

Comments Received Via E-mail From Thomas H. Marston, Energy Services Group

When we spoke in Orlando, I mentioned the party wall as a big hole. I would like to describe other areas of the house that must be sealed to ensure comfort and better performance.

The party wall if it includes a 1" air space must be sealed with a "durable material" at all exterior boundaries, attic, front and back wall to foundation and at garage if a tuck-under garage. "Draft Blocking" occurs between the wood framing and the gypsum shaft wall. If a gypsum spacer is installed for "fire-blocking" then all edges of spacer are sealed to framing and shaft wall.

This is a very big hole and generally not a treated cavity, nor understood by most in the industry.

The next big hole is at the band joists. Your prescriptive details cover cantilevers. We see a critical hole when the builder builds with open-webbed trusses. Typically there is no sheathing on the band when you include bay window bump-outs or cantilever over the garage with living space. The band joist must have sheathing installed and sealed to form a continuous airtight boundary.

Last week Joel Lstiburek of Building Science Corp was walking some Pulte Homes that we seal and was surprised by this band joist detail and I believe intrigued by our fix. Pulte uses open-webs for their slab houses so they can run mechanicals in the cavity. They run through the band to reach one story areas out beyond the two story area. This guarantees that the floor between, if unsealed, is effected by cross ventilation.

These are just a few of the big holes that we seal to achieve 0.35. I would like to show you these details so you can understand them and discuss how to educate code people so they do not conflict with the solutions to sealing them.

We can do this in the field or through pictures. I am available as you need me.

Generally, I'm OK with the revisions to the standards. The program needs to change for the better.