

Roof Covering Repair Requirements and the International Codes

Overview

It is common for an existing building to be serviceable in every way; however, some roof repairs may be required. On many occasions, MCA has been asked what types of roof repair materials are required and what code supporting language exists. The decision on what material to use is often based on two factors.

1. The fire classification of the existing roof that was defined when the building was constructed.
2. The current requirements of the local building code (whether or not a permit is required)

MCA investigated this issue and found direction offered within the Existing Building Code.

Discussion

When buildings are constructed, many roofs are required by code to meet fire resistance performance levels determined by ASTM E108 or UL 790. Typically, the roof will be designated “Class A”, “Class B” or “Class C” depending upon the fire performance rating in those tests. MCA believes that when repairs are made to the roof assembly, the repaired roof should continue to meet the originally intended performance requirements.

This position is supported in the International Code Council (ICC) Existing Building Code and shown here:

2012 INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE®

SECTION 601 GENERAL

601.1 Scope. Repairs as described in Section 502 shall comply with the requirements of this chapter. Repairs to historic buildings need only comply with Chapter 12.

601.2 Conformance. The work shall not make the building less conforming than it was before the repair was undertaken.

SECTION 603 FIRE PROTECTION

603.1 General. Repairs shall be done in a manner that maintains the level of fire protection provided.

While the repairs can be accomplished using a variety of currently available materials, the important issue is maintaining the overall performance of the roof assembly.

Conclusion

While the majority of the ICC codes target new construction, there are specific performance requirements defined in the Existing Building Code.

For roof assemblies, the reference code sections are 601.2 and 603.1. Both sections state that the level of performance for the building should not be diminished by any repairs that take place. This guidance should aid designers and building maintenance personnel in material selection and building departments providing roof repair permits.

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