

5601102 Coating Structural Steel  
COMMENTS FROM INTERNAL/INDUSTRY REVIEW

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From FTBA  
Forwarded by Bob Burleson

Comment: (8-11-10) (Internal Review)

I know that Steve Plotkin has talked with Keith Waugh about this and does not view it as a big change. I am sure that is your intent. Our bridge contractors see it differently. I would like to sit down and talk about this. I am afraid we are creating a spec change that could create huge costs and conflicts.

Below are a sampling of the comments I have received.

Thanks,

Bob

Steve Plotkin has called and talked to me about the spec change. They view it only as cleaning up the spec to make sure that there is no battle over “interlocking surfaces” and “interlocks”, etc. But in talking to representatives of Wheelblast in Zephyrhills I have a bigger concern that I’m not sure how to handle. The biggest issue is coating of paired sheets. They typically don’t unthread paired sheets to coat the interlocks.....whoops. How would FDOT react if they knew that the interior of paired sheets was not coated? My feeling is that the homogenous coating over the interlock will provide the same protection as the coating over the flat surface. I’m sure you all agree, but will FDOT?

So, where do we go with this? Do we just let them change the spec without additional comment? The problem is that we who know better will tell the coater to unthread, coat and then re-pair at a huge cost and lose the job to those that will ignore the literal wording of the spec. Or do we bring it to FDOT’s attention now and ask them to write the spec to allow coating over the interlock of paired sheets? Let me know how we as a united industry should proceed.

I also agree with Keith. Most sheet piles (other than cold rolled) won’t thread if you try to coat inside the interlock. The last part of an old sea wall remaining is always the interlock

After reading the spec a couple of times I’m still not sure if they are wanting the interior of the interlock coated or if they want a coat along the interlock after driving. Either way, I see problems. Applying an even coating, in a small enclosed area such as a sheet pile interlock would be very difficult at best. I don’t know how you would keep the paint from puddling in certain areas or missing some areas altogether. Interlocks have tight tolerances and any extra coating is going to inhibit the threading of sheet piles and most coating within the interlock is likely to be scraped off during threading. Recoating the interlock seam after driving will be almost impossible to 5’ below scour or ground. Historical inspection of old bulkheads would probably show that the interlock is the most durable part of the sheet. With the sacrificial thickness that is now required, I don’t see where interlock coating should be an area of concern warranting a revision to the spec.

I am opposed to any specification that calls for coating the interior surfaces of sheet pile interlocks. Sheet pile interlocks by design are not conducive to coating. As we previously

discussed, the act of threading the sheets together will remove coating. How will FDOT monitor the loss of coating inside an interlock and how will the loss of coating be repaired? Even if sheet piles are coated in pairs, the sheets will flex during handling and installation so you will never have a total seal between the paired sheets.

In short, this specification will lead to construction issues, inspection issues and increased costs for all without any appreciable improvement in the final product. The FDOT needs to understand this or they will be inviting a number of complaints and claims. They may view it as cleaning up a spec but clarifying a bad spec just means you have a well-written bad spec.

**Response:**

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