

Specifying wind design

Many roof system designers inadequately address wind loads in contract documents

by Mark S. Graham

NRCA is receiving an increasing number of reports indicating project drawings and specifications incompletely, inadequately or inaccurately address proper wind design for low-slope membrane roof systems. Some designs, according to reports, only include a specification requirement for the roof system manufacturer to provide a wind warranty.

But there are minimum requirements for proper wind design of low-slope membrane roof systems.

Code requirements

Building codes typically provide specific requirements for reporting design loads, including wind loads, in contract documents.

The *International Building Code*,[®] 2012 Edition (IBC 2012), Chapter 16-Structural Design, Section 1603-Contract Documents, indicates contract documents need to include a roof system's live load, snow load data, wind design data and any special loads.

Required wind design data includes identifying the ultimate design wind speed, nominal design wind speed, risk category, wind exposure and applicable internal pressure coefficient. For component and cladding systems that are not specifically designed by a registered design professional, design wind pressures in terms of psf (pounds per square foot) also are required. Roof systems typically are considered component and cladding systems. Design wind pressures in the field, perimeter and corner regions

of roof areas should be noted in contract documents.

IBC's previous editions include similar contract document requirements.

For new construction projects, design loads most commonly will be identified on structural drawings in the project drawing set. For projects without specific structural drawings, design loads may be provided on architectural drawings or drawing notes or in project specifications.

ANSI/SPRI ES-1

ANSI/SPRI ES-1, "Wind Design Standard for Edge Systems Used with Low Slope Roofing Systems," which is referenced in IBC 2012, includes two primary elements: determination of design wind loads at roof edges (fascia, copings) and testing for resistance loads of copings and fascia.

Designers should not simply specify compliance with ANSI/SPRI ES-1 in project specifications; they should determine and clearly include design wind loads at roof edges in contract documents.

IBC 2012 indicates in Section 1504.5-Edge Securement for Low-slope Roofs design wind loads should be determined using the ultimate design wind speed and IBC 2012's Chapter 16, which is based on ASCE 7-10, "Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures."

IBC 2012 references ANSI/SPRI ES-1-03. ANSI/SPRI ES-1-03 is based upon ASCE 7-02, which is not an ultimate design wind speed-based method. Therefore, the design wind load determination method contained in ANSI/SPRI ES-1 does not satisfy IBC 2012's requirements for design wind loads at roof edges.

Design wind loads at roof edges should be

determined using IBC 2012's Chapter 16 and be clearly noted in contract documents.

Responsibilities

Designers should not place the responsibility for determining roof system or individual component design wind loads on manufacturers, component suppliers or installers, or roofing contractors.

Also, designers' sole reliance on specifying wind speed warranties is not a substitute for code-required wind design data. Such warranties typically do not address consideration of ultimate and nominal design wind speeds, building height, risk category, wind exposure and internal pressure coefficients applicable to the specific building necessary for properly determining roof systems' design wind loads.

Responsibility for properly determining and clearly identifying wind design data, including design wind loads for roof systems, is required by the building code and is clearly that of roof system designers. Designers may retain a structural engineer or qualified consultant to help them fulfill their design responsibilities.

To help designers determine wind loads for commonly encountered low-slope roof systems, NRCA, the Midwest Roofing Contractors Association and North/East Roofing Contractors Association have developed and offer a free online application, Roof Wind Designer.

Roof Wind Designer is a web application that allows users to determine design wind loads using ASCE 7's, "Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures," 2005 or 2010 editions.

Roof Wind Designer is accessible at www.roofwinddesigner.com. 

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Specifying wind speed warranties is not a substitute for code-required wind design data