



INFORMATION SHEET

BUILDING SERVICES

Ref: MAT 12-08
Current at: May 2013

BUILDING PRODUCT TECHNICAL INFORMATION: WHAT SHOULD YOU BE LOOKING FOR?

This information sheet sets out an approach to the provision of technical information and product technical statements for building products. This approach is intended to assist builders, designers, and building certifiers to identify the right information in relation to any building product being used on a project to verify that it is fit for the purpose you intend to use it.

There is a range of ways that a building product can prove it meets the relevant building code or Australian Standards requirements, including: labels, brochures, certificates, material safety data sheets, technical information brochures and the like. Depending on the risk in using the product for its intended purpose, you can choose how much information you get to verify that a product meets these standards. For major structural components, the building certifier will expect you can provide written evidence that the material you have used meets the required standards.

Detailed conformance information can be provided by two ways and you should be able to obtain this information for the major structural components in a home, such as bricks, windows, steel, timber and concrete. The two options are:

1. Technical Information provided by the building product manufacturer or supplier
2. A Product Technical Statement (PTS) provided by the building product manufacturer or supplier

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Currently technical information is provided by building product manufacturers or suppliers in an array of formats and with varying level of detail. These documents should all provide you with the essential information you need, regardless of format. The following list of key elements is a guide to what an acceptable level of relevant technical information should be provided on the product, hopefully in a succinct manner.

The key elements of technical information provided by a manufacturer or supplier should include:

Description: a short description of the product – what it is and its intended use.

Language: instructions in plain English, with clear sentences and diagrams.

Design Instructions: clear statements to help designers successfully integrate the product with other products, e.g. produce a conforming building system such as lightweight cladding using polystyrene, fibreglass mesh, adhesives and render.

Construction Instructions: clear instructions to assist builders and contractors successfully install the product. Clear statement outlining when an approved installer must be used.

Maintenance requirements: guidance for the building owner to effectively maintain the product over its lifetime. Clear statements describing potential consequences if specified maintenance is not carried out.

Test Results: details of any tests carried out on the product, and what those tests showed.

DISCLAIMER - The above is intended to provide general information in summary form. The contents do not constitute specific advice and should not be relied upon as such. Formal specific advice should be sought by members with respect to particular matters before taking action.

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Quality Assurance: information about any measures in place to ensure consistent production quality. May include a statement of acceptable variations.

Product Support: Australian contact details for organisations able to provide product advice and support.

PRODUCT TECHNICAL STATEMENTS

Providing good technical information on a building product may not cover everything needed to demonstrate compliance with the Building Code of Australia. To fill this gap the manufacturer or supplier may provide a supplementary Product Technical Statement (PTS). If provided, this type of information should include the following elements:

Statement of Building Code conformance: a clear statement of the Building Code of Australia clauses that relate to the product and a self-declaration of conformance with the performance requirements of those clauses.

Scope of use: a statement using recognised Australian terms (e.g. high wind, bushfire zones and corrosion zones) that outlines the product's scope of use, including any conditions or limitations on its use.

Consenting Instructions: any statements useful to a builder or building certifier to assist them in making decisions about the conformance of building work that uses the particular building product or construction system.

The PTS should *accompany* not replace the technical information for a building product and it should cross reference any other documents that provide evidence to support:

- the conformance claims, such as test reports or technical opinions
- the use of the product, such as installation or maintenance manuals.

Ideally, supporting documents should be uniquely identifiable by date or version number to avoid any possibility of confusion. Just because you use the same timber for each job, doesn't mean you shouldn't get an up to date copy of the technical information or PTS for each project. From time to time manufacturers will change their processes which can affect the scope of the product, so always check.

To gain the maximum benefit from a PTS it should be readily available. Assertions about conformance and a detailed scope of use will assist building designers when specifying a product and will help building certifiers when assessing building approvals or inspecting completed building work.

**HIA members can contact HIA's Building Services team for more information
on 1300 650 620 or hia_technical@hia.com.au.**