Rinse the surface with clear water, then let it dry.

If the surface has been stained from the mildew or is otherwise discolored, it will need to be painted. Apply a stain-blocking primer before applying a topcoat.

Cracks in the ceiling/wall joints are the result of truss uplift during the winter. The cracks could have been prevented by using brackets that allow the truss to lift without disturbing the drywall. If your home wasn't built with those brackets, the best way to deal with the problem is with a molding that is wide enough to cover the cracks. Nail it to the truss so it is free to move up and down.

Source: popularmechanics.com

Ok, Show of hands...
Who's tired of snow?

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INTEGRATED BUILDING TECHNOLOGY
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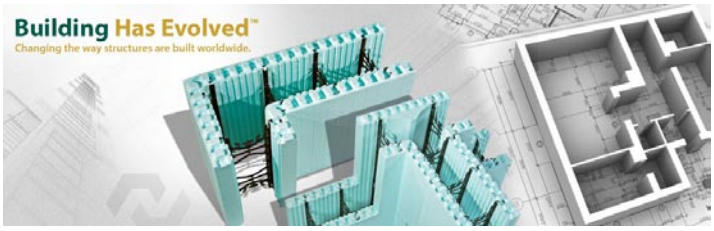
Learn from our experience. If you are thinking of building with NUDURA Insulated Concrete Forms, we encourage you to take this "ONE-DAY ICF TRAINING COURSE". The one-day training provides builders and installers with basic NUDURA ICF installation skills. NUDURA is committed to providing the highest level of training, ensuring you get the knowledge you need to get the job done with efficiency and confidence.

WHEN: March 17, 2011 8:00 am to approximately 5:00 pm

WHERE: Holiday Inn, Oneonta, NY

COST: $150 PER PERSON

To sign up, visit *www.nudura.com* and click on "Training Courses". Or, contact Jeff or Paul in contractor sales at Pickett Building Materials for further information. 607-432-8391



COLD Stress Wrap-Up

Older people, infants and those weakened by chronic illnesses are more at risk of cold stress (hypothermia). They might even suffer indoors, if the temperature gets below 70°. If you know someone like that, give them a call to check up on them. Have a friend, neighbor or family member call daily if you're susceptible too.

Symptoms of Hypothermia
When any of the following symptoms are noticed during cool or cold conditions, suspect hypothermia.

- A sudden change in appearance or behavior
- Skin that is cool to the touch
- Drowsiness and difficulty speaking
- Cold and stiff muscles
- Shivering
- Chest pain
- Slowed breathing
- A puffy or swollen face
- Trembling in an arm, leg, or on one side of the body.
- Difficulty with coordination and balance.

What to do if you suspect hypothermia:

- Call a doctor, ambulance or rescue squad
- Handle the person very gently, wrapping them with blankets or towels.
- Cover the persons head or neck.

Closing a House for the Winter?

Q The December 15, 2010 Question and Answer article in the Journal of Light Construction brings out some important facts regarding what is recommended when reducing or eliminating heat in seasonal homes or year round homes that will be vacated during extended vacation periods.

A Don Fulger, a senior researcher with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. in Ottawa, Ontario, responds: If you leave a house deserted in winter, the biggest risks are to finishes and furniture due to cold temperatures and extreme humidity (high or low). The safest, most convenient way to minimize problems is to provide a modicum of heating. Keep it to about 50°F. If you build an energy-efficient house with good solar gains, the heating costs for the unoccupied winter periods will be low, and you will avoid the inconvenience of draining plumbing and removing all water-based stored foods and supplies. A small amount of continuous ventilation is also useful for keeping the air fresh.

If you are intent on leaving the house unheated, there are some precautions I would recommend. Ventilation is particularly important. Running an efficient set of fans continuously at low speed will mix air and keep the house fresh. Also, you do not want solar gain in an unheated house, because temperature swings can cause condensation problems. If possible, minimize solar gain by using exterior shutters on at least the south and west windows. Before the owners reoccupy the house in winter, they should have someone bring it up to temperature slowly over a couple of days. I would not use the no-heat strategy during the first winter after new construction, because there may still be significant moisture in the concrete, drywall, and lumber. A cold or freezing house with high internal moisture is a recipe for trouble.

