

Fire, Acoustics, and Structural Detailing of Light-Frame Horizontal Assemblies



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3-Part Series on Light-Frame Interior Detailing

- » July 2021 Workshop on Fire, Acoustics, and Structural Detailing of Light-Frame **Interior Walls**

- » <https://www.woodinstitute.org/enrol/index.php?id=207>

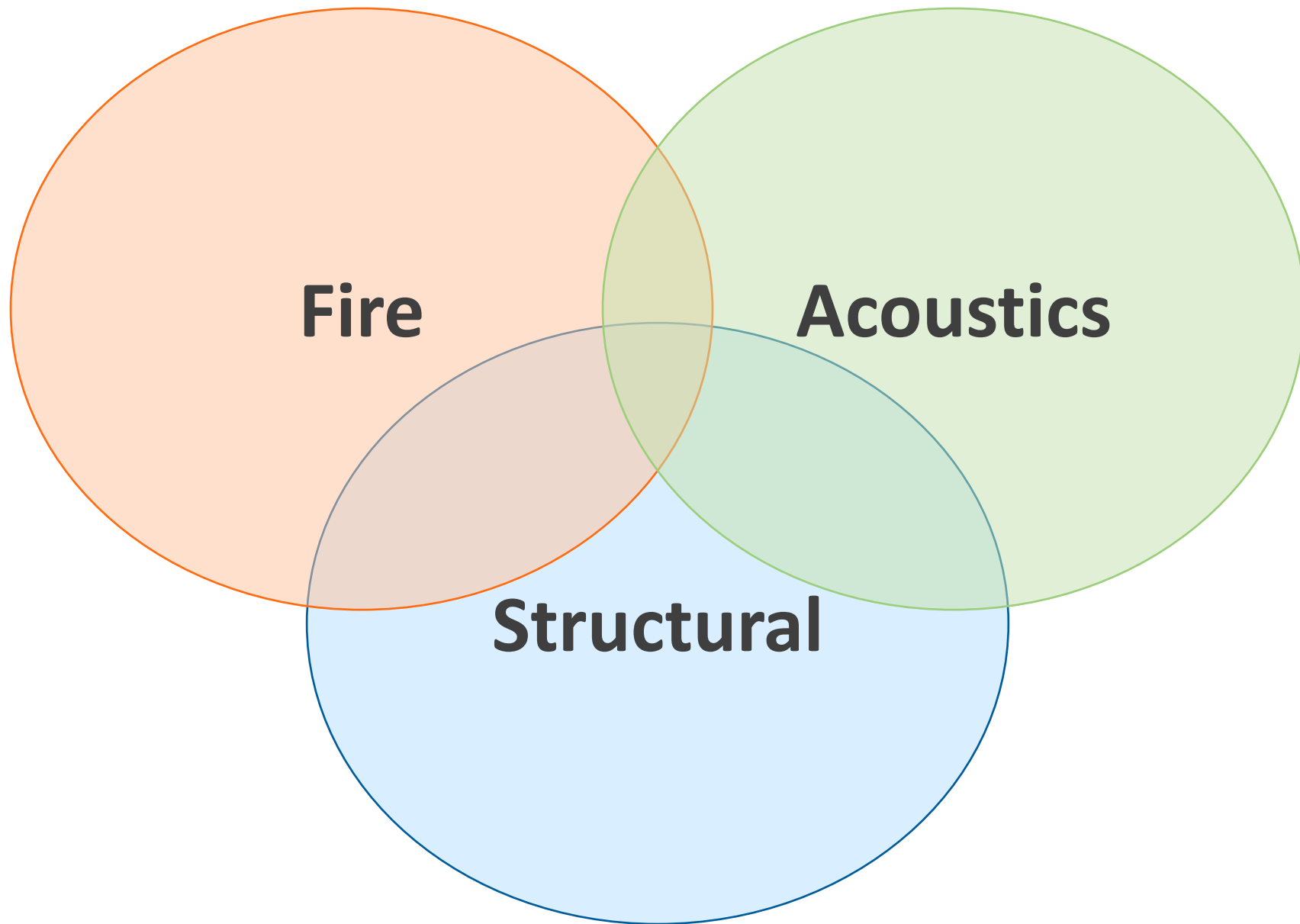
- November 2021 Symposium session on Fire, Acoustics, and Structural Detailing of Light-Frame **Horizontal Assemblies**

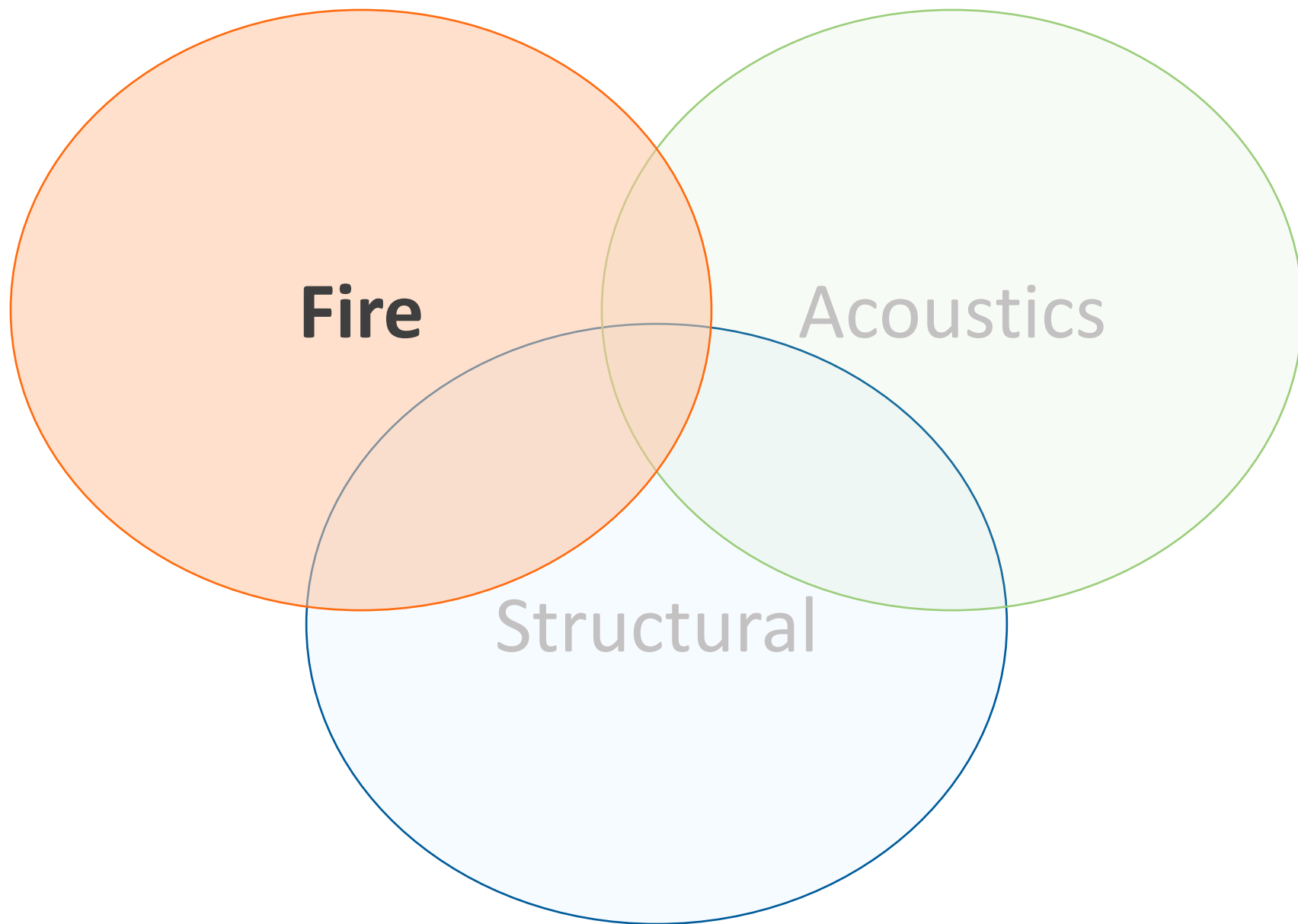
- » Will be posted to The Wood Institute prior to December Webinar

- » **December 8 Webinar** wrap up on interior floor and wall assemblies

- » Answering follow-up questions, commonly asked questions

- » <https://www.woodworks.org/education-event/2021-dec-webinar/>





Horizontal Assemblies

- A floor or roof assembly required to have a fire resistance rating such as for occupancy separations and fire area separations
- May be constructed with any materials permitted by the construction type
- Occupancy separation: Fire resistance ratings per IBC Table 508.4
- Required to be continuous without vertical openings except as permitted in IBC 712
- Supporting construction required to have same fire-resistance rating as the fire barrier being supported (with exceptions per 711.4)
- Other requirements for openings, penetrations, joints



Fire Ratings of Horizontal Assemblies – 711.2.4

Fire resistance rating shall not be less than that required for:

- **Building's construction type – Table 601**
 - 1-hr for III-A, V-A
 - 0-hr for III-B, V-B
- Separating mixed occupancies – Table 508.4
- Separating fire areas – Table 707.3.10
- **Separating dwelling units – 711.2.4**
 - Not less than 1-hr
 - Except: III-B, V-B with NFPA 13 sprinklers is ½-hr
- Separating smoke compartments – 709.3
- Separating incidental uses – Table 509

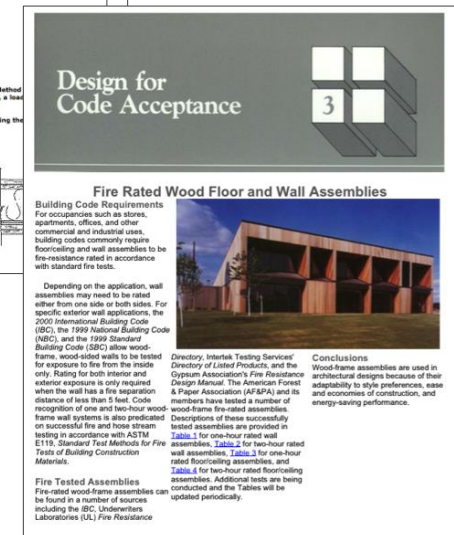
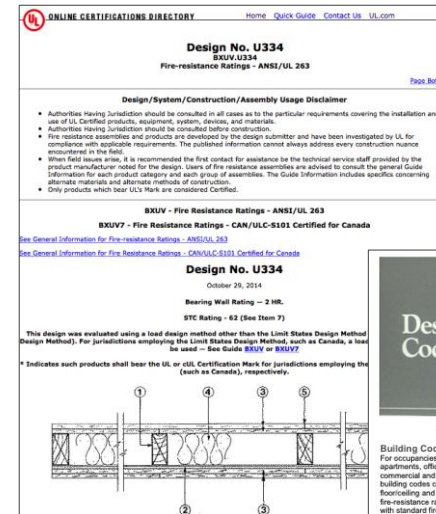
Choosing Fire Rated Assemblies

