Chapter 11

Drywall Contractor

The Super Good Cents program does not affect the drywall contractor as much as it affects other trades. Still, several new energy-efficient construction techniques affect drywall installation.

FACE STAPLING INSULATION

In some Super Good Cents homes, faced insulation is stapled to the stud face rather than inset stapled to the sides of the studs. Face stapling compresses insulation less.

To avoid face stapling, you can use unfaced insulation in the wall and apply vapor retarder paint over the drywall. This approach avoids insulation compression and provides a clean stud surface for drywall.

POLYETHYLENE VAPOR RETARDERS

In many cases, polyethylene vapor retarders cover unfaced wall insulation. That prevents you from using adhesive. Take care to avoid ripping the vapor retarder.

Many Super Good Cents homes have polyethylene ceiling vapor retarders. Ceilings with polyethylene vapor retarders must be insulated immediately after ceiling drywall is hung and before taping and texturing begin.

Taping and texturing release a lot of moisture. If the ceiling is not insulated, the ceiling vapor retarder will be cold. Moist air cannot penetrate the vapor retarder and may reach its dew point in the ceiling drywall. That can mean extensive water damage to the ceiling.

When the ceiling drywall is hung (and before taping and texturing), call for ceiling insulation. If the ceiling is insulated, the vapor retarder will be warm, and moisture will not reach its dew point in the ceiling drywall.

GET RID OF MOISTURE

It is important to get rid of moisture produced during construction, including moisture produced during taping, texturing, and painting. Portable propane and oil-fired heaters release moisture during the combustion process. They are poor choices for drying energy efficient homes. Electric heaters and large capacity dehumidifiers remove moisture faster.

DRYWALL GASKETS

Drywall contractors may see foam or other gaskets stuck to wall framing. They are used in the “Advanced Drywall Approach” to air tightening. Gaskets seal drywall to framing and eliminate air leakage to the attic from interior and exterior wall cavities. Take care to avoid scraping gaskets off the framing. Removing gaskets increases air leakage from the house.

An alternative to gaskets is continuous beads of drywall adhesive. You need to apply the adhesive as you put up the drywall. If the general contractor plans to use this approach to Advanced Drywall air sealing, review the system together carefully so you can plan for additional time and materials.

If the house has an Advanced Drywall system, ask the general contractor who will provide gaskets or sealant. See Chapter 9 for Advanced Drywall Approach details.

INTERIOR RIGID FOAM

In some homes, interior rigid foam attached to the interior wall surface boosts overall wall R-value. Studs should be marked. Framers need to know that special drywall backing and corner details apply. See the section in Chapter 9 on “Interior Rigid Foam Air Barrier.” You might be able to expand your business by installing rigid insulation.

BLOWN-IN INSULATION

Blown-in insulation is becoming more popular in the Northwest. In some systems, a light nylon net is stretched over wall cavities and stapled to the studs. The net supports insulation blown into the cavities. The net stays in place beneath the drywall.

An adhesive stabilizes the insulation, preventing it from settling. The adhesive is water-activated, so the blown-in batt goes in damp. It needs time to dry before it is covered. Summer drying time may be 2 to 3 days. The insulation contractor needs to let the general contractor know how much drying time the job needs.

If you see a blown-in product in the home, check with the insulation contractor to verify that the general contractor allowed adequate (at least some) drying time.

Blown-in insulation requires a separate wall vapor retarder: tested vapor retarder paint or polyethylene. If it is paint, the painting contractor is responsible. If it is polyethylene, the insulation contractor or “air tightening specialist” provides the vapor retarder. Poly vapor retarders must be in place before you put up the drywall.

5/8 INCH CEILING DRYWALL

Code homes usually have R-38 ceiling insulation. R-49 is more common in Super Good Cents homes. The extra weight of higher insulation levels is better supported by 5/8 inch drywall. It reduces nail pop and sagging. Use drywall screws rather than nails to provide added support.