



***For Immediate Release***

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## **City of Chicago Recognizes Ballasted EPDM as “Cool Roof” Alternative**

*Decision Expands on Regulatory Actions taken by ASHRAE and  
California Energy Commission*

**BETHESDA, MD., May 29, 2009** – The EPDM Roofing Association (ERA) lauds the recent decision by the City of Chicago to add ballasted roof systems as an accepted cool roofing alternative in its Municipal Code. In the latest version of its code, Chicago is allowing for an exception in its listing for low-sloped roofs, that reads as follows:

“Low-sloped roofs permitted on or after January 1, 2009 in conjunction with a new building or structure shall utilize roofing products that meet or exceed an initial reflectance value of 0.72 or a three-year installed reflectance value of 0.5 as determined by the Cool Roof Rating Council or by Energy Star.”

The exception reads as follows:

“Ballasted roofs with a minimum of 15 lbs/sq. ft. of ballast over the entire roof surface may have a reflectance value of a minimum of 0.30. For purposes of this section, “ballast” shall mean river rock aggregate or larger, pavers or other means of weighing down a roofing membrane over a substrate to resist wind uplift.”

The action in Chicago follows a similar decision by the California Energy Commission (CEC) and a tentative decision by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), to update their “cool roofing” standards and recognize ballasted roof systems as an acceptable alternative.

The Single Ply Roofing Industry (SPRI) funded a three-year study (available at [www.SPRI.org](http://www.SPRI.org)), conducted at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), to determine if ballasted roof systems offer similar energy efficiency benefits as reflective roofs. In the report summarizing the study’s results, André Desjarlais, Program Manager of the Building Envelopes Program at ORNL, stated that roof systems with ballast at a weight of 17-22 pounds per square foot “are as effective as white-membrane roofs in mitigating peak energy demand.”

“There is a growing perception in the building community that reflective roofing is the panacea for energy efficiency, however countless studies have proven this to be incorrect



in many instances, particularly for buildings located in cool, northern climates, such as Chicago,” commented John Geary, vice president of marketing, Firestone Building Products and chairman of ERA’s board of directors. “Chicago has long been a leader in promoting sustainable roofing standards, and the decision to include ballasted systems into its cool roof standards is a positive step in that direction because it allows roofing professionals to consider more sustainable and energy-efficient alternatives to the currently prescribed cool-roof requirements.”

ERA has long supported this ongoing research and has been working to ensure that the cool roof status of roof systems using ballast over EPDM membrane be given due consideration by a number of regulatory and code organizations. This would benefit building owners who prefer the durability of ballasted roof systems and would now be able to consider ballasted roofs as a cool roof option.

The latest version of ASHRAE’s Standard 189, currently under review, now lists ballasted roofing as a prescriptive equivalent to a “cool roof,” and the CEC has formally listed ballasted roofing as a “cool roof” equivalent in the recently approved 2008 version of *Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Non-Residential Buildings*, more commonly known as Title 24.

“We believe that the commercial building industry and the regulatory groups are now taking the concept of cool roofing to a new level,” said Scott Long, EPDM Product Manager for Carlisle SynTec Incorporated and a member of ERA’s Technical Committee. “With acknowledged leaders such as the City of Chicago leading the way, we encourage other groups and municipalities to adapt their standards to incorporate this new information.”

With more than 45 years of success as a roof system of choice for low slope applications, EPDM is the leading roofing choice of architects, roof consultants and contractors for both new construction and replacement roofing projects, with more than 20 billion square feet of EPDM installed on more than 500,000 warranted roofs.

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*The EPDM Roofing Association (ERA) is the first trade association solely representing the manufacturers of EPDM single-ply roofing products and their leading suppliers. ERA provides technical and research support to the public and the construction industry, and communicates the longstanding attributes, consistency and the value proposition of EPDM rubber membrane roofing materials.*