



# THE JOURNAL OF LIGHT CONSTRUCTION

A Builderburg Group Publication

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JLC's

# Letters

## Test Results Questioned

To the Editor:

The article titled "Fiberglass Batts Pass Air Leakage Tests" (*Notebook*, 9/98) sounded more like a press release than a report on research. First, it appears that the fiberglass batts only "passed" with the help of an air-sealing package, but it's not clear whether the cost figures presented in the article include the air sealing or not.

It is unfortunate that NAHB did not also study high-density cellulose, a technique with significant air-sealing benefits that is starting to be used in retrofits and is possible in new construction as well.

Dave Brook  
Extension Energy Agent  
Oregon State University  
Portland, Ore.

*According to Mark Nowak of the NAHB Research Center, the total cost of the fiberglass installation did include the cost of the air-sealing package. The cost of air-sealing measures was also included in the total cost of the other types of insulation.*

—The Editors

## New Design Laws Afoot?

To the Editor:

I recently received a copy of the First Draft (April 1998) of the International Residential Code (IRC) for One- and Two-Family Dwellings published by the International Code Council (ICC).

The IRC appears to be a consolida-

tion of other codes with the exception of the chapter concerning the submission of construction documents.

Section 106.1 calls for construction documents to be prepared by a "registered design professional." This seems to be a logical term until one looks up the definition: "an individual who is registered or licensed to practice architecture or engineering..."

Not knocking engineers, but since when do they "design" buildings. What about all of the other "designers"? If left unchanged, Section 106 could put a lot of "unregistered" building designers, kitchen and bath designers, interior decorators, and others out of business. Not to mention the added cost of an architect's fee for every set of plans for construction or remodeling after April 2000. What about those rural communities that don't have architects? What about contractors who design and build their own buildings?

All building and design organizations should look hard at this publication and plan to attend the public hearing on proposed changes scheduled for April 1999.

James Brown, Designer  
Meridian, Mo.

*Jeffrey Rice, CPBD, of the American Institute of Building Design, responds: I have just received a copy of the "Final Draft" of the International Residential Code and there are no changes to Section R106.1, Submittal Documents, from the*

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"First Draft." The wording remains the same, but Mr. Brown has failed to read the entire sentence. It actually states: "The construction documents shall be prepared by a registered design professional where required by the statutes of the jurisdiction in which the project is to be constructed."

This statement is intended to allow each jurisdiction to determine who can submit documents. There are some states that only allow registered design professionals to design buildings of any type. But these are in the minority. Most states (or jurisdictions) allow "anyone" to design buildings or renovations fitting a specific definition, such as residences under two stories, agricultural accessory buildings, nonstructural tenant improvements, and so forth. When a particular jurisdiction does not allow nonregistered designers to submit documents, then this code simply states that it must follow that jurisdiction's statutes.

Nonregistered designers who wish to prepare designs for buildings in jurisdictions where they are not allowed to do so should spend their efforts changing their state's laws, not the model building code.

### Portable Table Saw Fence

To the Editor:

The article on portable table saws (10/98) should have included information on after-market stands, since they make such a difference. We would not have considered the Makita saw if the Rousseau table/fence system was not available. For \$200, this folding table gives you a rock-steady Biesemeyer-style fence, complete with cursor, with a 26-inch rip capacity. The saw drops into a recess, so setup time is about 20 seconds. And it's light enough for even us old guys to hump around without complaining.

You're right about the blade height-adjustment knob, though — what a pain! I spent two hours rigging it with a homemade crank that fits over the knob — end of problem.

We took a long look at the DeWalt, since we like their chop saw so much. With that yellow color, it doesn't just scream "Buy me"; it also says "Steal me." And that nifty "transformer-style" fence system looks to be a nightmare if any of those aluminum or plastic parts should bend or break.

Chris Black  
C. & P. Black Inc.  
via the Internet

### No Connection

To the Editor:

I read *JLC* each month with great interest and enjoy the articles. The October cover photo has a problem to my way of thinking. The house under construction is being sheathed from both the bottom up and the top down. The plywood coming from the top down stops at the second floor plate line, leaving the home with no connection between the upper and lower walls. In essence, the second floor is held on by the nails in the bottom plate — not a good practice.

Richard J. Mailhot, Sr.  
Code Enforcement Officer  
Raymond, N.H.

**KEEP 'EM COMING!** Letters must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to *JLC*, 932 West Main St., Richmond, VT 05477; or e-mail to [jlc@bginet.com](mailto:jlc@bginet.com).



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932 West Main Street  
Richmond, VT 05477  
802/434-4747

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