

BCAB

Building Code Advisory Board of Palm Beach County

TECHNICAL ADVISORY

Issued on January 29, 2020

By the Building Code Advisory Board

Subject: Pending lawsuit claims three U.S. certification agencies are incorrectly grading and stamping Brazilian plywood being imported into the U.S. primarily through the Port of Miami

Purpose: The intent of this advisory is to provide pertinent information and to suggest municipalities within Palm Beach County, contractors, lumber suppliers, and the general public closely monitor this continually developing situation.

Issues: Throughout the Florida Residential & Building Code there are minimum requirements for structural wood panels. Section 2303.1.5, included in full below, provides the minimum requirements relevant to this advisory.

2303.1.5 Wood structural panels.

Wood structural panels, when used structurally (including those used for siding, roof and wall sheathing, subflooring, diaphragms and built-up members), shall conform to the requirements for their type in DOC PS 1, DOC PS 2 or ANSI/APA PRP 210. Each panel or member shall be identified for grade, bond classification, and Performance Category by the trademarks of an *approved* testing and grading agency. The Performance Category value shall be used as the “nominal panel thickness” or “panel thickness” whenever referenced in this code. Wood structural panel components shall be designed and fabricated in accordance with the applicable standards listed in Section 2306.1 and identified by the trademarks of an *approved* testing and inspection agency indicating conformance to the applicable standard. In addition, wood structural panels when permanently exposed in outdoor applications shall be of Exterior type, except that wood structural panel roof sheathing exposed to the outdoors on the underside is permitted to be Exposure 1 type.

The claim by nine U.S. plywood producers is three certification agencies have fraudulently certified and stamped the Brazilian plywood as meeting the requirements of DOC PS-1. BCAB has not independently verified these claims, and the case remains pending in the Southern District of Florida.

Separately, in June of 2018, the APA issued product advisory (SP-1185), which states that span rated panels failed the .2 inch deflection criteria by 15 to 41 percent. (Please see attached advisory)

To date, articles on this topic have discussed many potential causes for the alleged failures, including wood densities, growth rates, climate, and tree species. The link to three articles on the subject are included below. Links to these articles are included for informational purposes only. BCAB has not independently verified the veracity or accuracy of these articles, a task that the BCAB is unequipped to do at this time due to the lack of verifiable information on this continually developing situation.

- 1.) <https://www.building-products.com/article/dont-trust-your-job-to-interior-panels>
- 2.) <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/business/fl-bz-brazil-plywood-defect-alleged-20190909>
- 3.) <http://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/09/06/us-plywood-producers-sue-claiming/brazils-exports-flunk-industry-strength-standards>

It is, therefore, the determination and recommendation of the Building Code Advisory Board of Palm Beach County to continue closely monitoring this dynamic scenario and the quality of the plywood currently being utilized.

For Building Code Advisory Board



Wayne Cameron, Chair

The Building Code Advisory Board of Palm Beach County was created by a Special Act of the Florida Legislature, at the request of the building code enforcement and construction industries. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Board of County Commissioners and local governments concerning the adoption of building codes and their enforcement throughout the County. The Act also granted Palm Beach County special powers concerning building codes, in the interest of the public's health, safety and general welfare.

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