Common tested assemblies (ASTM E119) per IBC 703.2:

- UL Listings
- Gypsum Catalog
- Proprietary Manufacturer Tests
- Industry Documents: such as AWC's DCA3

Alternate Methods per IBC 703.3

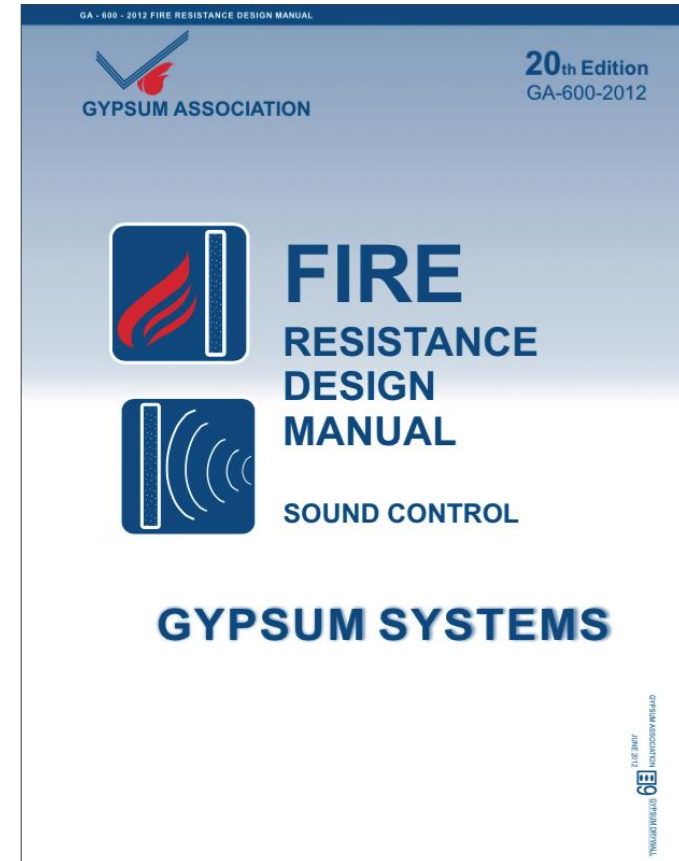
- Prescriptive designs per IBC 721.1
- Calculated Fire Resistance per IBC 722
- Fire-resistance designs documented in sources
- Engineering analysis based on a comparison
- Fire-resistance designs certified by an approved agency



Fire Resistance – Insulation Effects

"The addition of up to 16-3/4 inches of 0.5 pcf glass fiber insulation (R-40), either batt or loose-fill, to any 1- or 2-hour fire resistance rated floor-ceiling or roof-ceiling system having a cavity deep enough to accept the insulation is permitted provided that one additional layer of either 1/2 inch or 5/8 inch type X gypsum board is applied to the ceiling. The additional layer of gypsum board shall be applied as described for the face layer of the tested system except that the fastener length shall be increased by not less than the thickness of the additional layer of gypsum board."

Section 1.12 Gypsum Association's
Fire Resistance Design Manual



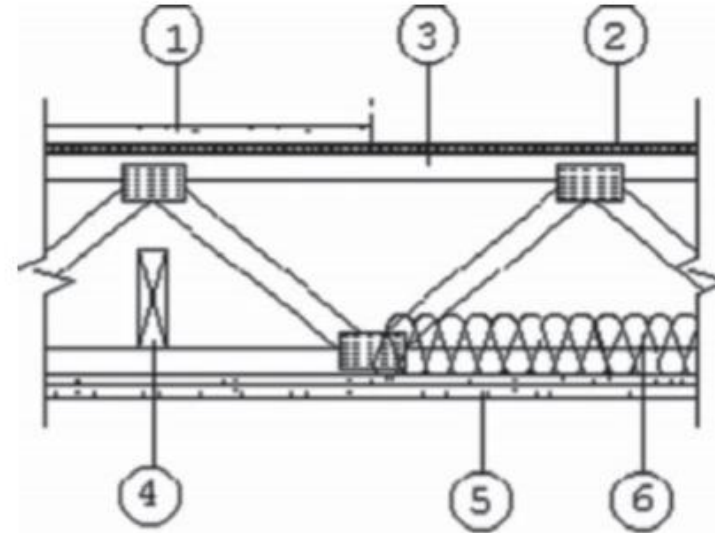
Trusses

"Specified floor-ceiling and roof-ceiling framing sizes or truss dimensions are minimums. Greater joist or truss sizes (depths) shall be permitted to be used in metal- or wood-framed systems."

Section 1.17 Gypsum Association's
Fire Resistance Design Manual

"Thus, larger and deeper trusses can be used under the auspices of the same design number. This approach has often been applied to roof truss applications since roof trusses are usually much deeper than the tested assemblies".

WTCA's Metal Plate Connected
Wood Truss Handbook

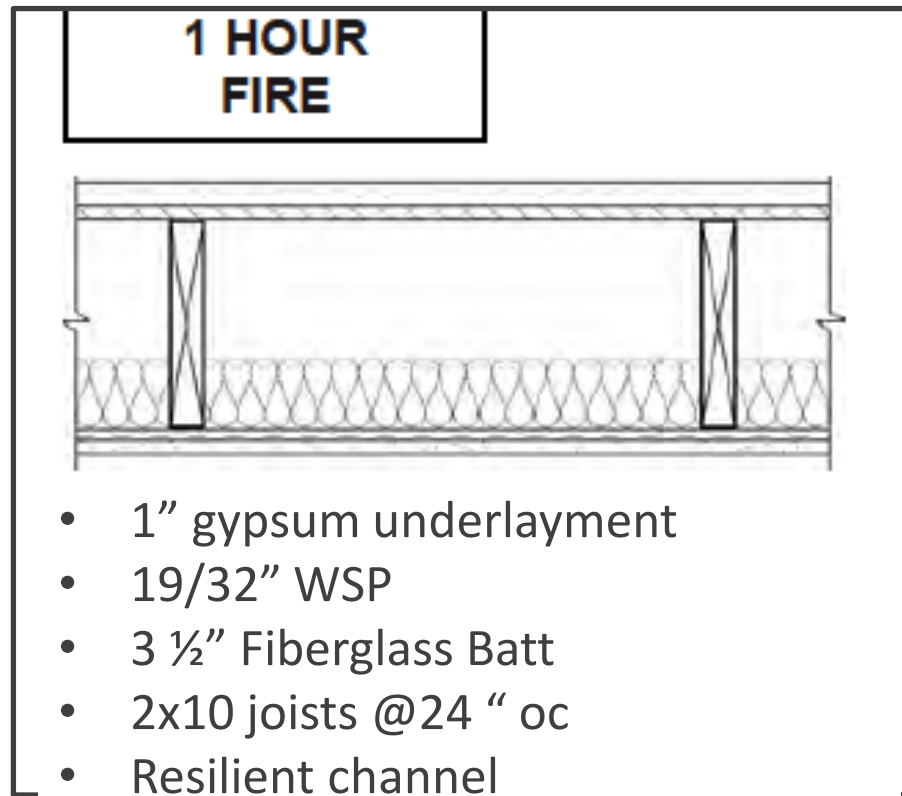


TSC/FCA 60-10

1. Topping (optional)
2. Flooring - min $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood
3. Truss – min depth 10", spaced at 24" oc
4. Bridging/Strongback
5. 2 layers $\frac{1}{2}$ " Type X Gyp
6. Insulation (optional) – supported by metal furring or 1x3 wood furring strips at 16" oc. "Equivalent methods that retain insulation above joist bottom flange are acceptable"

Shallow Floor Depths

UL L502
GA FC5104



- 1" gypsum underlayment
- 19/32" WSP
- 3 ½" Fiberglass Batt
- 2x10 joists @24 " oc
- Resilient channel
- 5/8" Type-X Gyp

Common issues with UL approved assemblies:

- Shallow Floor depth
 - Use prescriptive assemblies: IBC 721.1(3) assembly 21-1.1
 - Or use the calculated method in IBC 722
- Use of Structural Composite Lumber
 - Manufacturer's ESR shows equivalent fire performance to solid sawn

Exposed Framing Fire Resistance

IBC 703.3 Alternate Methods for determining fire resistance

Prescriptive designs per IBC 721.1

- **Calculations in accordance with IBC 722**
- Fire-resistance designs documented in sources
- Engineering analysis based on a comparison
- Alternate protection methods as allowed by 104.11



IBC 722 Calculated Fire Resistance

“...The calculated *fire resistance* of exposed wood members and wood decking shall be permitted in accordance with **Chapter 16** of *ANSI/AF&PA National Design Specification for Wood Construction (NDS.)*”



NDS Chapter 16 Fire Design of Wood Members

Limited to calculating fire resistance up to 2 hours.

Char rate varies based on endurance required, product type and lamination thickness. Equations and tables provided.

TR10 and NDS commentary are helpful in implementing permitted calculations.

