City and County of San Francisco
Department of Building Inspection
1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

Structural Bulletin
SB 04-08

Subject: **Continuous Tiedown Systems Used to Resist Overturning of Light-Framed Wood Shear Walls**

Date: May 9, 2008
Revised: January 22, 2009

Light-framed wood shear walls, when incorporated into a structure's lateral force resisting system, will experience overturning forces arising from wind and seismic loads on the structure. These overturning forces are typically resisted by the use of tiedown devices that anchor the ends of the shear walls to the foundation. A "conventional" tiedown system typically utilizes cold-formed metal hardware bolted to the wood end posts of the shear wall and anchored to the foundation. Tensile overturning forces are carried by the wood end posts. A "continuous tiedown" system utilizes a continuous or coupled rod or cable assembly comprising bearing plates, shrinkage compensating devices, and couplers, wherein tensile overturning forces are carried by the rod(s) or cable(s), not the wood end posts. Continuous tiedown systems are not explicitly addressed by current prescriptive code requirements.

Plan check review and approval of continuous tiedown systems for any project shall be on a case-by-case basis in accordance with this Administrative Bulletin. The following requirements shall be the basis for plan check review and approval of continuous tiedown systems used within light-framed wood shear wall systems.

1. Shear walls shall be designed to comply with the drift requirements of SFBC 1630.9. Shear wall displacements shall be computed in accordance with SFBC 2305.3.2. The component "d_a" of SFBC 2305.3.2 shall include, but not be limited to, elongation of the rod or cable, and deformations and displacements of shrinkage compensating devices, coupling hardware, wood compression, and steel bearing plates.

2. In a multi-story shear wall installation, the continuous tiedown system shall be restrained by bearing plates at each story of the multi-story shear wall. Skipping of stories, where bearing plates are omitted at intermediate stories, resulting in multiple stories being tied together, is prohibited. Shrinkage compensating devices shall be provided at each story of the shear wall.

3. The computed rod or cable elongation or stretch, together with computed deformations of shrinkage compensating device, coupling hardware, steel bearing plate, wood compression, and other components of the continuous tiedown system within any story under strength level (Load and Resistance Factor Design) short-term duration loading, such as wind or earthquake loads, shall not exceed 0.250 inch. For working stress level (Allowable Stress Design) short-term loading, elongation or stretch within any story shall not exceed 0.179 inch. Elongation or stretch shall be computed as the product PL/EA, where P is the axial load (pounds), L is the initial rod or cable length at the story under consideration (inches), E

is the rod or cable modulus of elasticity (psi), and A is the actual (or net) cross sectional area of the rod or cable (in^2).

4. Calculations demonstrating compliance with the foregoing shall be provided for plan check review.

5. Construction documents, signed and sealed by the engineer of record for the design of the building, shall specify the particular proprietary system or systems.

6. Any modification to the tiedown system proposed after a building permit has been approved shall require filing of a new permit application documenting the proposed modification. Plan check review of the proposed modification shall be in accordance with the requirements of this Administrative Bulletin.

7. Mixing of conventional and continuous tiedown systems within a common shear wall is prohibited.

8. In addition to other inspections required by SFBC 1701, special inspection of continuous tiedown systems shall be provided. In addition to structural observations required by SFBC 1702, the engineer of record for the design of the building shall provide structural observation of continuous tiedown installations, including shear wall boundary nailing, shear wall end post sizes, bearing plates, couplers, shrinkage compensating devices, and anchor bolts, to verify conformance of the installed tiedown system to the structural design intent.

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