



NEWS

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On the Horizon: New Design Values for Southern Pine *SPIB is First to Submit Proposed New Design Values to ALSC*

The Southern Pine Inspection Bureau (SPIB) has submitted new design values for visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber for review by the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC). The new values will ensure that Southern Pine lumber will continue to be strong and reliable when used properly in the construction of residential and commercial buildings. SPIB is the first rules-writing agency to submit new values. Rules-writing agencies responsible for other species are in different stages for evaluating design values.



The last major change for visually graded dimension lumber occurred in 1991 when design values for Southern Pine and other North American species were published based on In-Grade testing of full-size samples of commercially produced lumber. Since 1994, SPIB has conducted an annual resource monitoring program developed in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory (FPL). Although the level established to trigger additional testing was never reached, overall trends in the annual test data suggested a possible shift in the resource mix. These trends, along with anecdotal external information, prompted SPIB to conduct a year-long program of testing and data review.

SPIB and Timber Products Inspection selected full-size No.2 2x4 specimens following a sampling plan approved by ALSC. SPIB and Timber Products conducted destructive tests in bending and tension, plus gathered stiffness and property data, all in accordance with established ASTM standards. SPIB also performed the data analysis in conformance with ASTM standards and then submitted the results to ALSC. SPIB's data analysis is currently being reviewed by FPL.

Moving forward, the Southern Pine industry will fill out the full In-Grade testing matrix, sampling Select Structural 2x4s, No.2 and Select Structural 2x8s, and No.2 and Select Structural 2x10s. SPIB and Timber Products will conduct destructive tests in bending, tension and compression, plus gather stiffness and property data. Testing is scheduled to be completed by Spring 2012. Following this In-Grade re-assessment, Southern Pine will continue to be monitored on an annual basis with destructive tests.

ALSC's Board of Review may approve new design values as soon as their next meeting, scheduled for October 20, 2011. Or, ALSC may decide they need additional information, such as the results from

SPIB's full In-Grade matrix test results, before granting final approval. SPIB will publish new design values for visually graded Southern Pine lumber upon receiving final approval from ALSA.

Southern Pine remains strong, reliable

Southern Pine's strength remains comparable to other softwood species used in residential and commercial construction. "The strength and superior treatability of Southern Pine lumber against decay and termites continues to provide a great value for manufacturers, designers, builders and consumers," said Adrian Blocker, president of the Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA). "The extensive testing protocols used assure that everyone involved in the specification, sale and use of our products has the most current information about how Southern Pine lumber can be used confidently and economically", said Blocker.

"Component manufacturers, treaters and design-build professionals have many Southern Pine product options available to them. These customers can achieve the product performance they need by identifying a particular design value, choosing from a number of visual grade selections or specifying their choice of mechanically graded lumber," said Blocker.

Proposed Design Value Changes

Design values are assigned to six basic lumber properties. These values are used in designing light-frame construction and provide guidance for designers in calculating the performance of a structural system. Design values for four of the properties – bending, tension, compression and stiffness – are based on data from testing full-size, commercially-produced lumber specimens. Proposed new design values for these four properties may be reduced approximately 25-30%. New design values are proposed to change for all grades and all sizes of visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber 2" to 4" thick, 2" and wider. "All grades" includes Select Structural, No.1, No.2, No.3, Stud, Construction, Standard and Utility. "All sizes" includes 2x2s through 4x12s (and wider).

Design values for shear and compression perpendicular-to-grain are based on specific gravity. The average specific gravity observed from the latest testing of No.2 2x4s was not found to be different enough from the published Southern Pine specific gravity value of 0.55 to warrant a proposed change at this time. Because specific gravity is not proposed to change, the design values for shear and compression perpendicular are also not proposed to change.

What About Dense Lumber?

Test results did not indicate enough of a difference between Dense, unclassified and NonDense lumber to continue publishing three different design values for each lumber grade. The result will be a simplified table with design values assigned by lumber grade without density classifications. However, it is important to note that the SPIB Grading Rules will not change. Dense lumber remains an option for Southern Pine users requiring Dense material, such as proprietary grades for laminated beams. If Dense lumber is specified, it will have the same new design values as the corresponding unclassified lumber grade. For example, if No.2 Dense is specified, it will have the same design values as No.2.

Top Two Questions Addressed

Q – What will the new values mean for existing inventories of lumber in the supply chain?

A – Existing inventory can still be used, but it may need to be used differently. Visually graded dimension lumber is identified with a grade mark that includes the grade name (e.g. No.2), but not the specific design values associated with that grade name. Therefore, existing inventory will have the new design values associated with it as of the effective date of SPIB's *Supplement No.9 of the 2002 Standard Grading Rules for Southern Pine Lumber*. As before, Southern Pine grades and sizes should be used as specified on plans or construction drawings.

Q – What effect will the new design values have on maximum spans?

A – The impacts on end uses will depend on the specific application but, in general, maximum spans for typical joist and rafter applications will be reduced for a given visual grade. However, there are several options available to achieve similar maximum spans as before. One option is to specify a higher grade and/or larger size of visually graded Southern Pine lumber. Another option is to specify mechanically graded lumber. For example, possible substitutes for visually graded No.2 2x4 Southern Pine lumber include 1650f-1.5E Machine Stress Rated (MSR) or M-12 Machine Evaluated Lumber (MEL).

For answers to more questions about the proposed new design values for visually graded Southern Pine dimension lumber, visit www.southernpine.com.

Southern Pine lumber remains one of the best construction products on the market today. It is the only lumber species that has been monitored annually since 1994, making it the most tested wood species in America.

SFPA is a nonprofit trade association that has represented manufacturers of Southern Pine lumber since 1915. Today, SFPA is the leading source of information about Southern Pine products for design-build professionals and consumers.

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