Exposed Framing Fire Resistance

Table 16.2.1A Char Depth and Effective Char Depth (for $\beta_n = 1.5 \text{ in./hr.}$)

Required Fire Resistance (hr.)	Char Depth, a_{char} (in.)	Effective Char Depth, a_{eff} (in.)
1-Hour	1.5	1.8
1½-Hour	2.1	2.5
2-Hour	2.6	3.2

Source: 2018 NDS Chapter 16

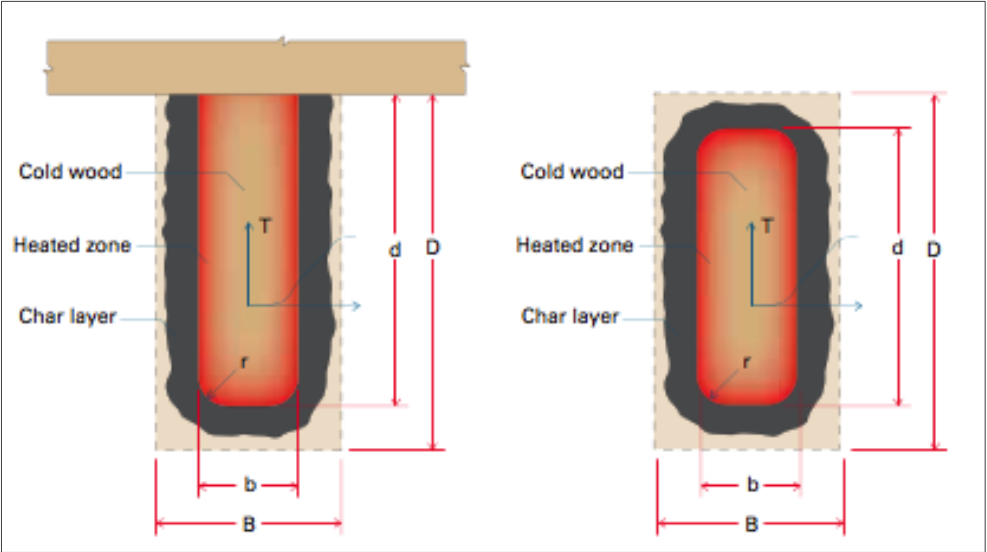
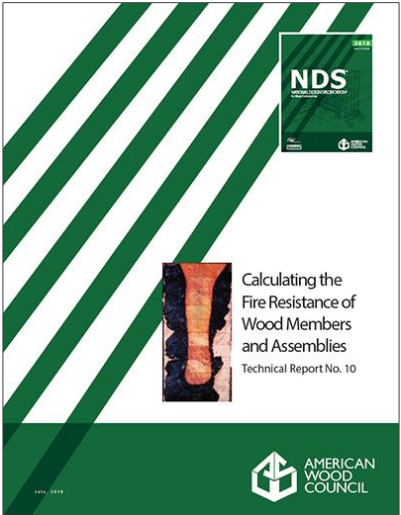


Image: AWC TR 10



<https://awc.org/codes-standards/publications/tr10>



Photo: David Barber, ARUP



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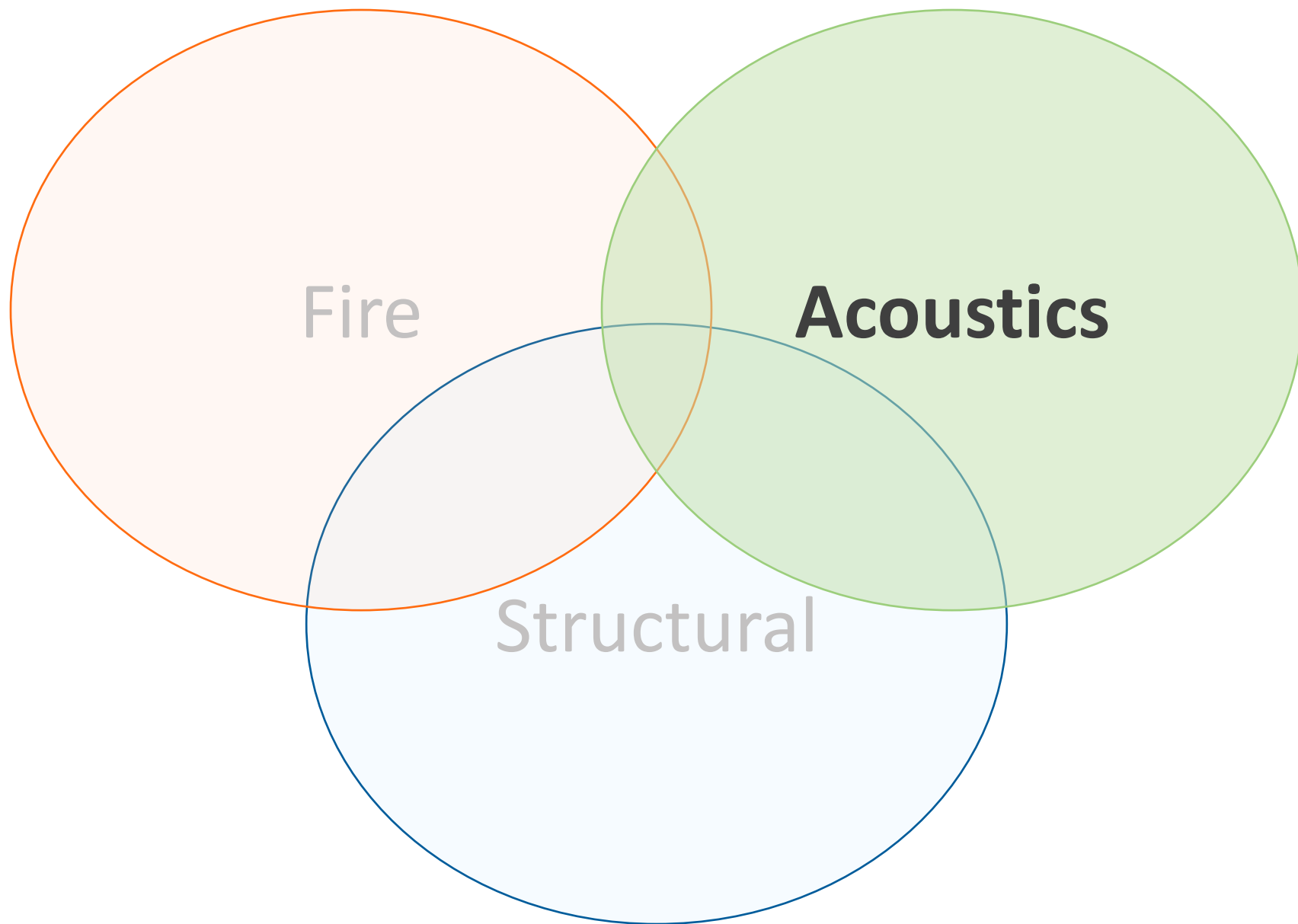
Are sprinklers required in concealed spaces such as floor and roof cavities in multi-family wood-frame buildings?



The International Building Code (IBC) requires all buildings containing Group R occupancies to have sprinklers throughout; however, the need for sprinklers specifically located in the concealed spaces of floors and roofs is dependent on the type of sprinkler system specified (NFPA 13 or NFPA 13R) and the use of fireblocking and draftstopping.

IBC Requirements:

[View All Expert Tips](#)

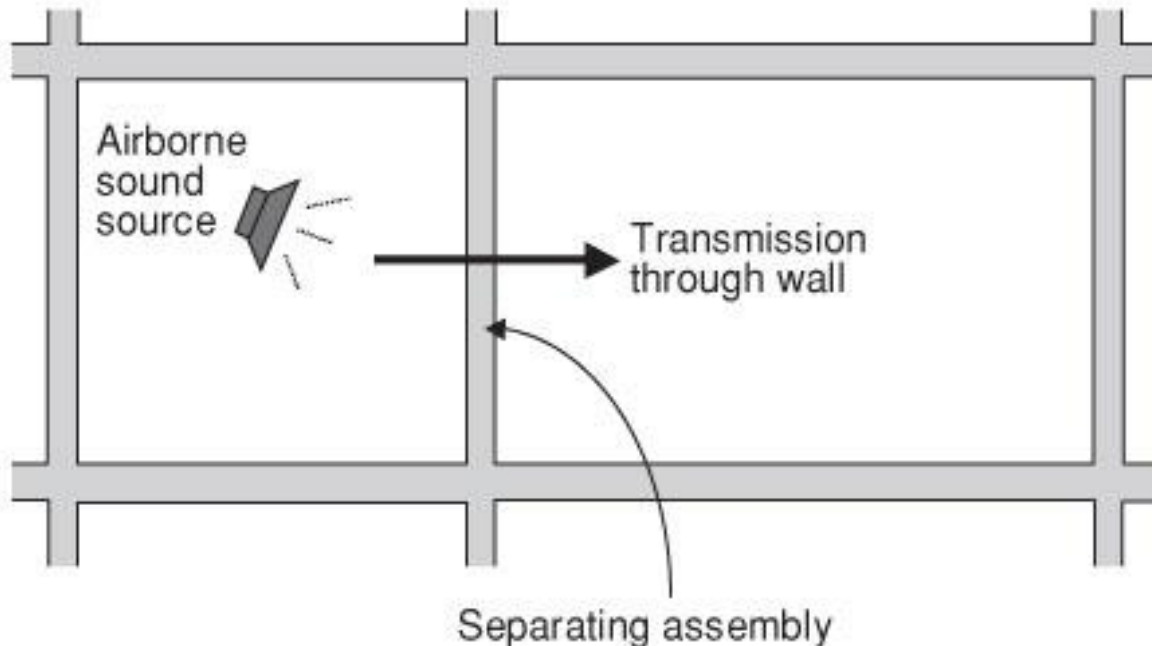


Acoustical Design

Air-Borne Sound: Sound Transmission Class (STC)

Measures how effectively an assembly isolates air-borne sound and reduces the level that passes from one side to the other

Applies to walls and floor/ceiling assemblies

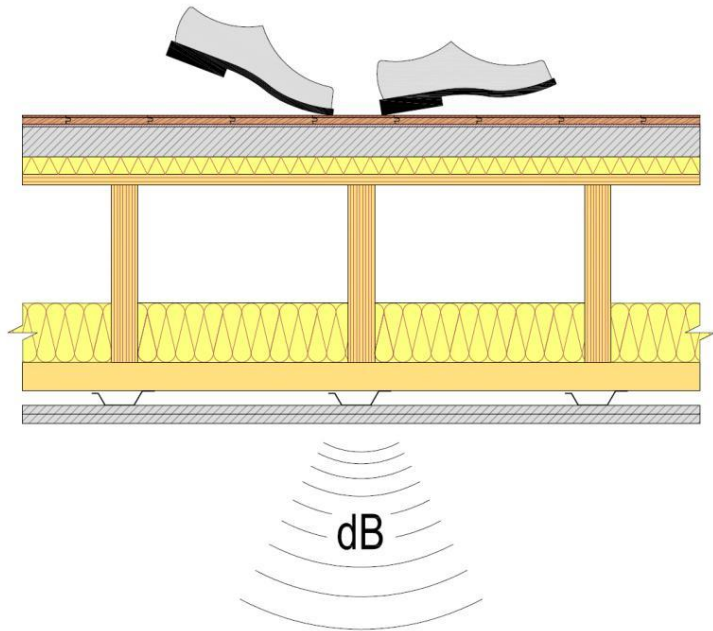


Acoustical Design

Structure-borne sound: Impact Insulation Class (IIC)

