

BULLETIN

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Combustible Substrates

Some modified bitumen membranes are applied to the roof substrate with heat welding. This application method has been used for decades around the world, yielding very durable, watertight roof membranes. Unfortunately there have been isolated incidents where careless use of the torch on the roof has resulted in roof fires, especially where wood decks, wood parapets, or wood fibre insulation/cover boards have been either the substrate, or a component of the roof assembly. It is possible to use heat welded products on such roof systems, however, reasonable, common sense precautions must be taken.

IKO has added the caution "Do not heat weld directly to combustible substrates." to the packaging tapes of its heat welded modified membrane products; Torchflex SBS, and ArmourPlast APP. To clarify, "Directly" means that the torch flame should never come into direct contact with readily combustible materials such as a wood deck or wood fibre insulation. IKO agrees with standard industry recommendations to cover any wood or wood fibre components with a flame-resistant membrane, or approved overlay board, prior to heat welded application of the subsequent base sheets and cap sheets. Naturally, care must still be taken to ensure the flame is not directed through the laps of the base sheet, or directly into any openings, penetrations, etc. of the roof system.

"Combustible" in the context of our caution is meant to include wood or wood fibre decks, parapets, crickets, cants, pressure-treated wood etc. In the strictest sense, many components found on a roof can be considered combustible. However, our intent is to discourage direct heat welding to items, which are more readily combustible such as the wood materials listed above. We feel that heat welding directly to asphaltic core boards (IKO's Protectoboard), gypsum boards, and oxidized or modified base sheets is acceptable.

There are many other common sense precautions that should be considered when using a flame on a roof, and we encourage our customers to also consult useful industry literature on this subject, including:

- Fire Prevention Manual (Quebec Master Roofers Association)
- Fire Safety poster (Canadian Roofing Contractors' Association)
- CRCA Technical Bulletin 43B – Application Guidelines For Torch Welding of Modified Bitumen Roll Roofing (Canadian Roofing Contractors' Association)

By adhering to the guidelines detailed above and also found in the referenced resources, heat welded modified bitumen roof membranes can be safely applied providing a very durable roof system alternative to building owners.

For additional information on any of IKO's products or application requirements, visit us on the web at www.iko.com (North America), or contact us in Canada/United States at 1-855-IKO-ROOF for our Technical Support Department).

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