

EEBC MEMBERSHIP COMMENTS | INSULATION & AIR SEALING
Due to PSCo April 13, 2020

RE: 60-Day Notice Summary - Insulation and Air Sealing.pdf (Attached)
Insulation and Air Sealing - Product Write-up.pdf (Attached)
Comments of Disagreement from EEBC Members (Below)

COMMENTS FROM | Andrew Wildenberg, E3 Power [Owner], Member of EEBC's Board

PSCo Company Statement – Insulation 60-Day Notice

For safety reasons, the Company is changing product eligibility requirements to exclude residences where asbestos, black mold, or vermiculite has been present, even if professional mitigation work is completed. Vendors have expressed the need to clarify the existing eligibility requirements due to hazards related to blower door tests in these situations. This change aligns the product with Building Performance Institute standards to promote safety and proper procedures for homes where these health concerns are present.

Why this change should be disallowed per below documentation.

After reviewing all the BPI and EPA and OSHA documentation I could not find a reference to what PSCo is referring to regarding the blower door testing after asbestos insulation has been removed.

The following lists all occurrences of asbestos in the BPI and EPA websites. Their statement This change aligns the product with Building Performance Institute standards to promote safety and proper procedures for homes where these health concerns are present is not supported by any documentation. The change should be disallowed.

Review of 2019-2020 DSM Language

This product excludes new residential construction, new residential additions, insulation of doors, garages, sheds, workshops, below-ground basements, mobile homes, projects with pre-improvement R-values of R-16 or greater, and residential properties with more than four units. To qualify for a rebate, all insulation must be installed to the manufacturer's specifications and meet all state and local codes and federal regulations. Air sealing and weather stripping must follow industry-accepted practices for mitigating air leakage. For safety reasons, residences with asbestos and/or vermiculite cannot receive a blower door test and are disqualified from the product until they can prove mitigation work has been done to remove all asbestos and/or vermiculite from the residence.

Review of BPI Standard 1200-S-2017 states the following

11.9.1 Examine the insulation on the steam-heating distribution piping. Note the insulation type and condition. If friable asbestos-like material is evident, project documentation shall include a recommendation for a qualified professional to verify the presence of asbestos and that procedures follow federal, state and local guidelines for dealing with asbestos. On systems with no insulation or damaged insulation, recommend that piping be insulated with insulation rated for steam piping or to a level meeting the requirements of the AHJ.

Review of BPI Standard 1100-T-2014 states the following

3 Health and Safety Related Requirements The health and safety requirements included in this standard are intended to ensure that home performance upgrade activities do not negatively affect indoor air quality or otherwise cause or exacerbate an unsafe condition in the home.

The energy audit shall include the following: 3.1 Evaluation of combustion air requirements and a test of combustion appliances in accordance with Section 7 of this standard. 3.2 Evaluation of ventilation needs in accordance with Section 8 of this standard. 3.3 Identification of existing and/or potential moisture issues in accordance with Section 9 of this standard. 3.4 Identification of areas containing known or suspected hazardous materials, including but not limited to, lead, asbestos, or mold. 3.5 Visual inspection for existence of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines compliant radon mitigation system. 3.6 Visual inspection for existence of knob and tube wiring. 3.7 Identification of obvious electrical hazards.

Review of BPI Standard Envelope Professional

Where the presence of **asbestos**, lead, mold and/or other known or suspected hazardous material is present, all relevant state and federal (EPA) guidelines must be followed to ensure technician and occupant safety. Blower door depressurization tests may not be performed in homes where there is a risk of **asbestos** becoming airborne and being drawn into the dwelling.

Review of EPA 402/K-11/003 | [EPA, Healthy Indoor Environment Protocols for Home Energy Upgrades October 2011](#)

If suspected asbestos-containing material (ACM) is in good condition, do not disturb. If suspected ACM is damaged (e.g., unraveling, frayed, breaking apart), immediately isolate the area(s). For example, separate work area in question from occupied portions of the building using appropriate containment practices AND do not disturb. For suspected ACM that is damaged or that must be disturbed as part of the retrofit activity, contact an asbestos professional for abatement or repair, in accordance with federal, state and local requirements. Only a licensed or trained professional may abate, repair or remove ACM.