Evaluates how effectively an assembly blocks impact sound from passing through it

Only applies to floor/ceiling assemblies



Acoustical Criteria – IBC 1206

Code requirements only address residential occupancies:

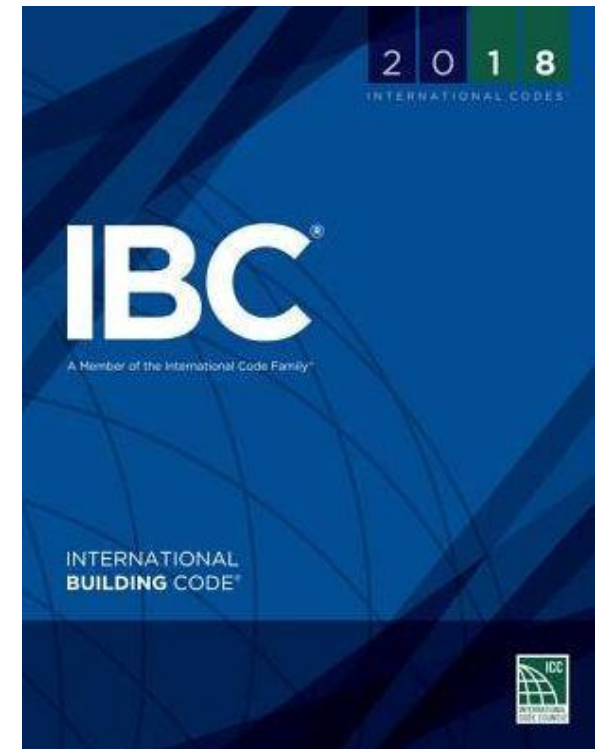
For unit to unit or unit to public or service areas:

Min. STC of 50 (45 if field tested):

- Walls, Partitions, and Floor/Ceiling Assemblies

Min. IIC of 50 (45 if field tested) for:

- Floor/Ceiling Assemblies



Acoustical Criteria

STC	What can be heard
25	Normal speech can be understood quite easily and distinctly through wall
30	Loud speech can be understood fairly well, normal speech heard but not understood
35	Loud speech audible but not intelligible
40	Onset of "privacy"
42	Loud speech audible as a murmur
45	Loud speech not audible; 90% of statistical population not annoyed
50	Very loud sounds such as musical instruments or a stereo can be faintly heard; 99% of population not annoyed.
60+	Superior soundproofing; most sounds inaudible

Choosing Acoustically Rated Assemblies

Common tested assemblies:

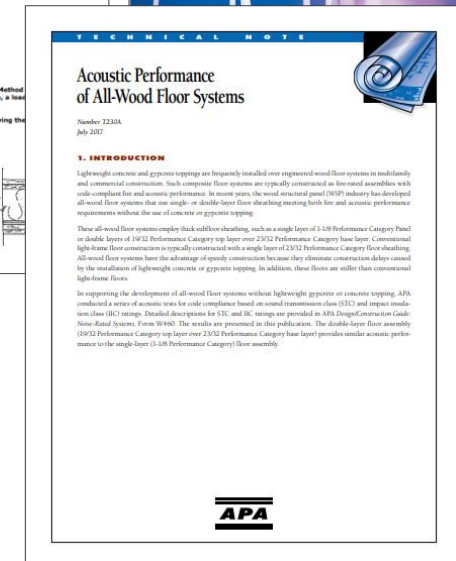
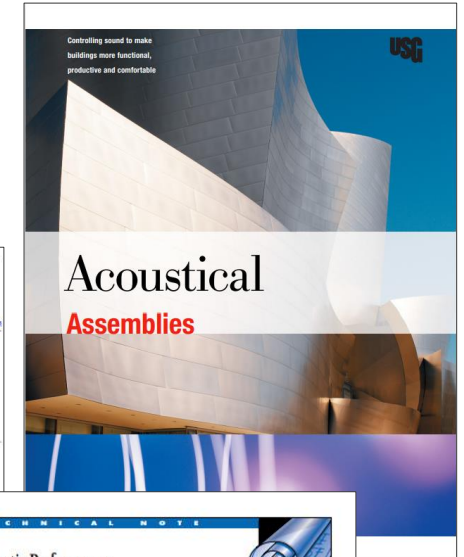
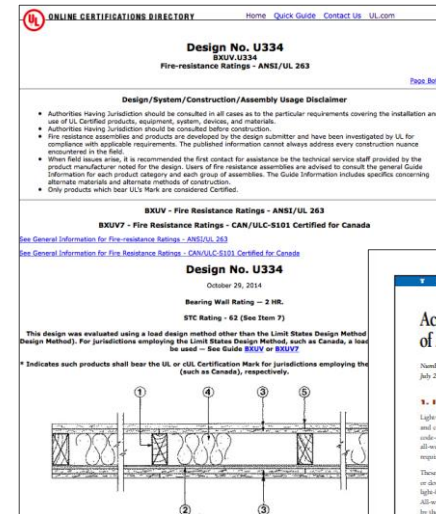
STC: ASTM E90, per IBC 1206.2

IIC: ASTM E492, per IBC 1206.3

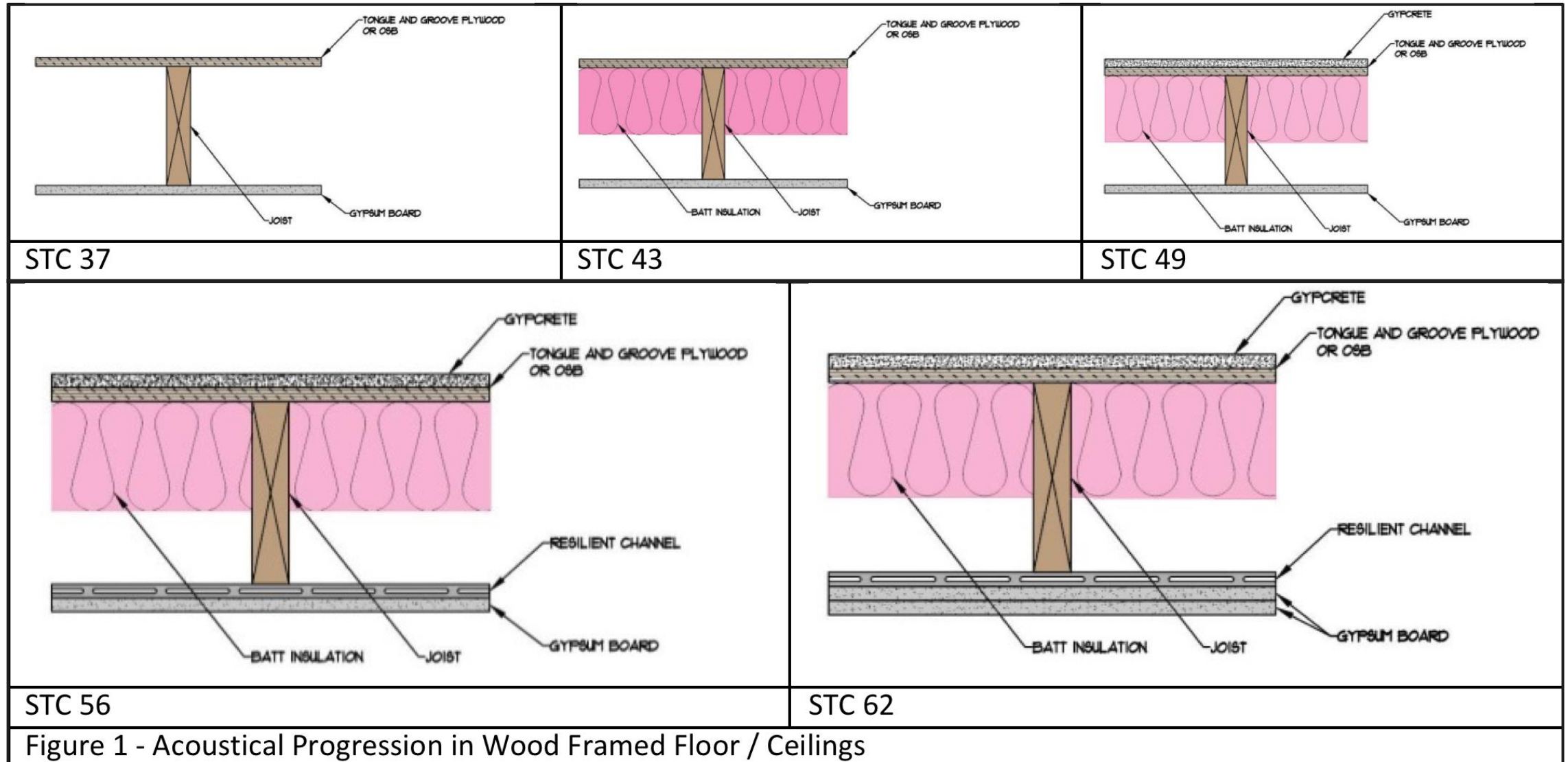
- Manufacturers of gypsum, insulation, acoustical products (proprietary tests)
- UL Listings
- Gypsum Catalog
- Industry associations: AWC, APA, others
- Reach out to **WoodWorks!**

Alternate Method: IBC 1206.2 & 1206.3

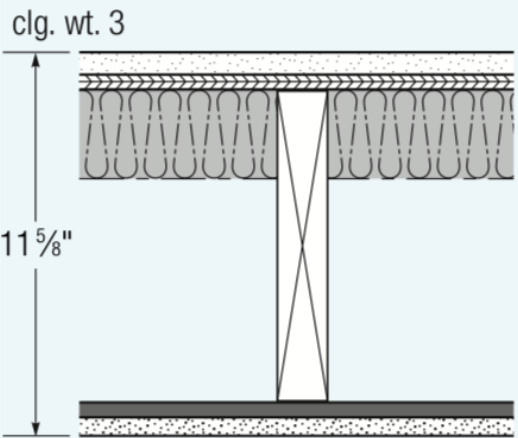
- Both STC and IIC may be “established by engineering analysis based on a comparison of floor-ceiling assemblies having [STC/IIC] ratings as determined by the test procedures.”



