

Vapor Barriers

ABSTRACT

The function of a vapor barrier is to retard the migration of water vapor. Where it is located in an assembly and its permeability is a function of climate, the characteristics of the materials that comprise the assembly and the interior conditions. Vapor barriers are not typically intended to retard the migration of air. That is the function of air barriers.

Confusion on the issue of vapor barriers and air barriers is common. The confusion arises because air often holds a great deal of moisture in the vapor form. When this air moves from location to location due to an air pressure difference, the vapor moves with it. This is a type of migration of water vapor. In the strictest sense air barriers are also vapor barriers when they control the transport of moisture-laden air.

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