Nails: More Important Than You Thought To The Bottom Line

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Not all nails are created equal. Nail quality and the type of collated nails effect worker productivity, and thus the all-important Bottom Line.

Inferior nails mean more nail jams, slowing down the worker, and tools wearing out prematurely, meaning tool downtime often when you can least afford it. They also mean building inspectors questioning the structural integrity of a house made with inferior nails. Often they “red-tag” such a building, making the workers re-nail everything with code-recognized nails.

The only sure way to know you’ve got high quality, code-recognized nails is to make sure you have an ASTM stamp or the ICC-ES stamp on your nail boxes. ICC-ES-stamped nails not only meet ASTM standards but also have a third-party ICC-ES evaluation report, which provides evidence that the nails comply with structural integrity codes, and building inspectors like to see that stamp.

But even if you have high quality nails, the way the nails are delivered, that is, paper-tape, plastic or coil collated, can make just as big of a difference in worker productivity. Paper-tape collated strip nails and plastic collated strip nails make up 80 percent of the collated nail market.

Paper tape collated nails have a productivity advantage over plastic. Our jobsite visits have demonstrated the following problems with plastic:

1) Slowing the worker down – plastic means frequent nail jams, and the constant need to clean up plastic debris;

2) Safety issues – plastic flies off the nail when fired, and that plastic often hits the tool-user in the face, slowing him or her down, at best; plus all that debris is a slipping hazard.

3) High scrap rates – to shear off, the plastic is purposely brittle, but that brittleness means they break easily when dropped, and even break up in the box. Note: some manufacturers are now making the plastic less brittle to avoid the flying plastic issue, but this often means the plastic does not shear correctly and gets stuck under the nail, not allowing it to seat properly.

4) More frequent maintenance – Plastic’s more frequent jams and dry fires creates premature wear and more frequent tool downtime.

Field studies demonstrate that paper tape nails don't have these problems. Framing nailers using paper tape nails jam at a significantly lower rate, increasing the speed of the worker. And there is no flying plastic to cause injuries, or constant need to clean up. Paper-tape nails don't break when dropped, so scrap rates are significantly lower and, because there are fewer jams and dry fires, wear and tear on the tool is greatly reduced meaning less down time for maintenance.

Another paper tape advantage: they have better holding power. You must have clean nails to collate them with paper, and many manufacturers, including Paslode, add a proprietary polymer tip coating to the cleaned nail for easier penetration. A clean nail and a tip coating mean better holding strength because the heat generated by driving the nail helps bond the polymer coating to the wood.

Paslode manufactures paper-tape collated nails for 30 degree nailers, These nails have a propriety tape adhesion so they don't fall apart in wet weather and a special process to make the paper very rigid, meaning they shear consistently when fired creating less jams and wear.

All of Paslode's framing nails are the patented RounDrive® nail, an innovative nail for 30 degree framing nailers. The RounDrive® nail meets all building code requirements of a round head nail, which, until RounDrive® was introduced, could only be delivered by a 20 degree framing nailer.

Today, enhancing productivity and worker safety are very important. To overlook the quality of the nails you use and the way they are delivered can cost you more than the few dollars you save by using no name nails.