Acoustical Detailing



Acoustical Detailing

Dimensional Lumber		Acoustical Performance		
Construction Detail	Description	STC	IIC	Test Number
 <p>clg. wt. 3</p> <p>11 ⁵/₈"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5/8" SHEETROCK Brand FIRECODE C Core Gypsum Panels – 2x10" wood joist 16" o.c. – RC-1 channel or equivalent 16" o.c. – Insulation held up under subfloor by lightning clips – 19/32" T&G wood subfloor • 3/4" LEVELROCK Brand Floor Underlayment 	59	54	RAL-IN04-006/TL04-033 Cushioned vinyl floor, SRM-25, 1" LEVELROCK
		58	55	RAL-IN04-007/TL04-034 Engineered wood-laminate floor SRM-25, 1" LEVELROCK
		59	77	RAL-IN04-005/TL04-032 Carpet with SRM-25, 1" LEVELROCK
		59	52	RAL-IN04-009/TL04-067 Ceramic tile with crack-isolation membrane, SRM-25, 1" LEVELROCK
		58	50	RAL-IN04-013/TL04-100 Cushioned vinyl floor, SRB board
		58	51	RAL-IN04-012/TL04-099 Engineered wood-laminate floor, SRB board
		58	73	RAL-IN04-010/TL04-097 Carpet with SRB board

Floor finish has a significant impact on IIC rating

Acoustical Detailing

Lightweight concrete topping or other similar materials can provide improved acoustical performance, increased durability

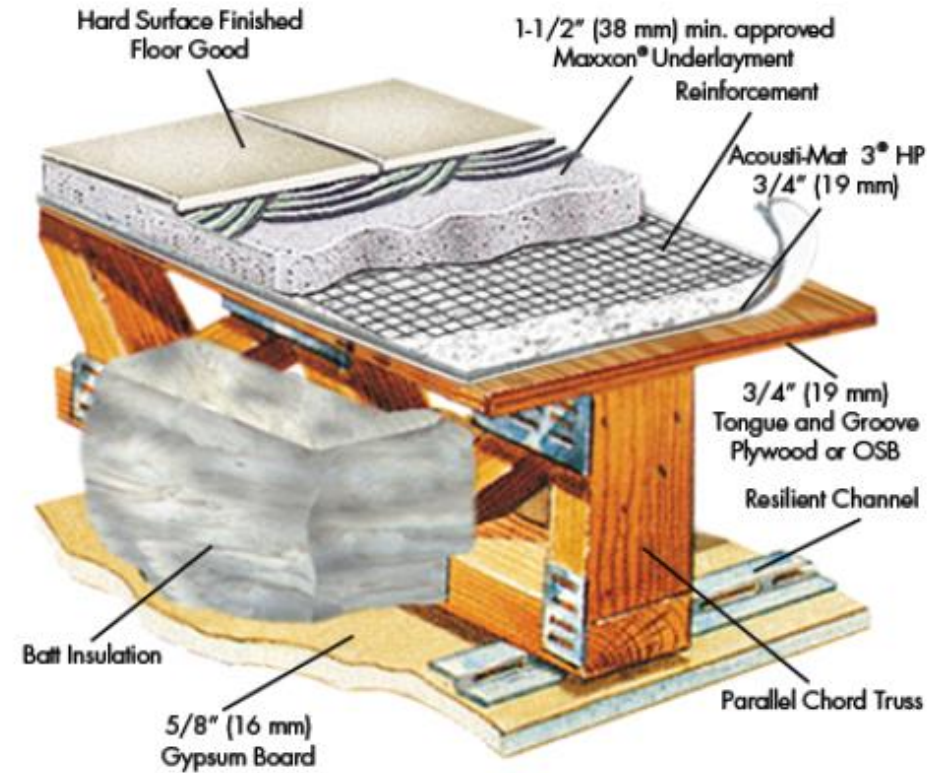
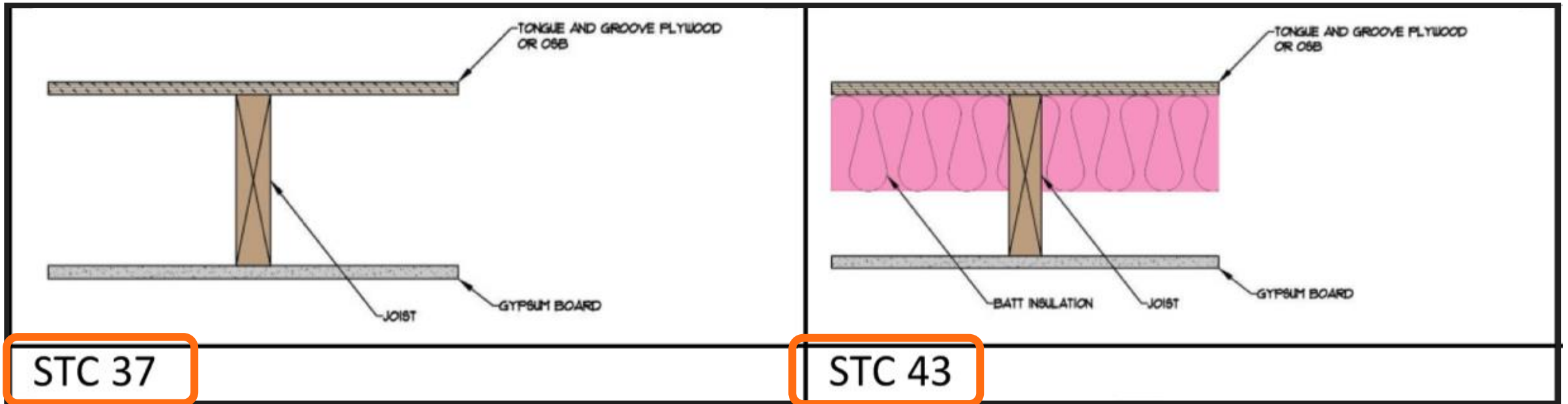


Image: Maxxon

Acoustical Detailing

Adding Noise Absorbers: Batt Insulation



Without Insulation

With Insulation

Acoustical Detailing

Decoupled:

Acoustical mat - typically installed between subfloor and topping or flooring. Can use multiple decoupling layers in sandwich assembly