Note: Standard Operating Procedure for Asbestos Repair

Typically, trained professionals can repair asbestos by:

- Sealing or Encapsulating: Treating the material with a sealant that either binds the asbestos fibers together or coats the material so fibers are not released. Pipe, furnace and boiler insulation can often be repaired this way.
- Covering or Enclosing: Placing a protective layer over OR around the ACM to prevent release of fibers. Exposed insulated piping may be covered with a protective wrap or jacket.
- Removing: Removing ACM may be advantageous when remodeling OR making major changes to a home that will disturb ACM, or if ACM is damaged extensively and cannot be otherwise repaired (by covering, enclosing, sealing or encapsulating).

Note: Real world examples:

A homeowner as 10 feet of Thermal System insulation on an abandoned steam boiler in the basement. The asbestos insulation was professionally removed by the licensed asbestos contractor and the permit cleared by the local jurisdiction. **Why should the rebate for attic insulation be denied when all of the work was done in the basement?** Colorado has some of the strictest laws in the country regarding asbestos removal. The CDPHE and other local municipalities issues permits for asbestos removal in schools, public buildings, private facilities since permitting has been required. This function is necessary for the protection of public health. **The contractors go through vigorous training and licensing to protect themselves and the public. These buildings are as safe as a new building once the abatement has been completed.**

COMMENTS FROM | Jim Meyers, Director Buildings Efficiency Program, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, (SWEET) Member of EEBC's Board

PSCo Company Statement – Insulation 60-Day Notice

The 60 day notice does not align with the updated insulation rebate program requirements. The notice is more restrictive than the Insulation and Air Sealing program requirements. Notices should reflect the proposed program requirements and not apply additional requirements. The notice does not allow rebates to any home that had/has any of these materials or symptoms even if professionally mitigated

Why the 60-Day Notice narrative should be modified.

The 60 day notice prevents the program from performing air sealing and insulation work in a home that “has” or at one time in the history of the building “had” asbestos, black mold, or vermiculite installed in the building. The 60 day notice also states the Building Performance Institute (BPI) standards align with Xcel’s new requirements. After a review of the BPI standards there could be found no requirements prohibiting testing of houses *after* mitigation had occurred in the house. The last sentence in the first paragraph of the 60 day notice should be stricken from the notice.

The other concern is how requirements for mitigation and workforce safety from EPA and OSHA are exceeded by an Xcel program. The EPA, OSHA and other federal organizations have developed safe and effective mitigation techniques to remove products such as asbestos. Mitigation of asbestos or vermiculite should not disqualify a house from participating in the air sealing and insulation program.

The term black mold is a generic term that can have many meanings. If the company is actually referring to the more dangerous mold *Stachybotrys Chartarum*, sometimes referred to as black mold, then the notice and program requirements should state the actual name of mold. Otherwise non-toxic molds that may be found in showers and bathtubs would disqualify a home from participating in the air sealing and insulation program.

Why the insulation and air sealing program amendments should be modified.

The BPI standards do not prevent diagnostic air tests on homes that have been mitigated from asbestos or vermiculite. The addition of the term black mold is inappropriate and can eliminate vast numbers of houses from participating in the program because of innocuous mold found in bathrooms and kitchens. The Xcel territory in Colorado is located in a dry climate with minimal mold issues. Other states such as Texas, which is located in a moist climate, do see and have issues with *Stachybotrys Chartarum*. Change the term black mold to *Stachybotrys Chartarum* in the program requirements.

Why this change should be disallowed per below documentation.

BPI does not prohibit diagnostic air sealing work after mitigation of toxic materials. EPA and OSHA mitigation standards should be enough criteria for a utility program. Black mold is too generic of a term and can mean many types of fungus. Labeling houses, and Xcel customers, negatively because of a past history of the house - which is now mitigated, is not in sync with a customer centric organization.

COMMENTS FROM | Scott Mills, AboutSavingHeat.com

With tighter homes the health problems increase from mold and dust from asbestos and vermiculite. There is no reason to disqualify rebates for mitigated problems. Owners may drop not only air sealing and insulation projects but also drop mitigating other problems, leading to increased health and safety issue. Mitigation is costly and should have its own rebates along with air sealing and insulation.