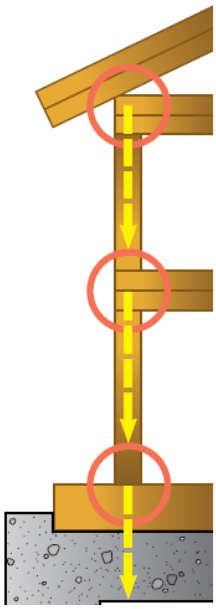
Question of the Day – Scope of Work?

I had a frantic phone call this week from a Component Manufacturer regarding hurricane ties…really big hurricane ties! After answering their question, I posed one of my own, that being "If you are being asked to assume this additional risk in specifying the truss to wall connections on this (very large) multi-family project, who is checking the load path through to the foundation on these three-story structures?"

This brings to light serious questions with regards to the Component Manufacturer's (CMs) assumed and actual scope of work (SOW).

As I have stated many times before in this space, ANSI/TPI 1, Chapter 2 is very clear about the division and assignment of responsibilities with respect to the application of Trusses in the construction of a Building. Unless otherwise changed in the specific contract documents, the provisions of Chapter 2 should be adhered to. With regards to the connection between the roof truss and the bearing support, the IBC requires that there be a Continuous Load Path (Section 2304.9.6) and TPI 1 places the responsibility for the connection between the truss and the structure inside Section 2.3.2.4, Required Information in the Construction Documents, as shown below.



**CONTINUOUS LOAD PATH REQUIREMENTS**

Section 2304.9.6 requires that "Where wall framing members are not continuous from foundation sill to roof, the members shall be secured to ensure a continuous load path." Simpson connectors are frequently used to maintain a continuous load path.

**2.3.2.4 Required Information in the Construction Documents.**

The Registered Design Professional for the Building, through the Construction Documents, shall provide information sufficiently accurate and reliable to be used for facilitating the supply of the Structural Elements and other information for developing the design of the Trusses for the Building, and shall provide the following:

(d) The location, direction, and magnitude of all dead, live, and lateral loads applicable to each Truss including, but not limited to, loads attributable to: roof, floor, partition, mechanical, fire sprinkler, attic storage, rain and ponding, wind, snow (including snow drift and unbalanced snow), seismic; and any other loads on the Truss;

(e) All anchorage designs required to resist uplift, gravity, and lateral loads.

(f) Truss-to-Structural Element connections, but not Truss-to-Truss connections.

Although it may be with the best of intentions when you or your associates inadvertently expand your scope of work to 'do your customer a favor', it is all-to-often exposing you to an incredible increase in your risk. For starters, unless you have an engineer on staff, you may be (and probably are!) not acting in compliance with your State Engineering laws. You may also be acting outside of your insurance coverage and placing your attorney in a precarious position if he/she were called to defend or protect you.

Further, do you or your staff have the expertise to accurately determine all of the loads acting on the truss-to-bearing connection? [A previous Question of the Day addressed the truss to bearing question in great detail.] Are you being compensated to do this work? Do you have the proper professional liability and errors and omissions insurance? Unless you do, and have a Registered Design Professional either on staff or on contract, you may be risking the entire store on this one 'favor'.

Sometimes Owners, Contractors and/or other that do not know or understand TPI 1 or our industry try and force you to assume these additional risks because they feel that you are closest to the product. It is wiser to take the time to educate them then it is to simply knuckle under. Because you may have done it in the past doesn't mean it has to continue. Read the Contract Documents for each project very carefully and either strike any detrimental language or choose to pass. In any event, I would always make a reference to ANSI/TPI 1, Chapter 2 when placing a bid for a new project. Unless the contract documents specifically revise the Design Responsibilities Section, your industry has done a good job to protect your interest. If the contract documents do change the Design Responsibilities assumptions, you then have a business decision to make but as always, business decisions should be made in conjunction with your insurance and legal folks, not as an ill-advised 'favor'.