



Industry Update



The *Construction Specifications Institute* publishes the **Construction Specifier** magazine to address industry updates, trends, and latest information about design and construction. RRJ authored a *Construction Specifier* article entitled, [The Complexities of Specifying and Detailing Air Barriers](#). This article discusses issues related to air control in buildings, including codes and standards, terminology and confusion between air barriers and vapor retarders, as well as current trends in building envelope commissioning and quality assurance testing. **Many of the building failures and condensation concerns investigated by RRJ have been in part caused by uncontrolled air leakage related to the design and installation of air barriers.** [Contact RRJ](#) today to find out more.

RRJ Feature



In response to a fatal accident in 1976 and to serve as a means to help assure public safety from the potential hazards associated with aging facades on mid- and high-rise buildings, **Chicago was the first city in the United States to prepare and adopt a facade ordinance in 1978.** New York City followed by implementing regulations in 1980. Chicago's original ordinance was ultimately repealed until 1996 when a newly drafted facade inspection ordinance was adopted. Since then, a number of major cities

Stucco Cladding on High-Rise Buildings



Recent RRJ investigations of stucco cladding distress on high-rise buildings in the southeast United States identified recurring problems associated with a popular method of stucco cladding installation. Engaged by building owners and contractors to diagnose the causes for the stucco cladding distress and to develop recommendations for repair of their building walls, RRJ provided professional services including:

- Hands-on, close-up examinations to document the location and extent of stucco distress using destructive and nondestructive testing techniques
- Laboratory testing and petrographic examinations of material specimens to determine physical properties and potentially detrimental behavior
- Structural testing of proposed remedial approaches
- Review and analysis of project documents and industry standard references
- Development of remediation concepts and preparation of construction documents for repair
- Technical expert services for dispute resolution activities

Our investigations and studies revealed a high occurrence of structural problems and concerns associated with direct-applied stucco adhered to proprietary materials and over concrete masonry and cast-in-place concrete on these high-rise structures. The problems that RRJ has identified include near- and long-term potential for debonding and spalling of the stucco cladding from these substrates, creating the potential for imminently hazardous conditions. [Read more>>>](#)

RRJ Professional Activities

RRJ takes pleasure in announcing several promotions and advancements within the firm. **Brian Lammert**, **Karen Zimmnicki**, and **Sarah Flock** have joined the Associate program. **Bart Lipinski** and **Brian Rubik** have been promoted to Engineer Intern III, **Dave VanDommelen** has been promoted to Architect Intern III, **Kyle Magnuson** has advanced to Architect Intern II, and **Joe Burke** has been promoted to Technician III.

including Detroit, Milwaukee, and St. Louis have also adopted their own regulations. The most recent major city to enact regulations was Philadelphia in 2010.

When the inspection requirements for Chicago's 1996 facade inspection ordinance and those in other cities were initially introduced, there was a general lack of published guidance for professionals to reference regarding parameters for conducting a facade examination. Nor did the regulations sufficiently consider varying the extent of the required examination scope based upon the building size, facade materials, age, and maintenance history. **RRJ first provided a Tech Tip in 2000, entitled [Facade Inspection - Going Beyond the Surface](#), which noted the limitations of optically aided visual examinations that do not include close-up visual examination, inspection openings, and testing.** The attached Tech Tip supplements and reinforces that discussion with industry updates since then. [Read more>>>](#)

In November 2011, **Robb Haukohl** became the Chair of the Existing Masonry Committee of **[The Masonry Society](#)**. RRJ's staff also continues their involvement in the Chicago Chapter of the **[Building Enclosure Council](#)**. **Sarah Flock**, AIA is now Vice-Chair for the Board of Directors and **Kenneth Lies**, AIA continues to serve as the Treasurer. Visit our website at www.rrj.com to learn about RRJ's many other staff accomplishments and professional activities.