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Temporary Bracing for Safety & a Successful Project by Brigit Frank



Anyone who has dealt with WTCA knows the importance that our association places on temporary bracing when erecting roof trusses. WTCA has printed countless articles in SBC Magazine

(formerly WOODWORDS) on the subject as well as created educational documents in our Truss Technology in Building (TTB) series. Bracing is also covered in more than one course in WTCA's Truss Technology Workshop™ program.

In fact, proper temporary bracing is not just a WTCA cause. It is, and should be, an industry-wide concern. There are a number of reasons why bracing is such a hot button in the component industry, but the most obvious is truss rollover or buckling. Nearly all rollover and buckling occurrences are due to the use of incorrect bracing methods.

This type of track record does not impress the insurance industry. Insurance companies are demanding better quality control and risk management from companies involved in construction. This means that component manufacturers have to be proactive in giving safety information, like proper bracing techniques, to their customers. One way to do this is to supply customers with trusses that have WTCA warning tags attached and to furnish a jobsite package that includes the "Always Diagonally Brace for Safety" TTB and WTCA's Warning Poster. This will help to establish a consistent, educational program from component manufacturers to our customers, and create a safer work environment at the jobsite.

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WORD IS SPREADING!

There are building and contracting companies that use correct bracing techniques on their jobsites. They, like the component industry, are interested in worker safety and producing a quality product, so, naturally proper bracing is used on their jobsites.

For instance, Tri-North Builders is a commercial construction company in Madison, WI that incorporated proper temporary bracing techniques in a current project. Tri-North built a salt storage building for Dane County, Wisconsin using "textbook" bracing methods. They used temporary, short-piece, lateral-spacers in combination with near immediate web-member and top chord diagonal bracing in the form of plywood sheathing. This provided excellent stability for the trusses and led to a very efficient installation process.

According to Tri-North's project superintendent, Kevin Bush, this wasn't a style of bracing that Tri-North typically used. "These were such big scissor trusses that [we knew] they would have the tendency to snake out of position," remarked Bush. "We talked with several truss consultants who recommended this method to install large trusses." Bush felt that incorporating this bracing method did not increase construction time at the jobsite, "Once we perfected the procedure we did not lose any time; it was actually a little quicker." It did require more labor, but Bush feels that the results were worth the increases because the project was finished safely and in a timely manner.

WORK WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Clearly, builders are willing to use the recommendations of component manufacturers if they are aware of the benefits. The Tri-North project is an example of a company that is getting it right. Unfortunately, getting it right seems to be the exception rather than the rule. The more we communicate good installation techniques, the more it is likely that they will become the standard operating procedure.

There are many ways to give customers the information that they will need to use your product correctly. The easiest and most efficient way to ensure that your customers have the correct information is to create a jobsite delivery package that contains information on the safe use of trusses and other components. (Please read ["Our Legal Reality"](#) in the June/July 2001 issue for details on what to include in a jobsite package / View Jobsite Package Description Note: Packages that can be customized for your company's needs.)

In addition to this package, component manufacturers can use some basic marketing methods to get the information to customers. For example, attend a customer's jobsite safety meeting, volunteer to speak at your customer's association meeting, or include safety documents with company mailings. The important thing is that the more we convey this knowledge, the more likely our customers will pick up on its importance.

If you would like additional ideas, please visit WTCA's web site at www.woodtruss.com.

[com](#) or call 608/274-4849.

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