There will be a test

These six groups are tasked with monitoring and testing lumber strength values every five years.

How It Works

Let’s follow a stick of wood throughout the entire testing and monitoring process to show you how it works.

It all starts with the development of a lumber sampling plan—by each agency that must be approved by the ALSC. Based on specific testing protocols, a geographic representative sampling of lumber for the species or species grouping published by the rules-writing agency is pulled by agency graders from random mills. The selection is completely random, and each piece is graded on the spot by expert graders to ensure it is No. 2 (the grade of lumber prescribed in the testing protocol and the most widely available grade). Sample sizes vary from 150 to 300 sticks of lumber, depending on an agency’s approved plan and the species type.

From here, the stick goes on a trip! All samples are transported to a certified lab—some agencies have their own, other agencies use an outside accredited lab source, like the University of Maine—where they are submitted to rigorous testing in bending. Results in the lab are analyzed, then compared to existing published strength values and shared with ALSC for further review. If strength values remain the same—the ultimate goal—nothing is done, and plans are made to retest in another five years.

If strength values are lower than published, then a second round of testing is completed. Should this added data also come out lower, then strength values for that species are adjusted and the information communicated across the industry as quickly and completely as possible.

The entire testing and monitoring process, from plan creation to result reporting, takes 12 to 16 months.

Now, why should you as a retailer care about the process of lumber testing and monitoring? Because it shows that the lumber industry has your back. You want every piece of wood you sell to a customer to perform exactly as it should; happy customers = happy dealers. This rigorous testing and monitoring process ensures that no matter what kind of lumber you sell, you can be confident in knowing that it will perform as expected. Every. Single. Time.

The more you know!

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