

Personalized Service for Engineered Wood Systems

Mead Clark has one of the best EWP design departments in Northern California

As homebuilders use engineered wood components more often in their roof and floor construction, Mead Clark's Engineered Wood Products (EWP) Department is on hand to make the job go faster and simpler. For the past 10 years, the department has been one of the best in Northern California, with a team of EWP specialists who use the latest software and computer technology to ensure builders get the most efficient, cost-effective use out of the products they are buying. If you are an owner-builder, custom homebuilder, developer who constructs one or two houses a year, framing contractor on multi-unit projects or a builder of mid-sized tracts, this service is meant for you. Residential building accounts for at least two-thirds of EWP sales, according to the U.S International Trade Commission.

Engineered wood is a general term that describes wood-based building parts that are manufactured by gluing or laminating together wood strands, fibers and chips. Engineered wood products are structural components than have been fabricated by using these recycled or reconstituted wood materials. "Our engineered wood services go far beyond what a typical lumberyard would offer," says Glenn Suyeyasu, EWP Department manager. "Many commercial and residential builders in Sonoma and Lake Counties know about the design and ordering assistance we provide, but Marin and Napa customers are just discovering us," he notes.

How Our Design Team Can Help You

Working with your building plans EWP specialists Glenn Suyeyasu, Gordon Heihn and Kim Givens can help design your engineered wood floor or roof system to make sure you get the best EWP system possible. Once the design is complete, they help you lay out the drawing of your EWP system. Then they produce a map of that layout to be used in the field, "to tell you and your installers exactly where the pieces go," Suyeyasu explains. Sometimes in smaller jobs the

EWP designers also recommend beam sizes, but usually that information comes from the project engineer.

EWP specialists can also put together a product list for your EWP package which you can take to your project manager, estimator or directly to Mead Clark's contractor sales department. Sales reps order your EWP package from the manufacturer along with your lumber order. When your EWP package arrives, Mead Clark cuts the components to size and delivers them to your job site. We use leading EWP manufacturer's products including, TrusJoist, a division of Weyerhaeuser and Louisiana Pacific.

The EWP team is also on hand to help with problems that come up in the field during installation. "For instance, if someone cuts a hole in an I-joist in the wrong place, we can tell them if it can be repaired without weakening the joist or if the part must be replaced," Suyeyasu says.

Benefits Are Many

For some builders the best part of Mead Clark's service is the time efficiency. The EWP department boasts a turnaround time—from getting the building plans to jobsite delivery of the EWP components—a week or less. By planning EWP packages in house Mead Clark can cut job preparation time in half. Customers are saved from sending their building plans to an EWP wholesale supplier who lays out the EWP system, compiles the product list and then sends the list to a retail lumberyard, which in turn places the order with the wholesale supplier. That process typically takes weeks.

Having Mead Clark handle EWP layout, product lists, ordering and custom cutting has yet another benefit. It cuts down on waste which keeps your costs under control.

Before Heihn joined Mead Clark back in 2000, he worked for several years at an engineered wood supplier and gained valuable experience working with

EWP design software. "We learned how to stretch [the way we used] the product so we took maximum advantage of the strength of the components. In other words we became skilled at getting the most bang for every buck," he says. He brings that efficiency and product knowledge to his work at Mead Clark. Additional waste is avoided because the EWP specialists know the capabilities of Mead Clark's new precision saw (see related story) and don't need to order extra material to cover for imprecise cuts.

Future of Engineered Wood

For some uses engineered wood is more desirable than conventional sawn lumber. When it comes to tolerances in stability, consistency, straightness and strength, engineered wood can perform better than lumber, according to Sustainable Sources, a clearinghouse for building information. Joists and rafters made of engineered wood, in particular, do not bow or move laterally in long spans. Suyeyasu recalls that EWP was used primarily in commercial construction in the late 1990s and gradually moved into single family residential construction. "Today most construction plans, both residential and commercial, have at least some engineered wood components," says Suyeyasu. Sawn lumber is becoming more sporadic in size and dimensions, and customers know they can get consistency from engineered wood. Plus they are learning about the span capabilities of EWP." Yet another factor fueling popularity of EWP systems is homebuyers' increasing interest in green building materials. Engineered wood drastically reduces the amount of waste created in processing lumber, says greenbuilder.com.

Suyeyasu predicts that engineered wood will play an even greater role in homebuilding as lumber supplies decline and remodelers will begin to see ways they can use the products.