DATE: March 26, 2008

SUBJECT: FIBER GLASS INSULATION AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR SPRINKLERS


Of particular interest to the fiber glass insulation industry is Chapter 8 Installation Requirements – Section 8.15.1.2 Concealed Spaces Not Requiring Sprinkler Protection in the 2007 version of this publication. The following sub-sections deal specifically with insulated spaces above ceilings.

8.15.1.2.6 Concealed spaces formed by ceilings attached to composite wood joist construction either directly or onto metal channels not exceeding 1 in. (25.4 mm) in depth, provided the joist channels are fire stopped into volumes each not exceeding 160 ft³ (4.53 m³) using materials equivalent to the web construction and at least 31/2 in. (90 mm) of batt insulation is installed at the bottom of the joist channels when the ceiling is attached utilizing metal channels, shall not require sprinkler protection.

8.15.1.2.7 Concealed spaces entirely filled with noncombustible insulation shall not require sprinkler protection.

8.15.1.2.8 Concealed spaces within wood joist construction and composite wood joist construction having noncombustible insulation filling the space from the ceiling up to the bottom edge of the joist of the roof or floor deck, provided that in composite wood joist construction the joist channels are fire stopped into volumes each not exceeding 160 ft³ (4.53 m³) to the full depth of the joist with material equivalent to the web construction, shall not require sprinkler protection.

These three exceptions clearly allow for the use of a noncombustible insulation material to be installed in ceiling cavities without the need for sprinklers. CertainTeed’s InsulSafe SP, Optima, System 5 and Ultratherm fiber glass insulations all meet this noncombustibility requirement.

These exceptions should be brought to the attention of your customers and builders since they may receive direct benefits in the way of reduced material and installation costs – by reducing the number of sprinklers that must be installed in typical applications.

The family of I-Codes - including the IRC (International Residential Code), IBC (International Building Code) and IFC (International Fire Code) – recognize these exceptions and often refer to NFPA Standard 13 within the individual codes.