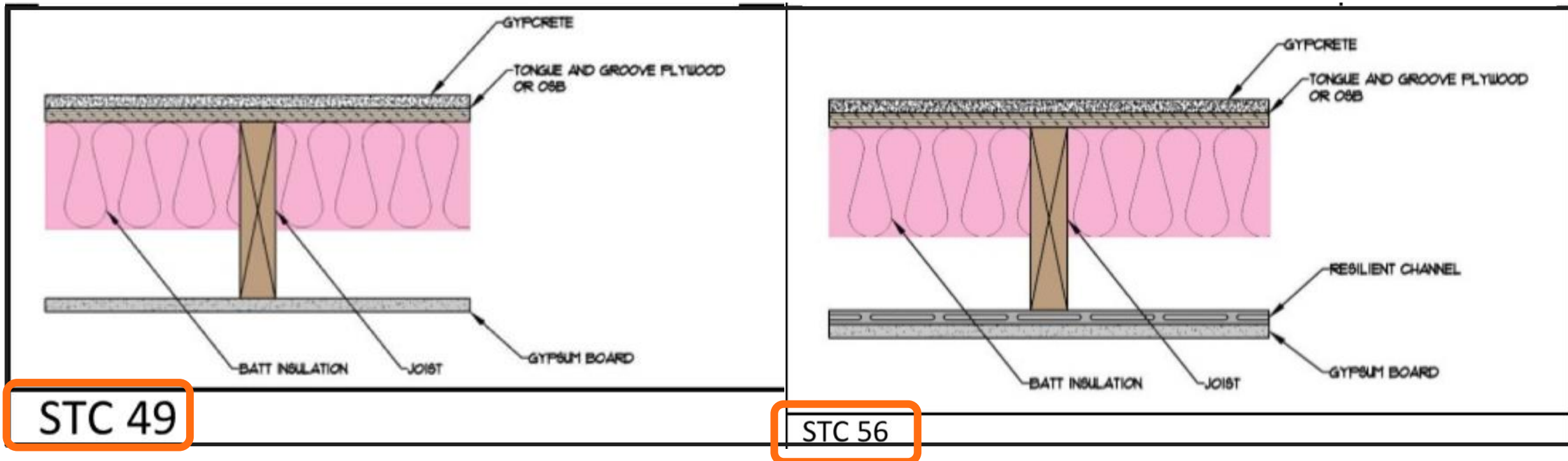


Image credit: Pliteq



Acoustical Detailing

Decoupled: Resilient Channels

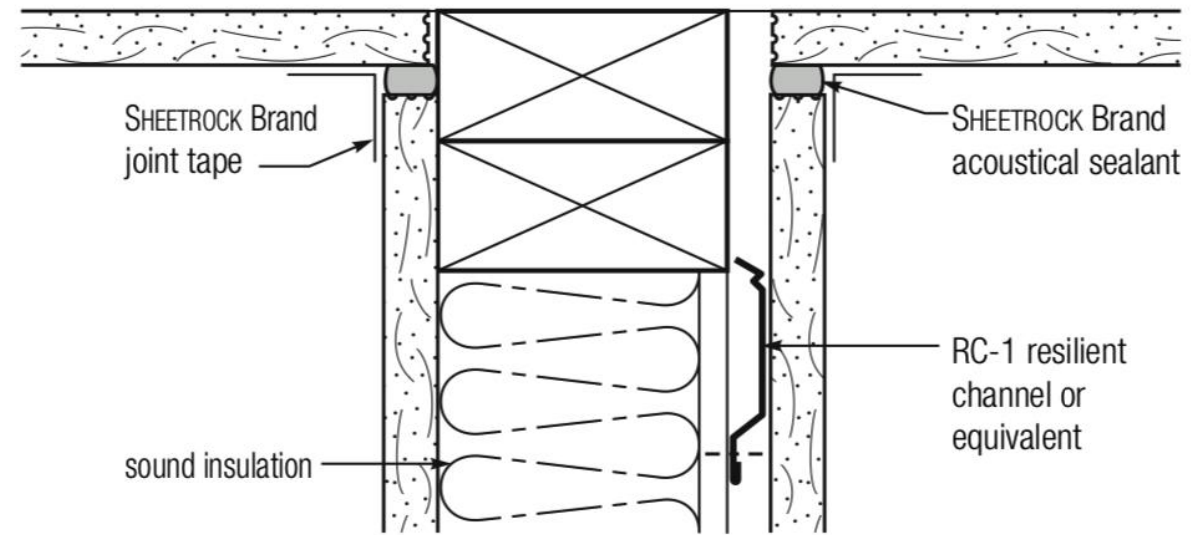
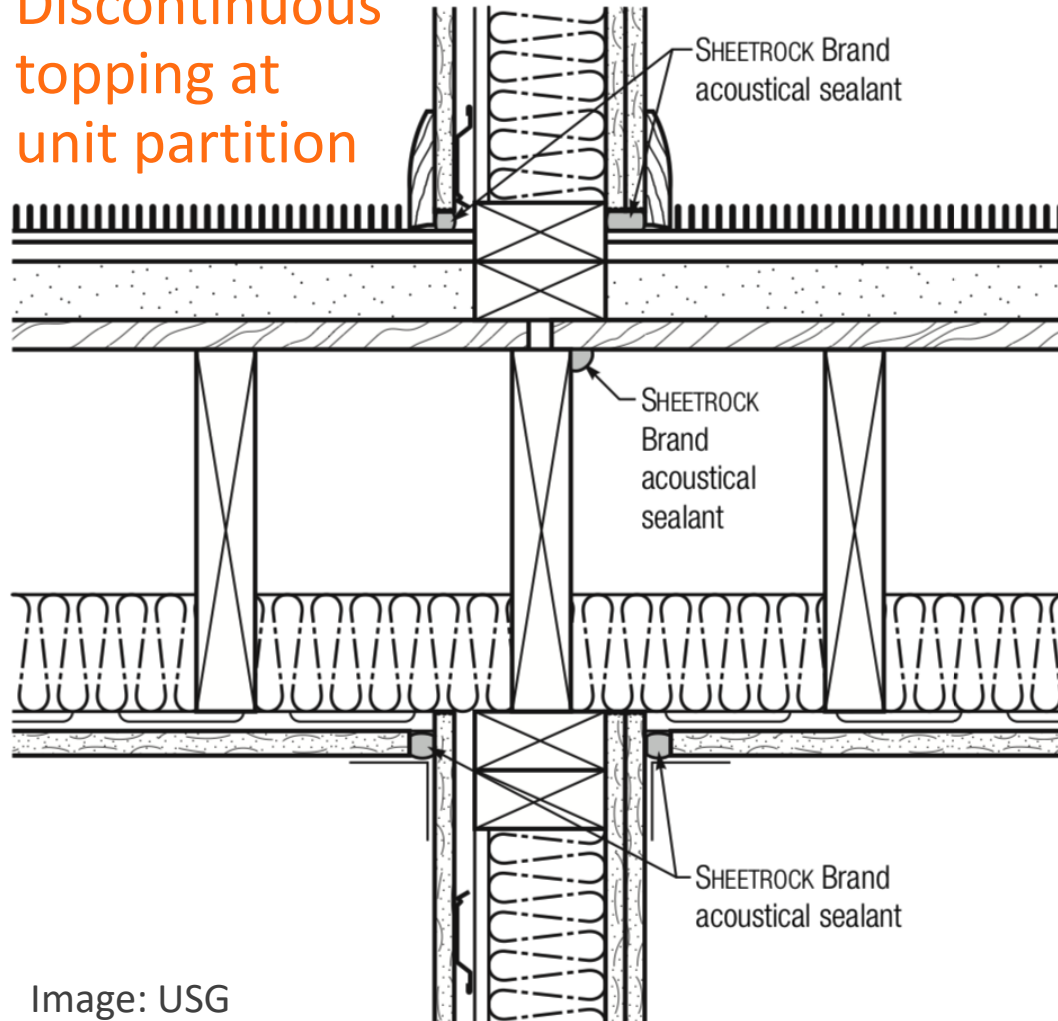


Without Resilient Channels

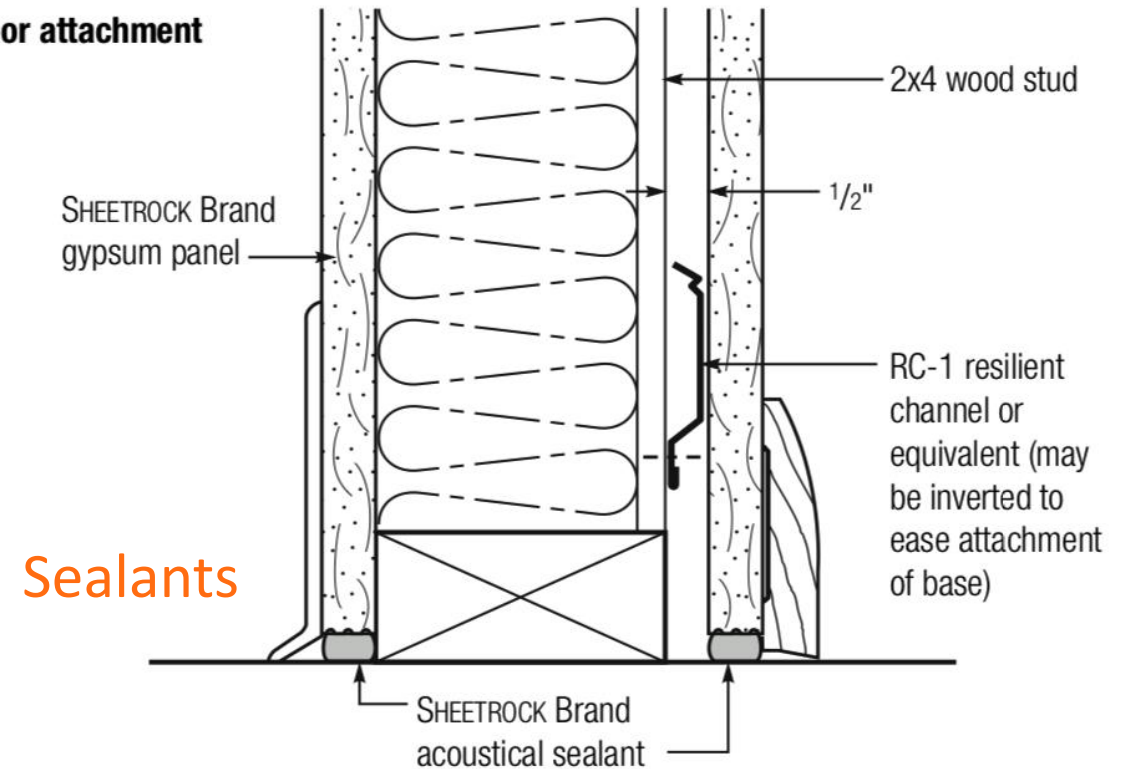
With Resilient Channels

Acoustical Detailing

Discontinuous topping at unit partition

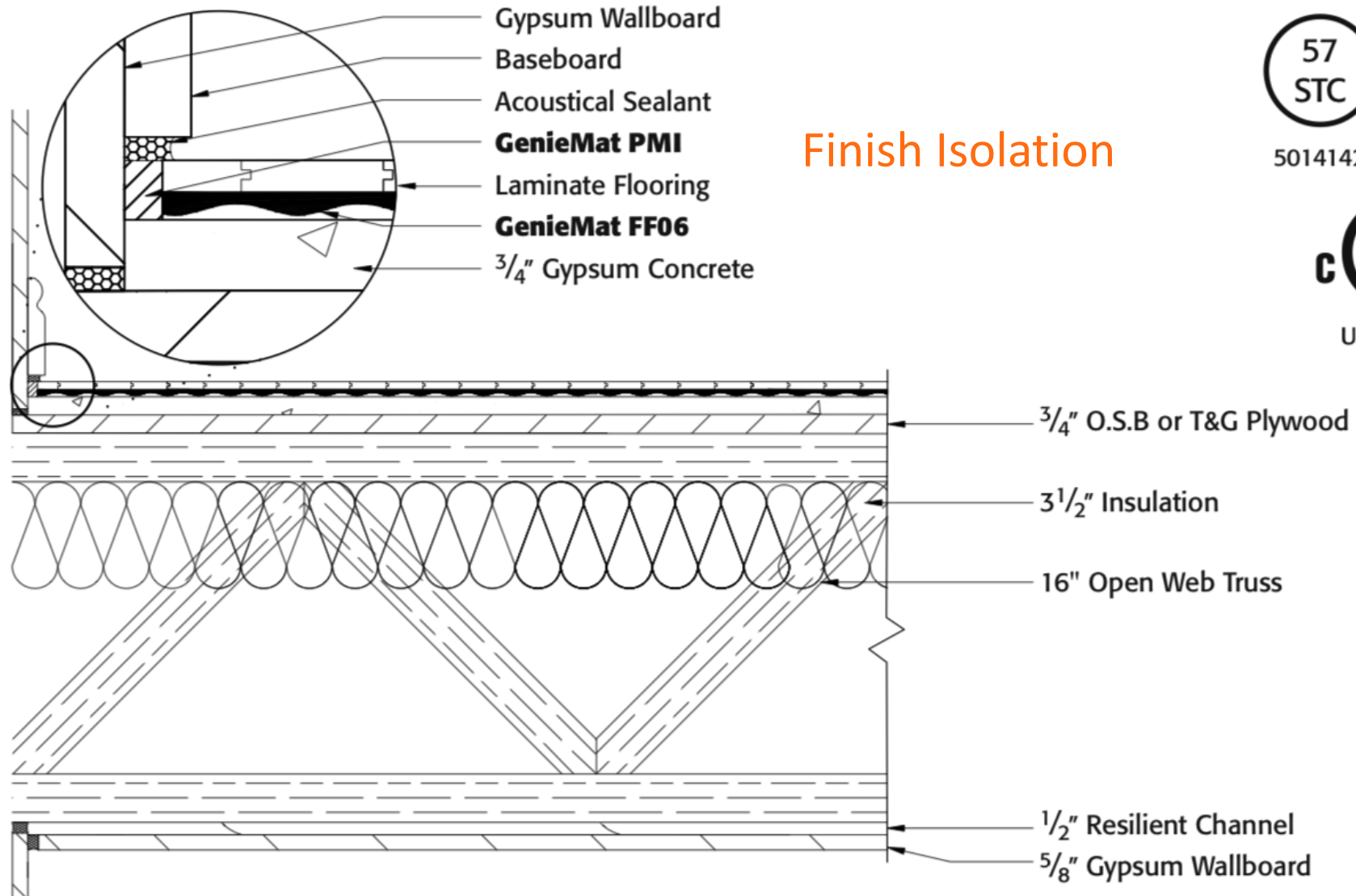


Floor attachment



Sealants

Acoustical Detailing



5014142



7014195



UL Assembly
L546, etc.

