

Rim Joist Treatment

The goal of this memo is to provide greater consistency across workscope recommendations and to ensure that rim joists are treated appropriately by all contractors. The clarifications below are consistent with recent updates to M&I and HES Energy Assessment Standards.

Air Sealing Guidelines

- Attic air sealing hours cover all air sealing in the house, including the foundation. Crews are expected to air seal the rim joists and sill plates of basements and crawlspaces as well as any related areas of the perimeter that could be sources of air infiltration (e.g., doors and windows) regardless of existing insulation.
- If there are no other air sealing hours on the workscope, foundation-only air sealing hours can be recommended for the rim joist -- regardless of existing insulation.

1 hr if <150', 2 hrs if => 150'

- Foundation-only air sealing hours are eligible whether the rim joist is to be insulated with fiberglass batts (preferred) or rigid board (as conditions require).
- Open wall cavities into the basement (as with balloon framing) should also be addressed when walls are being densepacked, but it is not considered part of the air sealing scope. The Balloon Frame Blocking measure should be added to the contract (linear feet of open wall cavities) for this purpose.
- When the crawlspace boundary is defined at the ceiling, the rim joist should still be air sealed before the ceiling is enclosed, whether treated with foam or densepacking.

Insulation Guidelines

- 6" fiberglass batts are the preferred insulation treatment and should be recommended for most rim joists without existing insulation.
- Rigid board should only be recommended when:
 - There is no sill plate or other framing to adequately support the fiberglass.
 - The joists extend to an overhang that needs to be blocked for densepacking.
- Rigid board should generally not be recommended over existing or new fiberglass batts in the rim joist.
- Insulation Removal should only be recommended in some circumstances:
 - YES - when disposing of existing 1"-2" batts and replacing with new material
 - YES - when disposing of fiberglass batts that are badly damaged or unsafe (due to mold, vermin, etc.) and replacing with new material
 - NO - 3"-6" fiberglass batts in good condition are deemed effective and should not be replaced
 - NO - air sealing only for an insulated rim joist includes the cost of removing/replacing the existing insulation, just the same as in an attic
- It is permissible to use different types of insulation in separate areas of a rim joist.
- Uninsulated rim joists should be insulated at the same time they are air sealed.