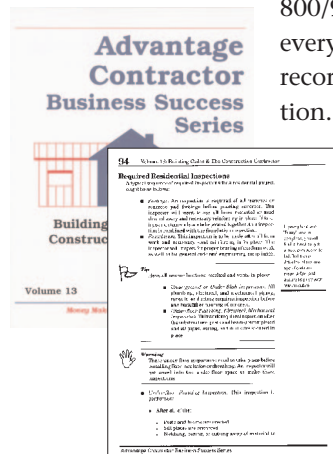


Comprehensive Business Reference

by Pete Young

The 15-volume *Advantage Contractor Business Success Series* tackles the business side of construction contracting. Compiled by Gene Fessenbecker of the Construction Contracting Academy (83 Centennial Loop, Eugene, OR 97401; 800/937-2242; www.acbss.com), separate volumes cover everything from contract law, cash and finance, and recordkeeping, to lien law, licensing, and office operation.

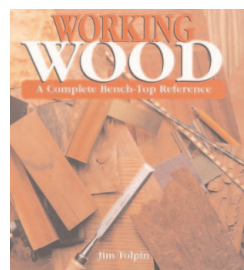


Each well-organized volume uses tables, diagrams, and model office documents to explain specific procedures, and includes lists of national organizations, agencies, and other sources for more in-depth information. Business topics can sometimes be a tough read, but in this series critical information is highlighted with eye-catching icons that draw attention to special notes, tips, or warnings.

The CD version (\$119) makes it easy to cut and paste model language, but the search routines are not user friendly. I recommend the books, which are sold individually for \$20 each or as a set for \$199.

Wood Shop Primer

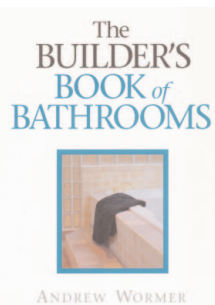
Here's a book to keep handy for questions about wood properties, tool usage and maintenance, woodworking layout and design, or wood finishing.



Jim Tolpin's *Working Wood: A Complete Bench-Top Reference* (\$20, Davis Publications, 50 Portland St., Worcester, MA 01608; 800/533-2847; www.davisart.com) is organized around abundant detailed illustrations, and the loose-leaf binding makes it easy to read while standing in the shop with the work in your hands. A reference section at the end of the book includes a wide range of technical tables on shrinkage factors, lumber nomenclature, suggested drilling speeds, adhesive performance specs, standard-metric conversions, and more.

Designing and Building Bathrooms

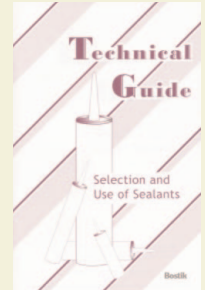
Andrew Wormer's *The Builder's Book of Bathrooms* is a practical guide covering all aspects of residential bathrooms. Organized into two sections — design and construction — the guide employs 180 color photographs and 60 detailed drawings to review the basic house systems related to bathrooms (plumbing, ventilation, heating, lighting, and so on), survey the range of available bathroom materials, provide design specs for vari-



FREE & CHEAP

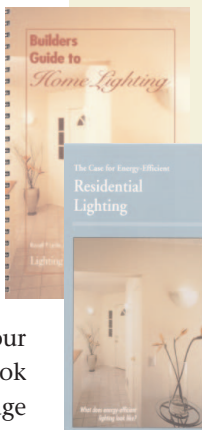
Choosing Sealants

A free technical guide called *Selection and Use of Sealants* (Bostik, Inc., 211 Boston St., Middleton, MA 01949; 800/523-2678; www.bostik.com) covers choosing, using, and troubleshooting sealant and caulking products. Unlike many other manufacturer publications, this 30-page pamphlet is a technical guide, not advertising in disguise. Generic products are discussed according to their chemical makeup (oil, latex, butyl, polysulfide, urethane, and silicone), and joint design, surface preparation, and application methods are explained for various substrates. While the intent of the guide is to avoid common problems before they happen, two final pages address the causes of failures and briefly discuss sealant removal/replacement vs. "band aid" solutions.



Residential Lighting Pamphlets

The 17-page *Builders Guide to Home Lighting* (\$8), by Russell Leslie, provides general advice on architectural, recessed, ceiling, wall-mounted, and exterior fixtures and bulbs. Good drawings show how different lighting designs can affect the various rooms in a house, and three pages at the end of the guide are devoted to lighting control options.



If customers are asking you to assist with choosing between energy-efficient and conventional lighting alternatives, get a free copy of a fold-out pamphlet entitled *The Case for Energy Efficient Residential Lighting*. It details the results of a New York State Energy Research and Development Authority demonstration that estimated an average home with energy-efficient lighting

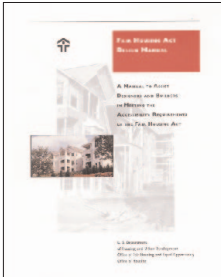
can save around \$180 a year in electricity and lamp costs over one with conventional lighting. Room-by-room cost comparisons are accompanied by pictures and details on particular energy-saving features, such as high color rendering fluorescent lamps, electronic ballasts, halogen incandescent lamps, dimming controls, and manual-on/automatic-off motion detector switches.

Both publications are available from the Lighting Research Center (877 25th St., Watervliet, NY 12189; 518/276-8176; www.lrc.rpi.edu).


ous layouts, and explain best-practice installation techniques. Well worth the \$35 price just as a builder's reference resource (Taunton Press, P.O. Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470; 800/888-8286; www.taunton.com), you can also loan the book to clients who are struggling to define their bathroom wish list.

Multifamily Housing Manual

Since 1991, designs that provide accessibility for people with disabilities have been required for all new



multifamily housing construction with four or more units, including side-by-side townhouses and condominiums separated by firewalls. *The Fair Housing Act*

Design Manual (free; ask for item #4758 from HUD at 800/767-7468 or www.hud.gov) is a clearly illustrated publication that covers the design issues surrounding building systems such as walkways, entryways and doors, kitchens, and bathrooms, as well as electrical switch and grab bar placement. Assembled by the staff of Barrier Free Environments of Raleigh, N.C., the manual was first issued in 1996 and later revised in 1998. 

FREE & CHEAP

Code Evaluation Reports on the Web

The International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO, 5360 Workman Mill Rd., Whittier, CA 90601; 562/699-0543), overseer of the *Uniform Building Code*, has begun offering its building material evaluation reports free on the Web at www.icbo.org/ICBO_ES. While other code bodies already offer free evaluation reports by mail or fax, the Web should make it even easier to quickly access this source of information on building products and materials. To read the reports, you'll need to load Adobe Acrobat software, which is also free at the same Web site.