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IS YOUR PAPER WORK IN ORDER?

Every detailer knows about supplying documentation with every truss job. It is the quality and clarity of these documents that I would like to emphasize in this GN Guideline.

The typical documents most fabricators submit are a truss certificate, truss layout, truss list, computations (where required) and installation instructions. Other specific instructions may also be included where conditions require them.

The truss certificate and computations summarise the design parameters for the benefit of the project manager and building certifier to ensure compliance. They are not designed for use in construction on site.

For that purpose, the carpenter relies upon the truss layout, installation instructions and other specific drawings or details.

Not only must the information in the drawings be consistent with the truss certificate, they should not contradict nor confuse the reader but must be related to the job and include all necessary instructions to carry out the design intention.

The printed fixing and bracing guidelines naturally contain a comprehensive range of general information that may be surplus to the job but your layout and drawings have to be as site specific as possible.

It is easy to think that dumping a whole lot of erroneous extra "standard" information into the plans is going to cover you more - but you would be wrong!

Too much superfluous instructions might not only confuse the reader and cloud the important items, they could also mislead and conflict with other instructions.

You should focus only on providing specific instructions which are relevant to the job.

I was recently called upon as an expert witness in a law suit against a fabricator in which the prosecuting lawyer scrutinised their plans and exploited every item of irrelevant information to make them appear incompetent.

In one instance, for example, there was uncertainty as to whether overhang struts were or weren't part of the design because the fabricator had included additional information on strut installation in their documentation but had not shown where they were required in the layout.

As some overhangs suffered excessive deflection, the prosecutor

fabricators should also always make clear any requirements that are necessary for the successful performance of their trusses.

The new ABCB Structural Software Protocol places an obligation upon the fabricator to declare all design assumptions and parameters as well as to provide all necessary instructions and information pertinent to the job.



■ Typical documentation.

laboured this point to allege that the fabricator must have forgotten to show where struts were required.

This element of doubt was systematically injected into the case to detract from the actual cause which was due to poor installation practice, namely that the installer stood on the overhang while fascias were fitted.

Although the ruling eventually went in the fabricator's favour (the correct ruling in my opinion), it nonetheless put a lot of pressure upon the fabricator's defence as to why they specifically added information into their construction drawings when they weren't required and thereby cast suspicion on the fabricator's credibility.

Through painful court experience, the fabricator now knows that it is much wiser not to include unnecessary details and comments in their drawings and documentation.

At the other end of the scale,

For example, if your roof trusses have been designed with structural fascias that reduce the concentrated live load and overhang size, this should be clearly noted in the layout drawings used for construction.

A subtle mention in the truss certificate may be deemed inadequate as it is used for certification purposes and not for construction, which is why it is kept in the office and not on site.

If you don't make the requirement clear in construction drawings and the fascia does not get installed, you could be setting yourself up for partial responsibility for not fully disclosing all relevant design requirements.

So pay good attention to detail. Do not fail to provide all necessary information for construction but desist from providing anything unnecessary that could come back and bite you! **TTN**