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NAHB Research Center

Just Released: Quality Tool That Can Improve Homebuyer Satisfaction & Reduce Costs

The recent release of the “Quality Assurance System for Wood Framing Contractors” marks an important milestone in the quality journey for wood framing in this country, said Ed Caldeira, Director of Quality Services at the NAHB Research Center.

The manual brings quality management practices to the home building industry in a new and useful way. The manual sets out a system that:

- Ensures that qualified personnel perform framing work.
- Controls materials, tools, work procedures and equipment that affect quality.
- Verifies compliance with regulations, product specifications and builder requirements.
- Takes action to prevent recurrences of defects.
- Assesses and improves the effectiveness of the quality assurance system.

The manual provides a step-by-step approach to implementing and maintaining a practical quality assurance system for builders and framing contractors. The body of the manual serves as the basis for customizing a quality assurance system to adapt it to any company. Additionally, performance guidelines and templates of quality assurance forms—such as jobsite inspection checklists to verify jobsite activities and warranty tracking forms to monitor closure of warranty callbacks—allow for the creation of company-specific documents.

“Bringing quality practices into the framing process is key, because framing is one of the most critical factors in home construction, currently accounting for 15 to 20 percent of the total cost of a house,” said Liza Bowles, Research Center President. “And, framing not only affects cost, but it also affects cycle time, quality and durability,” Bowles added.

Correct framing of a house can make the installation of windows, doors, cabinets and floors much quicker and easier. Quality framing also reduces rework and eliminates the cost of correcting structural defects after the house is complete, and it reduces occurrences of cracking drywall, creaking floors and similar problems often attributed to faulty framing.

“Integrating a quality assurance system into any company can reduce costs and can help builders and framers better satisfy homebuyer quality demands,” said Caldeira.

The manual is one of a set of tools being developed as a part of a pilot project to integrate

quality assurance practices into the wood framing industry. Sponsored by the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH), the NAHB Research Center, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and the Wood Truss Council of America (WTCA), this project will also yield an implementation manual; use-of-materials documents for basic materials, connectors and hardware; framing-carpenter training materials; jobsite inspection procedures and lists; methods to track and monitor quality; and contract templates that assign responsibilities and acceptance criteria. Major pilot project industry participants include: All-Tech Construction Contractors (Jamesburg, NJ), Del Webb's Sun Cities (Sun City West, AZ), K. Hovnanian Company (Edison, NJ), and Schuck and Sons Construction (Glendale, AZ).

For more information, contact the NAHB Research Center at 800/638-8556.

The NAHB Research Center is the not-for-profit research arm of the National Association of Home Builders, and is located in Upper Marlboro, MD. Through testing and certification services, the NAHB Research Center seal is recognized throughout the world as a mark of product quality and an assurance of product performance.

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