

consumers to verify for themselves that the correct amount of insulation has been installed. In addition to considering final settled thickness, they must perform calculations regarding coverage area and bag count to determine if the proper weight per square foot has been applied. The proposed initial installed thickness information should allow consumers, armed with a ruler, to determine whether the sufficient thickness of insulation has been installed. It should also provide installers with more straight-forward instructions for providing consumers with adequate amounts of insulation. In addition, the specific reference to initial installed thickness should reduce the probability that installers will mistakenly follow the settled thickness information on the labels in their initial application of material.⁹⁷

Although we propose to add disclosure requirements for initial installed thickness information, the Commission does not propose to eliminate any of the existing disclosure requirements related to loose-fill such as bag count. Manufacturers would continue to provide information currently required on loose-fill labels such as minimum settled thickness, maximum new coverage area, number of bags per 1,000 square feet, and minimum weight per square foot at various R-values as general guidance for the installer and the consumer. Installers would continue to be required to disclose to customers the number of bags used and the coverage area. This information will provide consumers and inspectors with an additional means to verify that installers have provided an appropriate amount of material. It may discourage unscrupulous installers from intentionally altering the settings on blowing machines to “fluff” material (i.e., increase thickness at the expense of density and total R-value). In addition, it is likely that most contractors would continue to need information about area and bag count for billing purposes.

The Rule would continue to require manufacturers of loose-fill cellulose insulation to conduct their R-value tests at the settled density using ASTM C 739–91 as specified by section 460.5(a)(2). Manufacturers of other loose-fill material also would have to continue to conduct R-value tests based on samples that fully reflect the effect of settling on the product’s R-value (see § 460.5(a)(3)). Manufacturers would

have to use this settling information in determining the initial installed thickness for their products.

The Commission has prepared the following questions to facilitate comment on this proposal. Commenters need not limit their comments to the issues raised by the questions:

- Would the information derived from ASTM C 1374 allow installers to provide the appropriate amount of insulation solely through the use of the manufacturer’s specified blowing machine settings and the installation of the initial installed thickness specified on the bag label?

- Is ASTM C 1374 an appropriate procedure for determining the initial installed thickness for all loose-fill products?

- Are there other test procedures that should be incorporated into the Rule in lieu of (or in addition to) ASTM C 1374?

- Is it possible for manufacturers to provide information on labels about the appropriate blowing machine adjustments and feed rates required to achieve the initial installed thickness derived from ASTM C 1374?

- Should the Rule specify procedures that installers must follow to measure the thickness of the installed material? If so, what should those procedures be (e.g., one measurement for every 100 square feet)?

- Is it possible for manufacturers to provide information on labels about the appropriate blowing machine adjustments and feed rates required to achieve the initial installed thickness derived from ASTM C 1374?

- Is there any specific rule language that would best achieve the proposal discussed here?

- Would incorporation of ASTM C 1374 significantly change the costs consumers would pay for loose-fill insulation? Are any increased costs offset by benefits?

- If installers follow initial installed thickness information for installation purposes, will it be difficult to provide consumers information on coverage area as required by the Rule? Will installers continue to measure coverage area to estimate the volume and cost associated with a particular job?

iii. Additional Loose-Fill Insulation Issues

In the ANPR, the section on “Disclosures for Loose-fill Insulations” included three other issues: (1) whether the Rule should require disclosure on packages of loose-fill insulations of “net weight” instead of “minimum net weight;” (2) whether the Rule should require manufacturers of loose-fill insulations to include unique tabs on

packages and require installers to attach the tabs to consumer receipts to ensure installation of the proper amount of loose-fill insulations; and (3) whether the Rule should require manufacturers to include, in fact sheets, information on how consumers can verify the total R-value of loose-fill insulations installed in their attics.

The Commission did not receive any comments in support of a change to require disclosure of “net weight” instead of “minimum net weight.” NAIMA indicated that the use of unique tabs on packages of loose fill would provide a significant benefit to consumers and urged the Commission to impose such a requirement on a trial basis.⁹⁸ The Commission continues to believe that there is insufficient evidence to suggest that requiring the use of bag tabs would add materially to the benefits conferred by the Rule. Finally, the Commission does not propose to require manufacturers to include, in fact sheets, information on how consumers can verify the total R-value of loose-fill insulations installed in their attics. The installed thickness requirements proposed in this document combined with information already required by the Rule (e.g., bag count, coverage area, and R-value) should provide consumers with adequate information. For these issues, the Commission is not proposing any amendments to the Rule.

d. Disclosures for Urea-based Foam Insulations

Background

In the original 1979 rulemaking proceeding, the Commission determined that the inherent qualities of urea-formaldehyde (“UF”) foam insulations, which were being installed at that time in wall cavities only by professional installers, would cause the products to lose volume or “shrink.” This shrinkage caused the insulation to pull away from the wall cavity after installation, leaving the wall partially uninsulated and resulting in a lower-than-claimed R-value.⁹⁹ To address this problem, the Rule requires that manufacturers disclose the product’s R-value in a manner that accounts for the product’s shrinkage, or include a specific disclosure about the effect of shrinkage on R-value (see section 460.13(d) for fact

⁹⁸ NAIMA (9), p.26.

⁹⁹ Although both the rate and extent of shrinkage depended somewhat on the quality of the chemicals and the product’s on-site formulation and application, even if a UF insulation product was installed perfectly, it would shrink and its R-value would decrease.

⁹⁷ To improve the clarity of existing language in the Rule, the Commission may consider changing the term “minimum thickness” in § 460.12(b)(2) to “minimum settled thickness.” The Commission seeks comment on such an amendment.