Acoustical Considerations for Mixed-Use Wood-Frame Buildings

Steve Thorburn, PE, LEED AP, CTS-I, CTS-D, Thorburn Associates

Acoustics are just one aspect of building performance and must be considered in combination with requirements such as fire protection, structural systems and energy efficiency. To determine an optimal design solution, it is critically important to understand how the design and detailing for each individual system affects the others. Specifically, in addition to meeting the appropriate acoustical rating(s), the assemblies chosen must achieve the required fire ratings and accommodate the structural and energy needs of the project. Understanding the effects of each performance area enables the design team to more easily navigate the decisions and trade-offs required when evaluating different assembly options.

Multi-Family Housing Acoustical Expectations

As with any issue of building performance, the acoustics of a mixed-use wood-frame structure can be designed to meet or exceed minimal requirements, depending on the expectations of the developer, buyers and tenants.

In residential buildings, the *International Building Code (IBC)* provides a minimum design requirement for unit-to-unit acoustical protection between floors. It requires a Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating or Impact Insulation Class (IIC) rating of 50, unless the "Authority Having Jurisdiction" has its own more stringent requirement, which is rarely the case. The *International Residential Code (IRC)* requires a minimum design separation of STC 45 for townhouses.



University of Washington West Campus Student Housing - Phase One
For this student housing project, the acoustical engineer recommended a strategic combination of staggered stud and double stud walls to minimize sound transmission.
Mahlum Architects, photo Benjamin Bernschneider

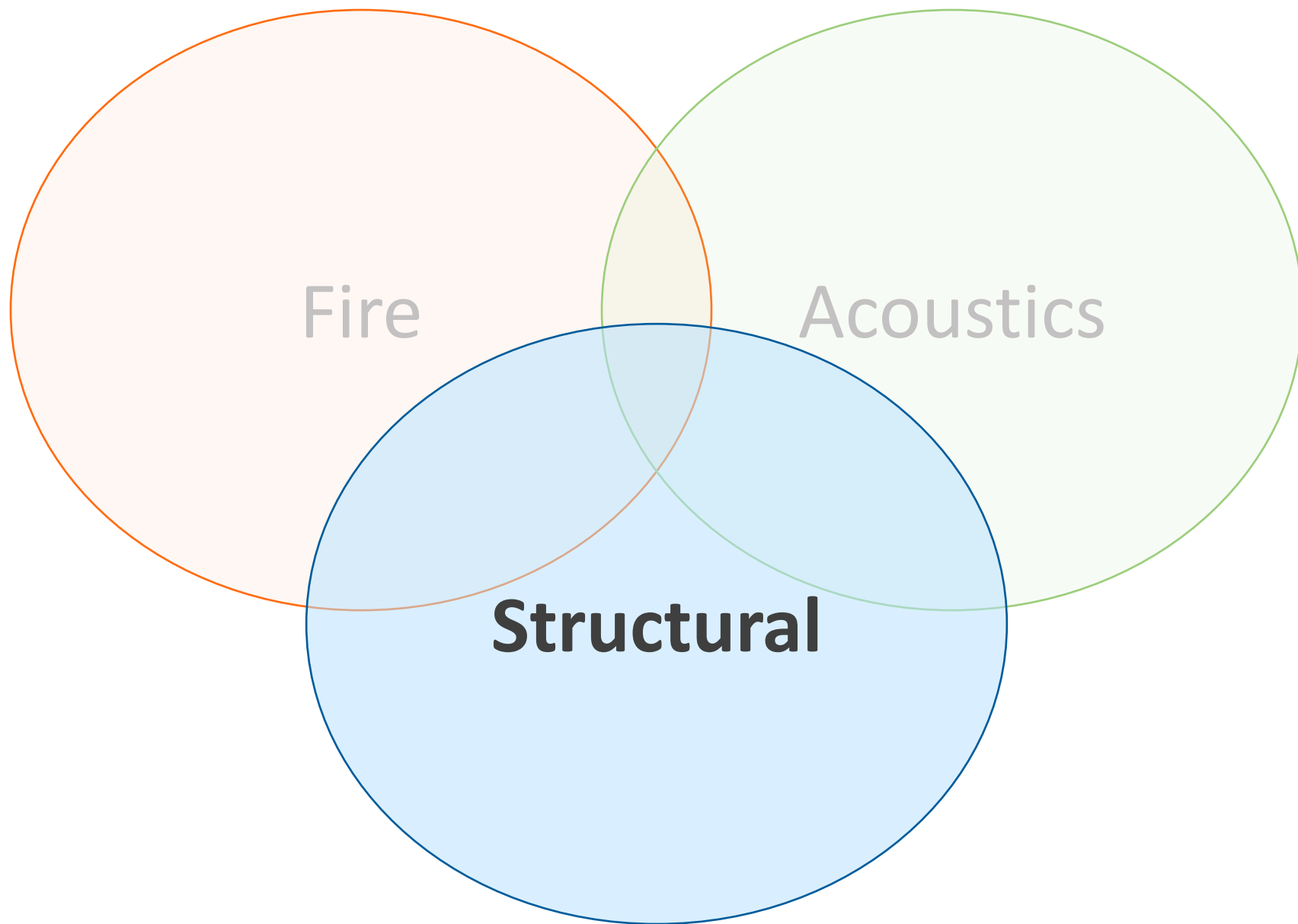
For wood-frame mixed-use buildings, Section 1207 of the 2012 IBC includes the following:

1207.1 Scope. This section shall apply to common interior walls, partitions and floor/ceiling assemblies between adjacent dwelling units or between dwelling units and adjacent public areas such as halls, corridors, stairs or service areas.

1207.2 Airborne sound. Walls, partitions and floor/ceiling assemblies separating dwelling units from each other or from public or service areas shall have a sound transmission class (STC) of not less than 50 (45 if field tested) for air-borne noise when tested in accordance with ASTM E 90. Penetrations or openings in construction assemblies for piping, electrical devices, recessed cabinets, bathtubs, soffits or heating, ventilating or

exhaust ducts shall be sealed, lined, insulated or otherwise treated to maintain the required ratings. This requirement shall not apply to dwelling unit entrance doors; however, such doors shall be tight fitting to the frame and sill.

1207.3 Structure-borne sound. Floor/ceiling assemblies between dwelling units or between a dwelling unit and a public or service area within the structure shall have an impact insulation class (IIC) rating of not less than 50 (45 if field tested) when tested in accordance with ASTM E 492(09).



Structural Floor Design



Common Wood Floor Assembly:

- LW Concrete Topping
- Acoustical Mat
- Wood Floor Sheathing
- Wood Trusses/I-joists
- Batt Insulation
- Resilient Channel
- Gypsum Ceiling

Structural Floor Design - Vibration

The code is silent on floor vibration criteria and analysis

TABLE 1604.3
DEFLECTION LIMITS^{a, b, c, h, i}

CONSTRUCTION	<i>L</i>	<i>S</i> or <i>W</i> ^f	<i>D + L</i> ^{d, g}
Roof members: ^e			
Supporting plaster or stucco ceiling	<i>l</i> /360	<i>l</i> /360	<i>l</i> /240
Supporting nonplaster ceiling	<i>l</i> /240	<i>l</i> /240	<i>l</i> /180
Not supporting ceiling	<i>l</i> /180	<i>l</i> /180	<i>l</i> /120
Floor members	<i>l</i> /360	—	<i>l</i> /240
Exterior walls and interior partitions:			
With plaster or stucco finishes	—	<i>l</i> /360	—
With other brittle finishes	—	<i>l</i> /240	—
With flexible finishes	—	<i>l</i> /120	—
Farm buildings	—	—	<i>l</i> /180
Greenhouses	—	—	<i>l</i> / 120

Structural Floor Design - Vibration



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

Where can I find criteria for vibration control for wood members?

- Dolan and Woeste developed some information on controlling vibration published in *Structural Engineer* magazine.
- APA Technical Note called *Minimizing Floor Vibration by Design and Retrofit*
<http://www.apawood.org/SearchResults.aspx?q=E710&tid=1>
- *Wood Design Focus* paper by Dolan and Kalkert called "Overview of Proposed Wood Floor Vibration Design Criteria" (Vol. 5, #3).
http://www.forestprod.org/buy_publications/wood_design_focus_past_articles.php#volume5

Structural Floor Design - Vibration

IS A "SPRING IN YOUR STEP" CAUSING PROBLEMS?

June 2007 » Feature Article



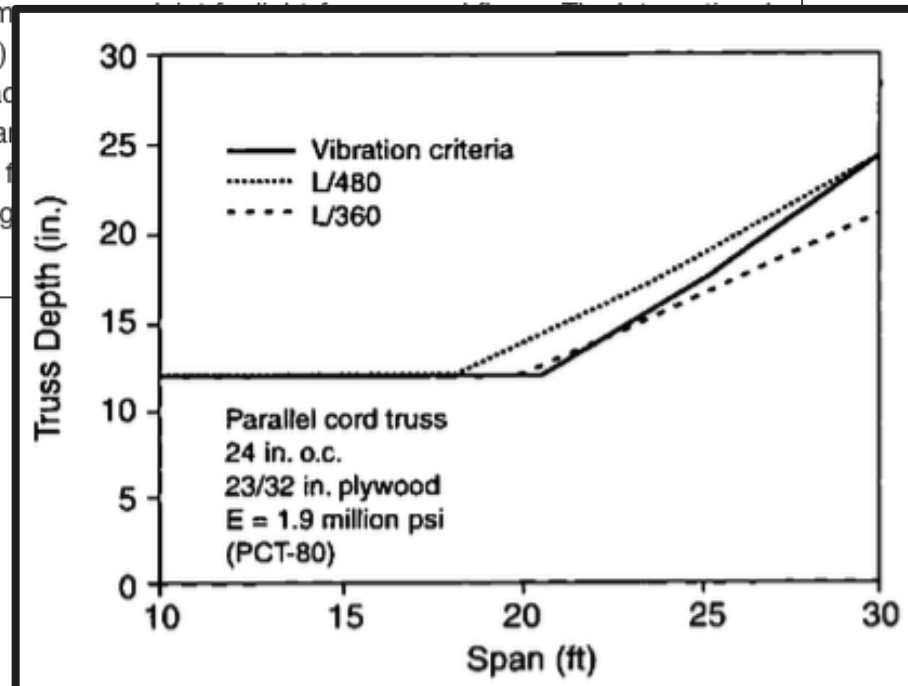
Annoying vibration is probably the most common performance complaint for light-frame wood floors.

