Undoubtedly, every spray-applied fireproofing contractor worth his pumps knows how to work with fireproofing material manufacturers. But it is also true that many do not fully realize the extent of services offered by suppliers and may not be taking profitable advantage of these services.

Responsible suppliers recognize the importance of the contractor to the continued well-being of their product and consequently take a vital interest in the contractor’s needs before, during and after a job is undertaken. Contractors should realize this and really insist on a responsive supplier.

The supplier’s interest begins at the beginning. As soon as he learns that a job is pending he will contact those who would normally bid on the particular job in question. Even though leads on jobs are available to all, a smart contractor will make a point of working closely with a supplier in receiving these leads in a timely fashion.

As the contractor prepares his bid, steady contact with the supplier is very valuable. The supplier can provide estimating guidelines that the contractor can adapt to his own operating speed and procedure. The supplier will provide all current information on design ratings as well as fully-updated product descriptions.

Often the supplier can inform the contractor of special conditions on a particular job. The supplier might
Proper application and field testing procedures go hand-in-hand in assuring quality fireproofing installations.

Point out where additional fireproofing might be needed. There also may be unique problems surrounding a job that call for special solutions by the contractor. The supplier should be able to recommend ways that such demands can be met.

The supplier should provide hard information that should translate directly into dollars and cents. Estimating guides for material quantity are only the beginning. Instruction on boosting production will also affect the bid. The supplier should recommend whether to use existing equipment, have it modified, rent the proper equipment, or make a new purchase. He should explain which equipment is the most desirable and give reasons why. Then he should explain where and how the right equipment is obtained. Finally, detailed descriptions should be given on how to achieve high production efficiency once the job has begun.

When the bid is completely drawn up, the supplier should examine it and assure the contractor that it is accurate and reasonable as it relates to fireproofing material and application procedures. Because of the lively competition in this field, suppliers have to be experts in all facets of fireproofing. The future of their products depends on it: This means that they are competent to advise on fireproofing material, production, application and fire rated design requirements. They know their way through the UL directory and work very closely with architects and structural engineers. Because they get involved with all the concerned parties, their evaluation of a contractor’s bid provides an excellent perspective.

With award of the job, the supplier can provide the contractor with detailed descriptions of procedures from pre-setup planning to job completion. Suggestions should be given on working with the job superintendent; what the contractor

Continued on page 33
SUPPLIERS
Continued from page 15

should expect and what he should demand. Proper surface preparation of the steel—freedom from oil or rust—clear floorspace and adequate water supply and pressure are among the requirements stressed by a knowledgeable contractor. Procedures for setting up equipment should be provided by the supplier. This includes where and how a permanent pumping station is established. Truck entries and material storage are considerations of basic importance, as is the condition of the contractor's equipment. The supplier should advise on all of this.

Within reason, a representative of the supplier, preferably the one present from the job's inception, should be available to the contractor anywhere, anytime. He should walk the job prior to setup, point out hazards and opportunities, monitor production, check equipment and make sure the contractor is following the best application procedures.

Naturally, problems do occur on any job. The supplier is obligated to respond immediately to complaints about material—be they on performance, delivery, whatever—and have a representative sent out to rectify on-site difficulties. Other problems, be they equipment failure, inefficient production, or problems on the building site, can be solved with the help of a supplier.

Safety is as important to the supplier as it is to the contractor. A good supplier will advise on scaffolding, tarps and any other peripheral requirement, as well as on the safe use of application equipment.

Few contractors are fully cognizant of the overall complexities in fireproofing technology. Research and development, constant testing, understanding codes, quality control, prompt transportation and factory production are all interests that preoccupy the manufacturer of fireproofing material.

These concerns ultimately benefit the contractor since they affect the performance of the product he applies.

Put more specifically, a contractor should demand of a fireproofing supplier quality in product and efficiency of procedure such as will essentially eliminate the possibility of callback due to the failure of material or procedure.

Anything less, and the contractor is not taking full advantage of his supplier and will not enjoy the excellent profitability possible in this business.