

Home Improvement Corner

New Building Codes For Residential Bathrooms

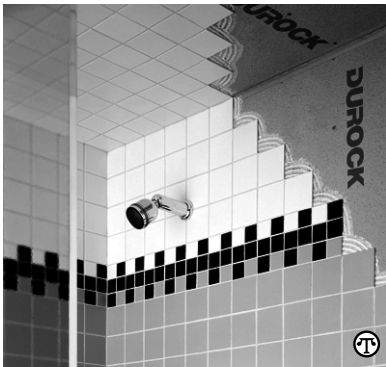
(NAPSA)—Do-it-yourselfers, builders and remodelers now have a new consideration for their bathroom designs. Changes made to the 2006 International Residential Code (IRC) no longer recognize moisture-resistant, paper-faced drywall (commonly known as “green board”) as a suitable tile backing material in wet areas such as tub and shower surrounds.

Instead, a cement-based backerboard or other approved moisture-resistant tile backerboard product must be specified to meet IRC requirements. These products tend to provide better overall performance in wet areas than green board.

However, green board is still suitable for use in many areas where it has traditionally been installed, including bathroom walls, laundry rooms and basements.

While most municipalities have their own building codes, they are typically adopted from code groups that develop a range of standards. Numerous industry groups and municipalities have said for years that paper-faced board should not be used in tile applications, including the Tile Council of America and National Tile Contractors Association.

These organizations have long recommended installing cement board and other materials that comply with ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) standards governing moisture and mold on surfaces.



New building codes may affect bathroom remodeling.

Tubs And Showers

Tub areas and shower stalls are some of the most common areas in a home for moisture to pose a problem. Water can damage walls and floors and create more serious problems, including mold. That's why it is crucial to install the proper tile-backing material.

There are several high-performance tile backers on the market today, most notably DUROCK® Brand Cement Board from United States Gypsum Company. This cement board is preferred by contractors and builders alike because of its tile-holding strength and ease of installation and other benefits.

The cement board panels are composed of an aggregated portland cement core, sandwiched between two layers of reinforcing glass-fiber mesh, giving the product excellent tile bond strength and durability. Cement board also

resists mold and moisture and is available in a variety of thicknesses and sizes to suit most applications.

U.S. Gypsum makes another product called FIBEROCK® Brand AQUA-TOUGH™ Tile Backerboard, which is ideal for use as a tile backer in areas exposed to intermittent moisture, such as tub surrounds.

Designed to be installed and finished like traditional wallboard, this new tile backerboard features a smooth surface that can be finished with ceramic tile or painted. The product offers outstanding resistance to mold and moisture and is an environmentally friendly option because it is made from recycled materials. The backerboard is available in a ½-inch thickness and several different sizes.

Both cement board and tile backerboard are a popular replacement for green board, which has been phased out by as many as 70 percent of the nation's high-end custom builders, based on a recent industry survey.

Perhaps best of all, according to U.S. Gypsum, the additional cost of using cement board or tile backerboard is minimal for each shower or tub surround. Many builders and remodelers are already making this investment, and urge do-it-yourselfers to follow suit.

For additional information about controlling moisture and effective product options, visit www.usg.com or call (800) USG-4-YOU.