Roseburg
A Forest Products Company

Technical Note

Stacking of drywall on Roseburg Forest Products RFPI® Joists

On occasion, the question arises regarding how many sheets of drywall can be temporarily stacked on a floor system during the course of construction. Unless the actual layout of the floor system is known, the conservative answer is that the stack of drywall should not exceed the allowable live load on the floor, which is generally 40 psf for residential construction. On this basis, a stack of drywall (laid flat) should not exceed approximately 9” in height (example: 18 sheets of 1/2” drywall or 14 sheets of 5/8” drywall).

In some areas, it is common practice to temporarily shore up the floor system in order to stack more than 9” of drywall. This shoring is generally placed at mid-span of the floor joist and carries the load to the concrete floor slab or foundation. The shoring members must be a minimum of 3-1/2” wide and be installed before the drywall is stacked. Holes in the Ijoist near the shoring should be avoided. The drywall is centered over the temporary shoring. The allowable height of the drywall stack depends on variables such as joist span, series, depth and on-center spacing. It is impractical to calculate how much drywall could be stacked on a floor system on a job-by-job basis. However, a rule of thumb for this shored condition would be to limit the height of the drywall stack to approximately 18” (example: 36 sheets of 1/2” drywall or 28 sheets of 5/8” drywall).

It is important to remember that floor joists can be overloaded by stacking too much weight on them in one location. Following these recommendations and spreading the load out will greatly reduce the risk of damaging the joists by overloading them.

In either case, with or without shoring, it may be possible to stack more drywall than is indicated above depending on the actual framing conditions (i.e. joist span, series, depth and on-center spacing). For guidance in these cases please consult the Allowable Floor Uniform Load table in the Roseburg Forest Products Engineered Wood Products Design Guide.

Roseburg Forest Products recognizes that overloading of RFPI® floor joists can lead to system performance problems such as floor squeaks, ceiling cracks, excessive deflection, nail pops and vibration issues. These items can be expensive to repair and result in warranty issues with the future homeowner. By following these guidelines and employing some reasonable caution these potential problems can be avoided.

Thank you for your attention to this subject. Roseburg Forest Products strives to provide quality building products and advice to the building industry that result in satisfied builders, contractors and ultimately, homeowners. We appreciate your business and look forward to being an integral part of your building solutions.

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