

Question of the Day: With the never-ending winter we are having in much of the northern half of the country, are you having bad dreams?

By: Stan Sias, Simpson Strong-Tie National Manager, Plated Truss Industry

You sit bolt-upright in bed, and look around the room. You have never been so grateful to be in your own bedroom... to realize it was only a bad dream. You didn't really just get that dreaded call that a set of your trusses had just fallen during erection and someone was seriously injured.

Some of you may already have had the hair-raising experience, and work hard not to repeat it. Others of you hope and pray the day never comes. The fact of the matter is that there are things you can do to help educate the installation/erection crews, and protect your company's interest in the process.

The best place to start your defensive practice sessions is on the industry website (<http://sbcindustry.com/content/1/truss-collapse-resources>). The Structural Building Components Association (SBCA) offers a number of tremendous resources to help draft a truss collapse response plan, customized to your business. My best advice to you is that you take the time to read all of the articles and review the different checklists.

It will take just a few minutes, but in doing so it will put you in the proper mindset to do what must come next. After you've completed the reading assignment, I would strongly suggest that you call a meeting of your insurance agent and attorney, along with your key production, sales and delivery managers. (Yes, this is probably going to cost a few dollars, but it will be well worth it if you ever do experience a "gravity storm.")

It is important that everyone in the organization is aware of the crisis management plan and process. When you meet with your team and the insurance and legal folks, walk through the disaster response plan in a worst case scenario (personal injury/death). It will be much easier to address the needs, and formalize the steps and your company's checklist, when not under the stress of an actual event. Don't take for granted that your collaborators are going to understand all of your fears and concerns. It may be wise to share the SBCA resources with them prior to your meeting.

Also, share with them the contents of your jobsite delivery package and be prepared to show them the quality control process that assures that the protocol is the same no matter what size trusses are being delivered. Do you have documentation that the jobsite packages are being delivered? Do you submit the jobsite delivery documentation along with your sealed truss design drawings at the time of the building Designer and/or building department review? That is another great way to show the building Designer/building official that you are concerned and have an interest in how the trusses are handled and erected on their jobsite.

Like preparing a will, or estate, retirement or healthcare planning, getting it done is a wonderful feeling. Getting your team to the top of its defensive game will also pay huge dividends. Good luck, and please let us know if you'd like any help along the way.