Construction Definitions

- CONTRACTOR - A gambler who never gets to shuffle, cut or deal!
- BID OPENING - A poker game in which the losing hand wins.
- LOW BIDDER - A contractor who is wondering what he/she has left out.
- ENGINEER'S ESTIMATE - The cost of construction in Heaven.
- OSHA - A protective coating made by half-baking a mixture of fine print, split hairs, red tape and baloney - usually applied at random with a shot gun.
- STRIKE - An effort to increase egg production by strangling the chicken.
- DELAYED PAYMENT - A tourniquet applied at the pockets.
- COMPLETION DATE - The point at which liquidated damages begin
- LIQUIDATED DAMAGES - A penalty for failing to achieve the impossible

Landscape Report

Protect Concrete with the Proper Use of Deicers

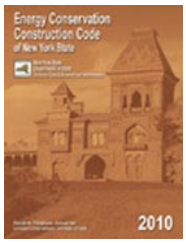
You can deice safely and efficiently by using the right ice-melting compound properly. The most frequently used deicers are calcium chloride and magnesium chloride, rock salt and a variety of blended products.

Proper application of deicers can extend the longevity of concrete surfaces. The recommended application rate of ice melt is typically 2 to 4 ounces per square yard, but you should always follow the manufacturer's directions.

None of the compounds in ice melters chemically attack concrete. Chipping and flaking are often blamed on the deicing chemicals when in fact, natural processes are the culprits, not the deicing agents themselves. Concrete is porous and absorbs moisture. If concrete has absorbed water and temperatures then drop below freezing, the water within the concrete will freeze and expand. Chipping and flaking will result.

However, that does not mean that deicers have no effect. Ice melters can increase the frequency of freeze-thaw cycles, thereby increasing the potential for this type of damage. Therefore, it is important to use an effective deicer at no more than recommended rates. (check product packaging) and to remove all slush and water as soon as possible.

DEICER	LOWEST PRACTICAL TEMPERATURE
Calcium Chloride	-25°F
Magnesium Chloride	+5°F
Sodium Chloride (Salt)	+20°F
Potassium Chloride	+25°F



2010 Energy Conservation Construction Code of NY

Paul Barnhart

The current revision of the Energy Conservation Code of NYS (ECCCNYS) officially took effect December 28, 2010 and has come to be referred to as the 2010 Energy Code. Among its various effects it brings New York State into compliance with commitments required under the Federal government's American Recovery and Renewal Act of 2009. This revision of the 2007 version basically aligns itself with the basic Energy Star Program construction practices with which many are already familiar. In turn, and progressively, the Energy Star program is itself enacting an update which will further advance its standards in a continued development of enhanced energy efficient construction practices.

Viewed from the perspective of "what's different", the new Code contains "minor" modifications throughout but is perhaps most recognizable for its enhanced Air Infiltration and Moisture Control standards.

In the area of air infiltration, most of the new concerns center on methodically sealing construction joints and areas which many builders already include in their routine practice. Newly detailed areas include, among others, obvious exterior joints, seams, and penetrations, joints around windows, doors and skylights, and so on. The Code indicates in Section 402.4.1 that the sealing method shall consist of caulking, gasketing, weather-stripping and various air barrier materials that seem to be commonly available and currently in use.

Ultimately, air leakage sealing can be tested by either a blower door test or by a detailed visual inspection of a list of areas delineated in the Code. Such inspection, at the Code Official's discretion, may or may not require a visit by an independent third party.

Future articles will highlight Moisture Control changes. Meanwhile, for more information, one online site is http://publicecodes.citation.com As always, be sure to check with your local Code Officer for final determinations.