Washington State Department of Labor & Industries
Division of Occupational Safety and Health

Q&A Questions and Answers: Fire-Resistant Materials Application Certification

Background State law requires employers in the construction industry to meet requirements for workers who install spray on fire-resistant material or firestop in buildings, whether new or existing.

What requirements are there for workers performing the installation of fire-resistant material, including spray-on fireproofing or firestop?

- Each worker must be certified to apply the specific type of fire-resistant material they are working with.
- To get certified workers must:
  - Attend a Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I)-approved training course with the required training hours for each specific type of fire-resistant material being applied by the worker.
  - Complete and submit an L&I application for certification.

What building types does this requirement affect?

Those installing spray-on fireproofing in all building types I-V according to the International Building Code (IBC), such as mixed-use, office, school, and medical buildings, must be certified.

What risk categories does this requirement affect?

Those who are installing firestop in buildings with a specific risk category (risk category III or IV) must be certified. These buildings are typically high occupancy, schools, and surgery/medical facilities.

Note: not all commercial buildings are considered risk category III or IV. Therefore, not every building where firestop is installed will require workers to be certified for fire-resistant materials application.

How do you know if the building you are working in is a risk category III or IV?

Typically, the construction drawings will show you what the building risk category is in the notes or details.

Do the workers need to attend training even if they have been previously trained in fire-resistant materials application?

Yes, all workers are required to attend an L&I-approved training either from an apprenticeship program registered with the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council, by a fire-resistant material manufacturer, or by other certified training providers approved by L&I to provide training in the application of fire-resistant materials.

Are all contractors required to verify that workers attended the training course and are certified?

- Yes, workers must be certified before the application of fire-resistant material.
- Workers supporting the installation of fire-resistant materials such as laborers installing scaffolding, installation of overspray tarps, clean-up of overspray, or mixing materials do not need to be certified applicators. Only those installing fire-resistant materials fall under this requirement.

Do all employers have to meet these requirements?

All employers and contractors in the construction industry who install fire-resistant materials, such as spray-on fireproofing in building types I-V and firestop in buildings with a risk category III or IV under the IBC, are required to meet these requirements, regardless of the number of workers.

What fire-resistant materials do not require certification?

Firestop in building risk categories I or II according to the IBC; gypsum wallboard installation; specialized concrete placement; and intumescent coatings or wall, soffit, or other framing of metal/steel studs or dimensional lumber or buildings that fall under the International Residential Code, including single-family residences, duplexes, and townhomes.

Are there personnel that do not require fire-resistant materials installation certification?

Yes. Project team members within a company such as project managers, project engineers, superintendents, fire protection engineers, architects and building inspectors, design management, contract management, or any individual not responsible for the direct application of fire-resistant materials are not required to obtain certification.

Are there any other industry recognized terms to be aware of?

Yes, there are terms not used in the statute that are sometimes used in the industry such as:

- **Spray-Applied Fire-Resistive Materials (SFRMs).** SFRMs are composed primarily of binding agents, such as cement or gypsum, and often contain other materials such as mineral wool, quartz, perlite, bauxite, or vermiculite. SFRMs are available as a wet or dry spray formula and application. The SFRMs are generally delivered as a dry powder in a bag, which is then mixed with water in the field. They are typically sprayed, but some can also be trowel applied.
- **Dry-mix SFRMs.** Consist of a factory-mixed, dry formulation of cement, inorganic binders combined with mineral wool. It is conveyed in a dry state by pneumatic equipment and mixed with water at the nozzle, forming a slurry, which is then applied to the substrate.
- **Wet-mix SFRMs.** Consist of a factory-mixed, dry formulation of gypsum or cement binders and lightweight mineral or synthetic aggregates mixed with water to form a slurry for conveyance and application.

Where do I go to receive more information?

L&I has a rulemaking page, we encourage you to review the link and review the rule. If you have questions, please reach out to the contacts on the resource page Fire-Resistant Materials Applicator Rulemaking (**Lni.wa.gov/FRMACertification**).

Questions?

Please reach out to the Fire-Resistant Materials Applicator Program via email, Frmapplicators@Lni.wa.gov.

June 2025

FY25-623 [06-2025]