

Generic Setups

By George Porter

Generic can be a good thing. Generic corn flakes are still corn flakes and generic aspirin is still aspirin. I am sure the brand names of this stuff contend that there is a vast difference and it is worth paying more because theirs is made out of better ingredients, more testing is done and the quality control is much better. Maybe these are good reasons to spend more money and maybe they are not. An important point to notice here is that in all cases of generic products the ingredients are the same. If you go a drug store and order a generic prescription drug such as penicillin they don't give you some other antibiotic, they give you generic penicillin because that is what you need to solve your problem. According to Webster's Dictionary one of the definitions of generic is "not protected by trademark registration". This means generic is essentially the same product but it doesn't have the brand name.

How does all this apply to the installation of homes? There seems to be a great movement afoot to make life simple and make up some "generic set-up regulations". It would be very wise to examine just what would be correctly termed generic and what some people think is generic.

When it comes to set-up, a generic set of instructions for an "Ajax Home" would be the same type of instructions as contained in the Ajax manual but independently put to gather by a competent engineer. These independent instructions are of course not the "brand name" instructions but are certified by a competent licensed engineer to be an equal. This is exactly what the licensed pharmacist does when your prescription is filled generically.

The generic set-up instructions in this business have been dreamed up by well meaning but misinformed state and local governments who just do not understand what is necessary to get it right. One example is a state that decided to declare that all the soil in the state had the same load bearing capacity. This way they wouldn't have to go to the trouble of showing all the building officials how to figure it out for themselves. Another example is several states that say all used homes are anchored the same, three or maybe two anchors per side, period. This is like going into the drug store to get some generic aspirin and coming out with a bottle of some kind of little white pills. Maybe its aspirin and maybe its not, but what the heck, they sort of look like aspirin don't they?

Generic in our world means something that will do the same job as the manufacturer's manual for that specific home and that is not easy. We would be more accurate to stop using the term altogether because we as an industry don't really want a true generic standard, it would be possible but it would be very complicated. What we really want is a "slam dunk, no brainer".

Something nobody has to think about, will work great in all cases, and not cost much. Have some coffee guys "it ain't going to happen". Set-up is a "brainer". You don't have to be a mental giant but it does take some education on the subject and a little hard work to get it right. It might even take some money. We have to afford to get it right, there is too much at stake, we can't afford to get it wrong. A simple generic one size fits all set-up code is wrong as well as impossible. It may even be dangerous to the homeowners in some cases concerning anchors.