

What You Need To Know About Building Structural Product Approval



A User's Guide

**Hillsborough County
Development Services Division**

and

**City of Tampa
Construction Services Center**

The implementation of the new Florida Product Approval system on October 1, 2003 is causing a lot of confusion to everyone affected by the new law. This has, in turn, caused different interpretations by local jurisdictions as to what has to be done at the local level. This guide will hopefully answer those questions, and provide guidance to all local jurisdictions for a more consistent enforcement of the law.

What are the options under the new law?

- Local product approval, which means that the product is approved only for that particular jurisdiction.
- Statewide product approval can be obtained under the optional statewide product approval program.

What products are covered?

The covered products are those that affect the structural integrity of buildings during hurricanes. They are:

- Windows
- Skylights
- Exterior doors
- Shutters
- Roofing
- Panel walls
- Structural components
- New and innovative building envelope products

These categories of products must be approved either by the local building department for local use, or by the Florida Building Commission for statewide use.

Is product approval required for every single product used in a building?

This depends on how the product is used. It is the intent of the law to make sure that every building and structure is constructed of approved materials and components. Products such as windows, doors, shutters, skylights, and the like, would require a product approval for the particular product. Materials and/or components that are used in the installation of these products would not, as long as these materials and/or components are provided and installed as specified by the manufacturer of the product.

Some examples of these are:

- **Roofing systems:** The system would receive the product approval, and the components such as nails, screws, adhesives and the like, would be accepted as part of the overall system approval, as long as they were provided and installed as specified by the roofing system manufacturer.
- **Connectors:** Nails used to attach truss joists, hurricane clips, wall studs, and the like, would be accepted as part of the connector approval, as long as they were provided and installed as specified by the connector manufacturer.

- **Panel Walls:** Nails, screws, adhesives, and other fasteners used to attach siding, soffits, EIFS, storefronts, and the like, would be accepted as part of the overall system approval, as long as they were provided and installed as specified by the panel wall manufacturer.

How is the new product approval program different from what was done before?

Previously, independent monitoring (Quality Assurance) of the manufacture of a product was only required where the Code required a product to be “listed” or “labeled” by an approved agency, such as Underwriters Laboratory.

Now, products in the eight categories identified above must also have independent monitoring of their manufacture in addition to those products the Code requires to be “listed” or “labeled.”

Previously building officials would accept test and evaluation reports and listings from “nationally recognized” entities and licensed engineers.

Now, for the eight products, “nationally recognized” means “accredited” by a national accreditation body like ANSI or ICC. (Florida licensed engineers and architects can evaluate.)

Does each product approval application have to be submitted with proof of an audited quality assurance program?

No. Products that have a certification mark or listing do not require proof of an audited quality assurance program, because this requirement must be met in order to get the certification mark or listing.

What about other products?

Since the Commission will only approve entities for the evaluation of the eight categories of products that are covered by the law, it is up to the local jurisdiction to approve all other products for use in their jurisdiction, but they can use similar approval criteria.

How will these product approval requirements affect local plan review approval?

All products in the eight categories must be approved in order to obtain plan approval. This is required in order to be in compliance with the product approval requirements.

Will plans submitted prior to October 1, 2003, but not yet approved, be affected by these product approval requirements?

No. Plans submitted for approval prior to October 1, 2003 are not affected by the requirements. The effective date of the requirements is October 1, 2003. Therefore, all plans submitted for approval after October 1, 2003, must be designed with products that meet the product approval requirements.

Will permits issued after October 1, 2003, whose plans were approved prior to October 1, 2003, be affected by these product approval requirements?

No. If the plans were approved prior to October 1, 2003, then permits issued for that project after October 1, 2003 will not be affected.

How will plans submitted after October 1, 2003, be affected by these product approval requirements?

In order to give manufacturers time to comply with the new requirements, the following products that have a currently active report that was valid on October 1, 2003 are grandfathered into the system until April 5, 2004.

- Products submitted with a certification mark or listing from a certification agency.
- Products with a test report from a testing lab.
- Products with an evaluation report from an evaluation entity.
- Products with an evaluation report from a Florida-registered architect or engineer.

Between October 1, 2003 and April 5, 2004, these products must receive product approval. After April 5, 2004, Hillsborough County's Development Services Division and the City of Tampa's Construction Services Center will not accept products that do not meet these requirements.

Where can one find a list of the approved agencies?

The list of approved agencies in each category can be printed from the Department of Community Affairs Florida Building Code web page at www.floridabuilding.org. Click on the Product Approval link on the left side of the page, and then click on organization search.

What is the best way to provide the product approval information to the local jurisdiction, once the product has been approved?

The best way is to provide an "Approved Products List" with the plans to be submitted. These approved products can be listed by category on an index sheet as part of the plans. If you use different manufacturers for the same type of product, then just list each of the ones that you use. See Attachment 1 for an example of the listing sheet.

What about the installation instructions for these products?

The installation instructions for these products must also be submitted as part of the drawings, as is already required by Hillsborough County's Development Services Division.

Attachment 1

Approved Products List

Product Category	Sub Category	Manufacturer	State of Florida Approval Number	Expiration Date
Structural Component	Wood connector	Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Structural component	Concrete lintel	Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Panel Walls	EIFS system	Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Panel walls	Curtain wall	Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Doors	Wood entrance	First Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Doors	Wood entrance	Second Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Windows	Double hung	First Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Windows	Double hung	Second Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Windows	Sliders	Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Roofing	Roofing tile	Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05
Shutters	Roll-up	Manufacturer's name	FL1234	01/31/05

This list would continue for each category of covered products.

Example