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BY THE BOOK

New TCNA Handbook Crack Isolation method F125-Partial-15 and F125-Full-15

Have you ever bid a project in which the specifications and plans were not clear about what was really required? And yes, I'm being sarcastic.

Obviously your first response is to send in a RFI to get the item clarified. That would be great if you can get your questions answered before bid day. Sometimes these items are small and really don't affect the bid. Yet others are huge, and you find yourself debating the same question, "What do they really want?"

Yet what they really want – or perhaps what common sense dictates – is not a factor when you submit your price. That's because every specification has the "get out of jail free" language for the designer. Here's a typical one.

"In case of a conflict between the contract documents, the

Contractor shall 1) provide the better quality or greater quantity of work or 2) comply with the more stringent requirements; either or both in accordance with the Architect's interpretation."

Doesn't that make you sleep well at night?

For this reason there are two small notes added to the Crack Isolation membrane method in the 2015 TCNA Handbook for Ceramic, Glass, and Stone Tile Installation: F125-Partial-15 and F125-Full-15.

The first note, located in the second bullet point under the Requirement section on page 96, states: **"Specifier to identify areas of coverage (partial or full). Unless full coverage is clearly specified, installing contractor's responsibility is limited to partial coverage."**

The second note is in the first

bullet point under the Materials section on page 97, last sentence: **“Unless full coverage is clearly specified, installing contractor’s responsibility is limited to partial coverage.”**

This new *Handbook* language is important, because on several projects, I’ve observed that designers have specified method F125, but did not designate if partial or full coverage was required. But before utilizing this new *Handbook* language and assuming partial coverage is the contractor’s only responsibility if not stated otherwise, some caution is warranted.

Case in point is a project we just bid a few weeks ago. The specifications noted in the execution sec-

tion stated all floor tile installations to be installed with method F125. My first question is “What version of the *TCNA Handbook* are they designing around?”

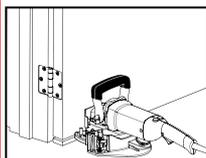
In 2010, the method was called F125 for partial and F125A for full coverage, and was only changed to F125-Partial and F125-Full in 2011. So with that in mind, you might conclude that since the method was F125, only partial crack-isolation coverage was being specified.

However, since no version of the *TCNA Handbook* was noted, the designer could argue a version from 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014 should be used. In this case the “get out of jail free” language

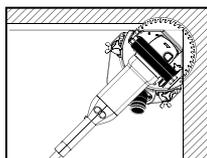
No. 825 Heavy Duty Undercut Saw Kit

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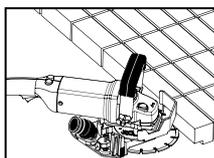
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could come back and bite you, as you did not bid the “better quality or greater quantity of work” – meaning full coverage in this case – regardless of the *TCNA Handbook* language.

This was the discussion we had internally on this project and we decided we must bid full coverage, a \$60,000 add to the bid. Perhaps now, but still with caution when it is unclear what is required, we have a stronger case to bid partial coverage with the support of these two added sentences in the 2015 *TCNA Handbook* method F125-Partial-15 and F125-Full-15. For your own safety, know which version of the *TCNA Handbook* the designer is using, and know that

without the 2015 *TCNA Handbook* specified, the contractors must still bid the greater work.

Kevin Fox, President of Fox Ceramic Tile, Inc., is the Kansas State Director of NTCA and a committee member of the NTCA Methods and Standards. Fox Ceramic Tile, Inc. is a NTCA Five Star Contractor. Kevin is a supporter of the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation and recognizes the importance of having Certified Tile Installers. All of his tile setters are certified and he has incorporated the certification in their Department of Labor Apprenticeship program as the final step in attaining journeyman status.

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