

O'Hagin Technical Bulletin – Non-combustibility

Understanding the Building Code Requirements for Noncombustible Roof Ventilation Products

• Purpose

Recent editions of the International Building Code (IBC), International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC), and California Building Code include requirements that certain roof ventilation products be manufactured from **noncombustible materials**. This bulletin explains how the building code defines non-combustibility, the role ASTM E136 plays in that determination, and an important limitation contained within the ASTM standard that should be understood when evaluating roof ventilation products.

The purpose of this bulletin is to assist contractors, builders, architects, designers, homeowners, and building officials in understanding the applicable code requirements before specifying or installing roof ventilation products.

• Building Code Requirements

The International Building Code (IBC), International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC), and California Building Code establish that materials required to be **noncombustible** shall be qualified using **ASTM E136**, or **ASTM E2652** utilizing the acceptance criteria prescribed by ASTM E136. These codes identify ASTM E136 as the recognized method for determining whether a building material qualifies as noncombustible. Accordingly, compliance with the applicable building code begins with understanding the requirements of ASTM E136.

• ASTM E136 – The Recognized Standard

ASTM E136, *Standard Test Method for Assessing Combustibility of Materials Using a Vertical Tube Furnace at 750°C*, is the nationally recognized standard referenced by the building codes for determining whether a material qualifies as noncombustible.

Materials that successfully satisfy the acceptance criteria of ASTM E136 are typically classified as **noncombustible materials**.

• Important Limitation Within ASTM E136

ASTM E136 also contains an important limitation regarding the types of materials that can be evaluated using this test method.

Section 1.2.2 states:

"This test method is not suitable or satisfactory for materials that flow, melt, or intumesce."

This limitation is significant because materials that soften, melt, flow, or expand when exposed to heat cannot be evaluated for noncombustibility using ASTM E136.

• Why This Matters

Where the building code requires a roof ventilation product or its materials to be **noncombustible**, designers, contractors, builders, and building officials should understand how that determination is made.

Because ASTM E136 expressly excludes materials that **flow, melt, or intumesce** from evaluation under the standard, products incorporating these materials may require additional review to determine whether they satisfy the applicable building code requirements for the intended application.

The applicable building code, manufacturer documentation, and the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) should all be considered when evaluating these products for code compliance.

- **O'Hagin Roof Ventilation Products**

O'Hagin Fire & Ice® roof ventilation products are manufactured from noncombustible, corrosion-resistant materials including galvanized steel, aluminum, and copper, together with stainless steel or galvanized steel wire mesh. These materials were intentionally selected to support compliance with applicable building code requirements governing noncombustible roof ventilation products.

- **Recommendation**

Before specifying or installing any roof ventilation product that incorporates materials capable of flowing, melting, or intumescenting when exposed to heat, O'Hagin recommends obtaining written confirmation from the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) that the product complies with the applicable building code requirements for noncombustibility. Obtaining approval during plan review can help avoid permitting delays, costly field corrections, product substitutions, and potential disputes during inspection.

- **KEY TAKEAWAY**

The building code requires certain roof ventilation products to be manufactured from noncombustible materials. The building code relies upon ASTM E136 to determine whether a material is noncombustible.

ASTM E136 expressly states:

"This test method is not suitable or satisfactory for materials that flow, melt, or intumesce."

Because ASTM E136 is the recognized standard used by the building code to establish noncombustibility, products incorporating materials that flow, melt, or intumesce should be carefully evaluated for code compliance. O'Hagin recommends obtaining written approval from the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) before specifying or installing these products.

For additional information or assistance, please contact O'Hagin. We are committed to helping contractors, builders, architects, designers, and code officials navigate today's evolving building code requirements through sound engineering, technical expertise, and responsive customer support.

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