

BARTKOWSKI AND MCDONALD PRESENT...

THE BARTKOWSKI REPORT

Most facilities like to believe that their firestopping program is well under control. This may or may not be the case. On the other hand, if your facility is one of those that is crying out for some sort of program to institute that will allow you to once again regain control of the whole process, then we believe that the information provided you in this and future issues will be well worth the time invested in studying and implementing.

I spoke with a hospital facility manager earlier this year and when the subject of a fire-stopping barrier management program was discussed, his response was, “When the inspector ‘dings’ me with a firestopping violation, my response is to call a contractor that is already working in the facility and ask them to remediate the condition. We then go back to our regularly scheduled activities, and wait with fingers crossed, hoping that the work was done correctly.” As funny as this may initially sound, this scenario is played out at many hospitals with a great degree of regularity. It’s not that anyone is looking to cut corners and do the absolute minimum to achieve compliance; it’s that most don’t even know how to go about setting up such a program. And, sadly enough, most aren’t equipped to implement such a program even if it were instituted.

What’s a manager or director to do?

We have a few suggestions...

1. Be open minded and accept that there may be better ways of approaching this life safety issue than the one you are presently utilizing.
2. Research and explore the fire barrier management programs available. You can call the various firestopping manufacturers and ask for their input or recommendations.
3. Make yourself available to those individuals or companies that are expert in the field of fire barrier management. Just because someone has installed fire protection products, it may be presumptuous to assume they have a fire barrier management program in their service offering.
4. Expect to invest about 2 – 2-1/2 hours for that initial meeting with those sharing their fire barrier management program with you. Anything less might not give you everything you need to know.
5. Realize that changing the way things have been done over the past 5, 10, 20... years is not going to happen overnight. On the other hand, once adopted, it is not unreasonable to expect measurable progress every quarter until all involved in the facility have bought into the new program.

6. Speaking of 'buying-in': with general contractors, subcontractors, vendors and hospital personnel all creating 'new openings', sometimes on a daily basis, without total buy-in from all parties, even the most spectacular program in the world is destined to fail or fall short of your expectations. **Remember, it is your facility...those working in 'your house' must follow your rules.** Those who do not want to comply can find somewhere else where their services are needed. When the inspectors want to walk-through and check the firestopping work, it is no small comfort knowing that those installing the fire protection products were 'on the program'.

Bartkowski & McDonald LLC is a full service provider of firestopping services and programs. Our service offerings include the following:

1. Firestopping Audits
2. Quality Control / Quality Assurance Programs for remediation work and new construction projects
3. Internet based Fire Barrier Management / Penetration Permit Program
4. Firestopping Installation Services
5. Damper Inspections

We look forward to establishing a relationship with your facility. Should you have any questions on any firestopping matter, we would welcome the opportunity to service you.

Sincerely,

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BARTKOWSKI & McDONALD LLC
FIRESTOPPING SERVICES

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FUTURE.....*