

## Independent Testing Helps Decker's Cause

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Green Bay Decking brought in outside sources to test composite products

Composites businesses related to the construction industry need to do whatever they can to thrive in the market's downturn. To that end, Green Bay Decking has turned to outside testing sources to add validity to its GeoDeck composite decking products.

According to Shane O'Neill, director of research and development, the company was not completely satisfied despite having done their own internal testing. So, they wanted to bring in third-party observers to test the products as well. "We know how the product does, and we wanted to put merit behind that and bring it out to the public," says O'Neill. "We went to agencies and had a couple of tests done."

The first of these was a water absorption test done at the University of Maine. The test was based on the ASTM 1037 standard for wood-based materials. In it, the materials are weighed, submerged for 24 hours, and weighed again to see the weight differences in the two states. Green Bay also did a modification involving 30-day testing, and O'Neill says the results were pleasing. "We were the lowest-absorbing product, and if it's hard for water to get into product, it's hard for moisture to get in there and decay the product," he says.

Accelerated weathering was also done, based on the G155 standard. "Think of it like a tanning booth married to a car wash," says O'Neill. Spray nozzles and UV tanning lamps were used to control the amount of UV energy and water sprayed to applied materials. In terms of a time scale, 2,000 hours of testing relates to a year and a half of exposure. Thus, it is intended to see what will happen to the material in the field, particularly if the color fades or changes.

O'Neill hopes the objective testing will help convince people to take the plunge into buying composites. "A lot of people sell things without really showing you what it does. By doing this testing, we've shown people how the product really behaves. When you do testing, it ultimately says a lot more."

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