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Note on safe use of Flexible Polyurethane Foam on the interior side of walls, partitions and ceilings

Flexible Polyurethane foam can be applied on the interior side of walls, partitions or ceilings for the purpose of sound treatment, sound insulation, sound absorption or for otherwise altering the acoustic properties of a room.

When installing such flexible polyurethane foam, requirements of applicable building and fire codes (national and/or local) need to be met at all times. Such codes are built around fire performance and life safety. They normally require the use of a prescriptive thermal barrier over installed polyurethane foam (e.g. gypsum wall board or other material). Legislation can also require that foam passes a specific approval test depending on the end-use.

We recommend that polyurethane flexible foam on the interior side of walls, partitions or ceilings of buildings is always protected by a thermal barrier. Indeed, all flexible polyurethane foam types, whether they contain flame retardants or not, should be considered combustible and handled accordingly.

When flexible polyurethane foam is assembled with other materials (e.g. intumescent coating system applied to the foam) in order to be used on the interior side of walls and ceilings, it must as well meet building codes or other specific approval tests.

Any person or entity installing flexible polyurethane foam on the interior side of walls, partitions or ceilings must review national and local building codes, fire codes, insurers and manufacturer's specifications and installation instructions in each specific instance of product application, system design, and building occupancy before the installation of the said foam; additionally certain applications and occupancies may require sprinkler protection and smoke detectors.

The improper use of flexible polyurethane foam, in conjunction with other combustible materials in and within the building structure, could contribute to the rapid spread of fire.

Legal notice

This short note prepared by EUROPUR (European association of Flexible Polyurethane Foam Block Manufacturers) is intended to provide general information to persons who may use polyurethane flexible foam on the interior side of walls and ceilings. It is not designed to create legal rights or obligations. It is not intended to be a “how – to” manual, nor is it a prescriptive guide. All persons using polyurethane flexible foam on the interior side of walls and ceilings have an independent obligation to ascertain that their actions are in compliance with current national building codes and local laws. This note is necessarily general. For the application intended you can also consult the manufacturer for further information regarding specific testing, performance and code acceptance details of a given product. You can also consult fire code officials and insurers on specifications and installation instructions.

Acknowledgement

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