

It's Not Easy Making It Easy

By George Porter

MHI had a task force on installation recently and I was privileged to serve on it. The job of the committee was to revise ANSI Code A225.1, a sort of generic model code that has been around for about 10 + years, and turn it into the new model code that the Manufactured Housing Improvement Act called for. How hard could this be? The original ANSI Code was put together by a large group of engineers so it should be pretty close to being complete in the first place right? "Fraid not!" One problem is that while many states used the ANSI Code for it's alternative installation procedures, especially on used homes, the fact is that as a practical matter it probably was never followed all that closely and only certain parts were focused on as that regulatory agency saw the need. I don't know of any state that used it in it's entirety to install homes. What had to happen is that when you got to a situation where it was confusing, the inspector made an on the spot decision and moved on. Well, you sure can't do that with this new model code because part of the wording in the act is that no manufacturers manual can be less restrictive than the government model. So.. If the model is messed up then the whole industry would be too. This was more than just a meeting about some details in some government document; every word affected everything long into the future.

There were over 100 changes proposed and then sent back to the committee which then made suggestions and other changes to the proposals. Then we met in Denver to discuss and vote on the 69 changes that the group was in disagreement on. The meeting was scheduled for about 2 2 hours in the morning but it seems we needed a little more time than that, about 11 more hours!

Mark Nunn at MHI ran the meetings and he deserves some sort of official commendation for the job he did. This could have boiled into a general non-directional mess but Mark would have none of it. The rules of order ruled! Mark did his job superbly! He knew where each motion was at all times and exactly what the wording was, even if was extremely complicated. The man has a strong mind and the patience of Jobe. If it were not for him we either would still be haggling over things or the model code would be very strange indeed. As it turns out I think we have something pretty good, thank you Mark.

You have to be at these things to appreciate how complicated it gets. For instance: the code must prescribe a way to join the marriage walls of multi section homes. Across the nation there are at least seven totally different ways that this is done. The ANSI Code originally said you lag them together. Well, you sure wouldn't want to do that with a Cavalier product which was made to get 30 gauge metal down the marriage line with screws on both sides every few inches. And you better not put the new Fleetwood together that way either, you will ruin the new structural beam in the roof. So what do you do when these homes all become used and you need a simple way to do it that will not destroy some of the homes? You can't list all the homes in the nation with their date of manufacture and method of assembly, simply impossible! So what would you do? How would you write a procedure that fits everything? Don't say you can't, because you must do this thing, you have to address this issue! What good would an installation code be without a way to close the roof of the

home?

Believe it or not we worked it out. While it is tempting to let you guess exactly what we did till next month ... I won't.

The precise wording is not out yet and it is definitely not in effect. Please don't think you are reading law here, it could still change.

Basically the method is:

Follow the directions found in the original manufacturer's installation manual when it is available. When the manufacturer's manual is not available and the original manufacturer's method of roof and marriage wall closure cannot be determined by examination, such as factory drilled bolt holes or roof lag bolts, then the roof should be closed with 30 gauge x 9 inch wide galvanized steel cap continuing for the length of the home. This cap will be fastened with # 10 screws or 1 inch x 1 1/4 inch 16 gauge staples, 6 inches on center each side.

Secure end walls and any marriage wall openings with #10 x 6 inch wood screws, at a minimum of 6 inches on center staggered intervals. Fasten the floor with 3/8 x 6 inch lag screws installed at a maximum of 36 inches on center staggered and at a 45 degree angle. Pilot holes for lag screws must be pre-drilled with a 1/4 inch drill (maximum) before installing lag screws.

This will ONLY be used on pre-owned homes, on all new homes the manufacturer's manual is the law.

This and 68 other "little" problems were worked out by this committee. I know what you are thinking, "a camel is a horse designed by a committee!" There is probably some truth here but in this case I think we have a horse that drinks less water, it's the very best we could do.

Thank you to the whole committee, especially to those who stuck it out 'till the very end.