Frank Woeste, Ph.D., P.E., and Daniel Dolan, Ph.D., P.E.

Recommendations to minimize annoying wood-floor vibrations

Annoying vibration is probably the most common performance complaint for light-frame wood floors. The International Residential Code Council's 2006 International Residential Code (IRC) addresses this issue, yet the engineer-of-record for a project may face a design challenge. An engineer may be engaged to determine the cause of an annoying vibration problem under the prescriptive provisions of the IRC. While wood floor vibration deserves attention by the design professional at the design stage, it is often impossible to fix.

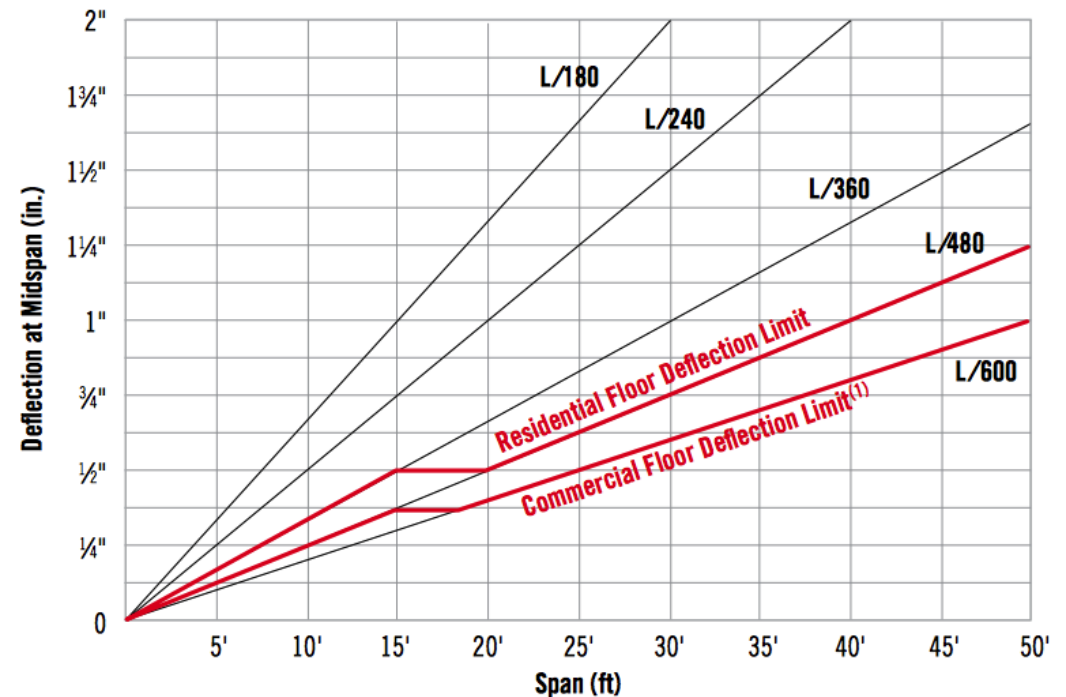
$$f = 1.57 \sqrt{\frac{386EI}{WL^3}} \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$



Floor Design: Occupant Comfort

Vibration & Deflection Control

Multi-family floor spans in the 24'-30' range work well from a layout perspective. Floor design of wood members in this span range are often governed by vibration and/or deflection control, not structural capacity.



Live Load Deflection Chart, Courtesy: Redbuilt

Floor Design: Occupant Comfort

Tools available to designers

Vibration Analysis: FP Innovations
(Spreadsheet available upon request)

Joist Manufacturer's
Rating Systems

WCTE

2014

Quebec City
Canada
August 10-14

World Conference on Timber Engineering

NOISE AND VIBRATION CONTROL OF LIGHT FRAME WOOD JOIST FLOORS TOPPED WITH CONCRETE

Lin Hu¹, Mohammad Mohammad² and Sylvain Gagnon³

ABSTRACT: Light frame wood joist floors have reduced sound insulation because of their lightweight nature. The popular solution to the noise transmission problem is to float a 38mm or thicker cementitious topping over the floor. Although this solution efficiently improves sound insulation of light frame floors, it makes normal walk-induced vibrations more perceivable than with the floors without the topping. Currently, more than half of the housing market in Canada is multi-family construction. As more multi-family light frame wood buildings are being built, more and more complaints about excessive feelable vibrations through concrete topped wood joist floors are being received. This paper explains the myths behind this phenomenon, and more importantly, sheds some lights on available solutions.

KEYWORDS: Light frame, multi-family building, wood joist floor, concrete topping, noise control, vibration control



Structural Floor Design - Vibration

Excel Interface:

- Formulas Tab:** Paste, Calibri (Body), 11, Bold, Italic, Underline, Wrap Text, Merge & Center, General, \$, %, .00, .00.
- Conditional Formatting, Format as Table, Cell Styles, Insert, Delete, Format, Sort & Filter.**

D7	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Determine vibration controlled span using the simple design method, i.e. Vibration controlled span ≤ (EI_{eff})^{0.284} / (8.22 * (m_J)^{0.15} * (F_{scl})^{0.14})						
2	Knowing Apparent EI						
3	Floor ID	EX1 - Handbook 2014			EX1b-12" spacing	EX1c-19.2" spacing	EX1d using glue and nails
4	Floor description	9.5" I-joist at 16" o.c., Bare floor, 5/8" OSB nailed, EX-1 in design guide (used 2005 design value of OSB = 4.40m), and use 2010 OSB value for MWFC handbook, 2014	Can also get 10% increase due to strongbacks		9.5" I-joist at 12" o.c., Bare floor, 5/8" OSB nailed (OSB 2010 design values)	9.5" I-joist at 19.2" o.c., Bare floor, 5/8" OSB nailed (2010 OSB design value)	9.5" I-joist at 16" o.c., Bare floor, 5/8" OSB nailed (2010 OSB design value)
5			27.55 ft				
6			Truss Design F1-50-24				
7	Results:						
8	Vibration controlled span ≤ (EI _{eff}) ^{0.284} / (8.22 * (m _J) ^{0.15} * (F _{scl}) ^{0.14})	7.64	25.05 ft		4.69	4.24	
9							
10	Input:						
11	Trial span, l (m)	7.62195122	25 ft		4.69	4.24	
12	Joist:						
13	Spacing, b ₁ (m)	0.406400813	16 in		0.3048	0.48768	
14	Apparent EI _{joist} (Nm ²)	5.53E+06	1.93E+09 lb*in ²		5.76E+05	5.65E+05	
15	EA _{joist} (N)	7.47E+07	1.68E+07 lb		5.94E+07	5.94E+07	
16	Joist depth, d (m)	0.609601219	24 in		0.241	0.241	
17	Mass/length, m _j (kg/m)	8.928571429	6 lb/ft		3.265	3.265	
18	Subfloor:						
19	Thickness, t _s (m)	0.018256287	0.71875 in		0.015	0.015	
20	EI _{slj} (Nm)	3.77E+03	4.00E+05 lb*in ²		1.40E+03	1.40E+03	
21	EI _{sgpendicular} (Nm)	8.62E+02	91500 lb*in ²		300	300	
22	EA _{slj} (N/m)	8.54E+07	5.85E+06 lb*in ²		5.60E+07	5.60E+07	
23	EA _{sgpendicular} (N/m)	4.81E+07	3.30E+06 lb*in ²		3.60E+07	3.60E+07	
24	Sheathing gaps distance, l _g (m)	1.219512195	4 ft		1.2	1.2	
25	Density, ρ _s (kg/m ³)	588.6217949	36.73 pcf		600	600	
26	Topping:						
27	Thickness, t _c (m)	0.019050038	0.75 in		0	0	
28	Young's modulus, E _c (N/m ²)	1.80E+10			0.00E+00	0.00E+00	
29	Density, ρ _c (kg/m ³)	1842.948718	115 pcf		0	0	
30	Connectors:						
31	subfloor to joist, S _j (N/m/m)	5.00E+06			5.00E+06	5.00E+06	
32							
33							
34	Calculations:						
35	Effective composite bending stiffness:						
36	h _t (m)	0.3303			0.1280	0.1280	
37	EA _t (N)	3.91E+08			3.60E+07	3.60E+07	
38	EA _t (N) with bar	7.40E+08			6.76E+08	6.92E+08	

Bottom Bar: I-joists | Wood trusses | Feuil3 | +

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What methods exist for checking floor vibration of light-frame wood structures?

Vibration of light-frame wood floor construction can be a significant occupant comfort issue. However, achieving acceptable levels of floor vibration is not a code requirement. As such, it is possible to design a code-compliant wood floor structure that produces annoying or unacceptable levels of vibration due to standard foot traffic.

A variety of factors can affect a floor's vibration performance, including:

- Presence of concrete topping or other massing materials
- Thickness/stiffness of floor sheathing
- Stiffness, spacing and span of floor joists/trusses
- Presence, size and spacing of blocking/bridging/strong backs
- Presence of direct-applied ceiling
- Stiffness of joist supporting elements (i.e., beams, bearing walls)
- Presence of partition walls

Several vibration analysis methods have been published, each of which takes into account some or all of these variables.

What constitutes an "acceptable vibration level" is subjective, but level of performance is generally measured by floor frequency. According to [an article by Frank Woeste and Dan Dolan](#), "Occupants are very sensitive to vibrations in the range of 7-10 Hz. In theory, joist designs (or floor system designs) that vibrate well above 7-10 Hz should be judged by the occupants as acceptable simply because they can't feel the higher frequencies. As a general rule, wider joist spacing (24 inches on center versus 12 inches on center) will produce a higher frequency because deeper members, having a greater bending stiffness (EI), will be required to meet building code deflection requirements." However, [studies by FPIInnovations](#) have shown that this approach may be "too simple to differentiate the vib

behavior of the floors with and without concrete topping, and to control vibration in a broad range of light-frame wood joist floors. For example, a long-span light-frame wood joisted floor with a concrete topping can have frequency below 14Hz, but

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➤ THANK YOU!

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