

# The 5 parts of a grade stamp and how to read them

**Y**OU'VE SEEN THAT ink stamp on the face or on the end of a piece of lumber, but do you know exactly what each of the five bits of information actually indicate?

The compilation of information is critical to ensure that the lumber your customer has ordered is the correct material. In addition, for structural applications, building code officials require this grade mark on the lumber in order for

it to be used in construction.

Grading agencies such as the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (NELMA) work directly with lumber manufacturers to make sure their products meet these requirements!

Here's a quick tutorial of how to read a grade stamp:

*In accordance with Voluntary Product Standard 20 (PS-20), when American Lumber Standard (ALS) program lumber is grade marked, the grade marking shall consist of a minimum of five elements to assist the consumer in identifying the (1) Moisture Content, (2) Product Grade, (3) Species or Species Grouping, (4) ALSC-Accredited Supervisory Agency, and (5) Unique Mill Number ID or Mill Name.*

*Please refer to the sample NELMA grade mark below for further information:*

