

U.S. Fire Administration / National Fire Academy

Warning: Hot Coffee!

Topic: Web-Based Lightweight Construction Education

Learning objective: The student shall be able to obtain online education to enhance firefighter awareness of lightweight construction.

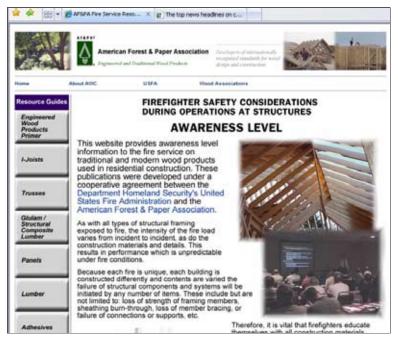
Firefighters need to be familiar with lightweight materials and construction techniques they find during fires. Modern design, construction, and wood products present new opportunities for builders and the fire service alike.

To help the fire service learn more about these products and their behavior during fires, the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) and U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) today announce the launch of a comprehensive Web-based educational program designed to enhance firefighter awareness of lightweight construction components.

"Firefighter safety and building construction are important issues for the fire service today," said Charlie Dickinson, acting U.S. Fire Administrator. "Education is critical for firefighters operating at incidents to understand how modern building products perform in fires."

Engineered wood products (trusses, glue-laminated beams, structural composite lumber, structural insulated panels, and wood structural panels) are replacing dimensional lumber in many applications.

Lumber, plywood, and other wood-based materials, including the components of I-joists and trusses, exhibit a relatively narrow flame spread range. Flame spread rates for engi-



neered wood products such as laminated veneer lumber, parallel strand lumber, and laminated strand lumber are within the same range as solid wood materials. Differences result from factors such as density, thickness, surface characteristics, and coatings or other chemicals applied, if any. Typically, at thicknesses greater than 1/4 inch, flame spread is almost independent of material thickness.

The Web-based training program, found at http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/research/safety/construction.shtm, was developed as an AF&PA/USFA cooperative agreement with the assistance of several State and local training organizations. FireFrame, an interactive tool that explains building construction methods, also is included on the site.