



FIBERGLASS GYPSUM SHEATHING

New Sheathing Material Provides
Greater Weather Protection

When Jean Pepin of Jean Pepin Drywall Company, Inc. took on a condo project in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, he had no idea he would be making history.

Pepin's company was the first in the country to install Dens-Glass™ gypsum sheathing, a new product from Georgia-Pacific Corporation that has the potential to change the face of the gypsum sheathing industry.

This new gypsum sheathing has a fiberglass face and back which gives it strength and resilience. Extensive exposure tests show the fiberglass mat enables the sheathing to withstand the elements far longer than traditional paper-faced gypsum sheathing.

Pepin began the 33,000-square-foot Seawatch Condominium project in the fall of 1984. He wanted to dry in the ocean-front building so that interior construction could continue during the harsh New England winter. "I looked at the stuff, saw it was new, and I knew water couldn't damage it," said Pepin.

Pepin, a member of AWCI, is no stranger to what damage New England winters can dish out. He has been a contractor in Maine, headquartered in

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Augusta, for 26 years. Pepin said almost 90 percent of his business today is commercial. His company employs more than 90 employees.

Sheathing installation on Seawatch began with a gypsum sheathing curtain wall on 16-inch oc metal studs. Metal screws were used 8 inches oc on the perimeter and 12 inches oc in the field. All the boards were applied vertically although horizontal application is also acceptable for installation of fiberglass sheathing. The joints were not caulked.

Once Seawatch was dried in, the sheathing remained exposed all winter—from late October to April. In April, an exterior insulation finish system (EIFS) was installed over the sheathing using 1-inch EPS insulation adhesively applied to the sheathing. No mechanical fasteners were used to adhere the insulation to the sheathing.

No Deterioration . . .

In spite of prolonged exposure to rain, sleet, snow, sea winds and blowing sand, the fiberglass gypsum sheathing showed no signs of deterioration or delamination. “It bonds real good—much better than paper faced board,” Pepin said.

Another gypsum contractor who used paper-faced gypsum sheathing on a nearby project wasn’t as fortunate. Construction on his project began approximately the same time as Pepin’s had for Seawatch. However, when time approached for installation of the EIFS in the spring, much of the paper-faced board required replacement—a costly, time-consuming process. His experience was typical for projects using paper-faced gypsum sheathing exposed to rain, ice, snow and salt water for extended periods. Paper-faced gypsum sheathing can sag, delaminate and warp.

Engineers inspected Seawatch during a followup visit in March 1986

and found no joint show-through, no deterioration or delamination, no visual signs of defective product or delamination on vertical surface walls or under the portico overhang. That

lead the manufacturer to provide Dens-Glass gypsum sheathing with an unprecedented six-month limited commercial warranty covering exposure to normal weather conditions. 

