September 10, 2021

MATERIAL SHORTAGE - INDUSTRY NOTICE

This communication is to provide clarification on expectations and progress of a project throughout the current industry material shortage.

Windows - Background
Due to material shortage and the ongoing pandemic, pre-manufactured window units seem to be delayed. The City of Kitchener standard has always been that all exterior elements (doors, windows, and shingles) are to be installed along with mechanical rough in’s prior to booking Structural Framing Inspections. The reason behind this, is to allow the construction to progress onto insulation stage should the structural framing inspection pass, based on the building envelope being weathertight.

In 2020, when window supply seemed to be delayed, we modified our requirements to allow structural framing inspections without the windows installed. This gave the industry the chance to correct framing deficiencies while waiting for windows to arrive and get installed. We continue to hold passing structural framing inspections until all deficiencies are corrected and windows are installed as the building envelope is incomplete, and many insulation manufacturer’s do not warranty product that is exposed to weather elements.

Expectation
As noted above we have modified our standard for inspections recognizing material shortage/delay and will continue that until further notice. We will perform the Structural Framing Inspection without windows installed but will not allow progression of insulation until the windows are installed and sealed. The exception to this would be if a builder is using an approved house wrap and left the house wrap intact over the window openings with appropriate backing. We would accept this temporary method to continue to insulation stage.

Exterior Doors - Background
Recently, we have been made aware that there is also a shortage/delay of exterior doors including sliding patio doors, much like the window industry.

Expectation
We are applying the same expectation for exterior doors as we have for exterior windows. We will perform the Structural Framing Inspection; however, we will not pass the inspection and allow insulation until all exterior doors are installed and sealed. The exception to this, is to install temporary exterior doors in openings or install a waterproof panel over the openings (OSB Panel gasketed to exterior face and completely sealed with a waterproof membrane like Blueskin).

Occupancy Permit
The OBC requires that “the building envelope, including, but not limited to, cladding, roofing, windows, doors, assemblies requiring fire-resistance ratings, closures, insulation, vapour barriers and air barriers, with respect to the dwelling unit to be occupied, is substantially complete.” We will continue to enforce this requirement throughout the material shortage.

Tim Benedict, Manager, Building