

Knowledge Is Power

WTCA's Approach to Temporary Bracing by Kirk Grundahl

There have been quite a few questions coming to us about the documentation we have published on temporary bracing. The reasons why we have undertaken this work in the temporary bracing realm are as follows:

- WTCA and its membership are very aware that use of short pieces for bracing is something that happens in the field. The February 23 photo (right) from the Wisconsin State Journal epitomizes this. We know that it is commonplace and our goal was to create a method that could be used to make common field applications safer, if installers used our recommendations.
- Throughout time, bracing has been on the agenda of meetings conducted by WTCA committees and its Board of Directors.
 - Marketing Committee 4/30/1994 Policy that the HIB-91 manual is too technical to be effectively used on jobsites. There is a need to come up with a document that is more useful for jobsite installers.
 - ERC/Board 11/11/1995 Policy that bracing education needs to stay a top priority. We should write on this topic as much as we can in publications that reach builders and building officials specifically.
 - ERC/Board 8/2/1997 Policy that WTCA ERC and TPI TAC recommend that a focus group of experienced truss installers be convened (initially independent of engineering input) to explore efficient ways of installing temporary bracing for 2' o.c. trusses.
 - ERC/Board 10/25/1997 Policy on the importance of updating HIB-91 was reiterated.



In response to a WTCA policy, WTCA, members of TPI TAC, and TPI staff attended a March 15, 1998 focus group dedicated to bracing issue with several framers from across the country. Having just reviewed the video, the discussion regarding HIB reiterated a number of points that have been expressed in the past. The main concerns revolve around the length and complexity of the document, particularly in terms of usability and effectiveness.

The conclusion derived from those of us in attendance was that truss installers need a more simplified presentation to understand temporary lateral bracing.

Clearly, HIB has a history of tradition in our industry and changes in this approach to dealing with bracing safety will be met by resistance. It has resulted in a variety of questions and concerns, some which were resolved easily through engineering backup and analysis.

Why has WTCA moved forward and taken an active role in this area? The reasons are as follows:

- To fulfill WTCA committee and Board policies.
- To provide a recommendation (remember HIB-91 is only a recommendation) that provides framers with a more simplified method that conforms to the way they actually undertake construction in the field. If it is used, we believe our TTB will enhance field safety.
- To comply with requirements to genuinely warn and instruct on the dangers of using the products we
- manufacture and provide a reasonable method of compliance. The use of the combination of the truss placement plan on the back of the Warning Poster, the bracing tag and providing our "Always Diagonally Brace for Safety" TTB meets our duty fully.
- To provide information about short steel bracing devices manufactured by our suppliers that were also developed to meet the needs of the field. For safety, diagonal bracing must be applied as the short steel bracing devices are used. Our TTB helps in the use of these products as well.

No component manufacturers desire to see a bracing accident happen. We also believe that, as component manufacturers, we have the right to expect that contractors are professionals, competent to perform the work they have agreed to do on any given project. Component manufacturers must be able to rely on contractors to determine what can be done competently, and when they need assistance. If the contractor believes that s/he needs assistance in some aspect of the construction project, then help needs to come from a competent party.

As an industry, we are here to help anyone who wants to understand more. Clearly, this is the function of our educational work through our Truss Technology in Building series and our Truss Technology Workshops. Our members and our chapters are critical pieces of this educational puzzle.

Note: At the most recent WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting, held March 2, 2002, in Orlando, FL, the following motion was made and passed unanimously:

Motion that the WTCA Board of Directors has reviewed all the information surrounding the creation of the WTCA TTB entitled "Always Diagonally Brace for Safety." The WTCA Board of Directors finds that the development of the TTB, the WTCA Warning Poster and the WTCA Bracing Tag, successfully fulfills the WTCA Committee and Board policies listed above.

The WTCA Board of Directors embraces and seeks to promulgate this work because:

- It is a bracing recommendation that provides framers with a simple method that conforms to the way they actually undertake construction in the field. Used as intended our Warning Poster, "Always Diagonally Brace for Safety" TTB and WTCA Warning Tag will enhance field-bracing safety.
- It helps all members of our industry comply with our requirement to enhance safety and genuinely warn and instruct in using the products we manufacture, and provides a reasonable method of compliance.

For more information about the WTCA products mentioned about, visit the [WTCA web site](#).

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