

EPDM's flash to the future

Advances in seaming, fastening technology improve EPDM installation

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The use of EPDM systems has grown dramatically since it was introduced more than four decades ago. The ongoing growth in EPDM usage can largely be attributed to a never-ending focus on innovation to advance the performance and productivity of EPDM systems. EPDM's immediate future looks bright based upon yet another wave of innovations that are designed to provide another quantum leap in roof installation expediency.

■ **Seams fast**—In 2003, one major manufacturer introduced technologies to speed the seaming process. Factory-applied splice tape was introduced for the 10 and 20-foot wide 60-mil products commonly used for adhered systems. The innovation of factory-applied splice tape cut the time required to assemble a tape seam from 27 man-minutes to approximately five total man-minutes.

■ **Stand tall**—Also introduced in 2003, was equipment to improve both the ergonomics and productivity for seaming. A patented seam tape machine provided the capability for a single worker to apply both 3"- and 6"- wide splice tape in a stand-up operation.

■ The seam roller provided a similar capability with its 6" roller width and ergonomic handle that largely eliminated the need for hand rolling by putting roofers back in a standing position. The combined impact of the seam taper and seam roller equipment provided a seam that was comparable in speed to heat welding applications.

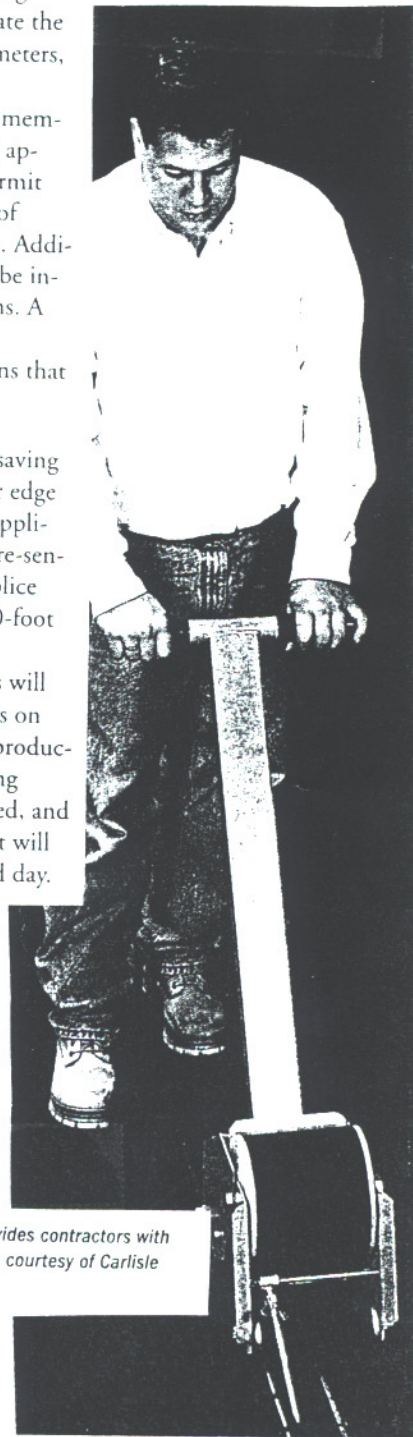
■ **Factory-applied seam tape**—For 2004, the emphasis on rooftop productivity continues with the addition of new products for continued EPDM appeal. The factory-applied tape concept will be expanded to provide more options for the roofing contractor. Factory applied splice tape will be offered on 10' and 20' wide 45-mil products and 60-mil white EPDM products.

■ **It's a flash**—On another front; one manufacturer is focusing its efforts on flashing details as another means to improve rooftop productivity. Contractors report having had great success over the years using pressure sensitive adhesive technologies to facilitate the flashing of pipes, securement strips for roof perimeters, pourable sealer pockets and corners.

■ In the not-too-distant future, an 18" cured membrane curb wrap with 3"-wide splice tape factory applied will be introduced. This technology will permit the installer to wrap the curb with a single piece of membrane with dramatically less labor and waste. Additionally, 12" wide pressure-sensitive flashing will be introduced for flashing metal work and straight runs. A formable 12"-wide pressure-sensitive uncured elastoform product can be used to flash projections that are of irregular shape like pipes or corners.

■ **Flash it faster**—The development of labor saving equipment provides contractors with yet another edge in the installation of EPDM. The new flashing applicator allows contractors to install 6" wide pressure-sensitive flashing with the same speed available as splice tape. In time trials, flashing application for a 100-foot seam can be accomplished in less than a minute.

Within the roofing industry, EPDM products will retain their popularity, as there is a constant focus on innovation to enhance system performance and productivity. The recent advances in seaming and flashing technology dramatically improve installation speed, and the contractor who adopts these technologies first will jump to the head of the pack with an edge on bid day.



The development of labor saving equipment provides contractors with another edge in the installation of EPDM. (Photo courtesy of Carlisle Syntec Inc., Carlisle, PA.)