



U.S./Canada harmonized Standard for Windows, Doors and Skylights Proposal for Reference by the National Building Code of Canada

By: Ken Rauch

Introduction

Ten years ago, the “U.S.A./Canada Harmonization Task Group” comprising twelve members – six from Canada representing the CWDMA (Canadian Window and Door Manufacturers Association) and the CSA (Canadian Standards Association) A440 Technical Committee, three from the AAMA (American Architectural Manufacturers Association) and three from the WDMA (Window & Door Manufacturers Association), began to prepare a draft North American fenestration standard. Since that time and some 14 drafts later, the “AAMA/WDMA/CSA 101/I.S.2/A440-05 Standard Specification for Windows, Doors and Unit Skylights” was included in the 2006 edition of the ICC (International Code Council) Code and is proposed to be referenced by the National Building Code of Canada. At the time of this writing, an excerpt edition of the standard has been balloted to members of that association, and was available for download at the WDMA website (<http://www.wdma.com/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3710>)

Current Standards for Windows, Skylights and Door Systems

A. Windows

Division B, Section 9.7 of the 2005 edition of the National Building Code of Canada requires windows to conform to CAN/CSA-A440, “Windows” and CAN/CSA-A440-00, “Windows”.

The Can/CSA-A440 standard classifies windows according to their performance in three areas – air tightness, water tightness and wind-load resistance. The User Selection Guide identifies performance ratings appropriate for buildings according to building height and the geographic area in which they are located. Residential windows are not

required to conform to the energy rating requirements of CAN/CSA-A440.

B. Skylights

Plastic skylights are required to conform to CAN/CGSB-63.14-M, “Plastic Skylights”, while factory-built glass skylights must conform to the performance requirements of the plastic skylight standard (see NBC Division B, subsection 9.7.7.).

C. Exterior Door Systems

Division B, Section 9.6 of the NBC requires insulated steel doors and their frames to conform to CAN/CGSB-82.5-M, “Insulated Steel Doors”. Sliding doors (“patio doors”) and their frames are required to conform to CAN/CGSB-82.1-M, “Sliding Doors”. Exterior wood doors must conform to the CAN/CSA-O132-2 Series, “Wood Flush Doors” – there is no standard for wood door systems).

Why a Harmonized Standard?

The opportunities of Free Trade and a relatively-favourable Canadian dollar have permitted Canadian manufacturers to market more window products to the United States. Of course, U.S. manufacturers are not blind to the opportunities north of the border either, but differing codes and standards requirements in the various jurisdictions can be a real barrier to trade. From this set of circumstances came the beginnings of the North American Fenestration Standard (NAFS) in 1997. It seems clear that, although the impetus for this change came from the manufacturing industry, a harmonized standard, provided it maintains the performance levels Canadians have come to expect, could simplify selection and regulation of these products. Who knows? The increased competition might even lead to enhanced quality or better prices for consumers.