Technical Bulletin: Mineral Wool Insulation

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A number of program builders have been using mineral wool insulation (Rockwool) on their projects. This is often driven by code inspectors, who frequently require these products for fire blocking as they are usually rated non-combustible and act as a fire barrier. In addition to fire prevention, mineral wool has several benefits:

- It is available in higher insulation values than fiberglass batts.
- The rigid shape allows the batt to be cut accurately and enables it to fill stud voids more completely.
- It has water repelling capabilities (hydrophobic).
- It has good sound absorption and noise vibration reduction.

Though you may find the benefits of mineral wool more desirable than fiberglass for your construction practices, please note that mineral wool is **not** an air barrier. Air sealing practices must be consistent whether using mineral wool or fiberglass insulation.

Example 1

The picture to the left shows a second floor top plate in a multi-family project. Mineral wool insulation was installed for fire blocking at the party wall as required by the local code inspector. When the foam air sealing was installed at the top plate, the contractor went around the mineral wool. There is still air transmittance between the second floor and the attic. The mineral wool should have been temporarily pulled to allow continuous air sealing across the top plate and then reinstalled.

Example 2

The picture to the left shows a second floor top plate in a multi-family project. Mineral wool insulation was installed between the top plate and the party wall. Although this satisfies fire stopping requirements, it is **NOT** adequate air sealing and could cause a failure in your air infiltration testing.