

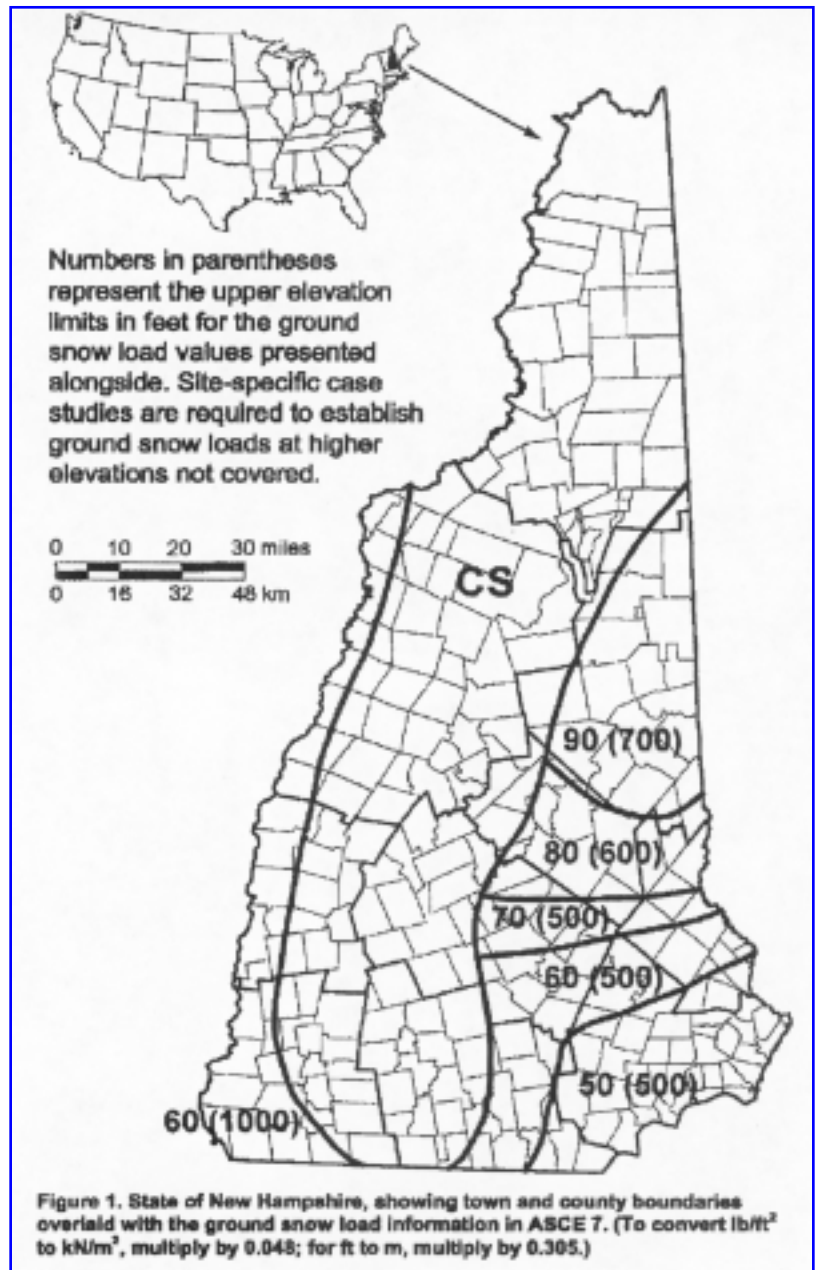
### The Times They Are A-Changin' by Stan Sias

*Come gather 'round people wherever you roam  
And admit that the waters around you have grown  
And accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone.  
If your time to you is worth savin'  
Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone  
For the times they are a changin'.*

Bob Dylan wrote *The Times They Are A-Changin'* in 1963. At the time he was writing about the youth movement, the growing resentment for the war in Southeast Asia and the establishment in general. In many ways, things never change and history does in fact repeat itself.

Our industry is constantly evolving and changing as we speak. The threats and risks that we face are too numerous to count. The fact is, however, that we are constantly identifying those threats and mitigating them. We are working diligently, with the best available information, to reduce the risks that we all face in our daily business.

Let's look at ground snow loads in New Hampshire as an example. Much of New Hampshire (as well as much of Maine and Vermont) has been classified in both BOCA and ASCE 7-98 as "Case Study" area (see map). It has been this way for many, many years. This has caused much disparity in the design loads that have been specified by both the professional design community and particularly by the local code authorities. Case Study (CS) areas are geographic locations in which extreme local variations preclude mapping at a national scale. Individual case studies are required to establish the ground snow loads in these areas. In 1995, the Structural Engineers of New Hampshire (SENH) surveyed 220 NH towns with the query of what loading they required for snow loads. Of those towns,



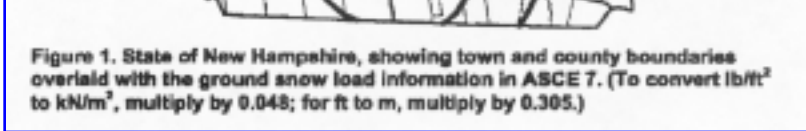


Figure 1. State of New Hampshire, showing town and county boundaries overlaid with the ground snow load information in ASCE 7. (To convert lb/ft<sup>2</sup> to kN/m<sup>2</sup>, multiply by 0.048; for ft to m, multiply by 0.305.)

150 said that as a minimum, they required the value as shown in BOCA -93.

The trouble was that over 80 percent of these towns were CS towns on that map, which meant that there was no information.

The three-year task of establishing ground snow loads for New Hampshire was tackled by a group of three engineers from the SENH and three Civil Engineering researchers from the U.S. Army, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL). The results of the Cooperative Research and Development Agreement can be found on the CRREL web site at <http://www.crrel.usace.army.mil>, or at the SENH web site at [www.senh.org](http://www.senh.org).

We had all been waiting for the publication of the report "Ground Snow Loads for New Hampshire." Finally, we had published loads, at given elevations, for every town in NH. There would be no more CS areas. PROBLEM: The publication of the report came only one year after one of the worst snow accumulation years on record. Homebuilders, and even some building officials, wanted to think that the report was due to the winter of '00-'01, but this was WRONG! Remember that this was a three-year project.

The WTCA-Northeast Chapter and several member truss and engineered wood suppliers have helped champion the validity of this report and the leveling of the playing field. For the first time ever we have the same starting point for all design questions. The inconsistent design criteria and the inappropriately high risk that some designers and builders were taking can now be a thing of the past. From here forward the general public of NH can rest assured that the design loads for their roofs are no longer guesses. Once again, we have the best available information.

## THE DUTY TO WARN

Let's look at another risk that we all face, the duty to warn (or, in today's legalese, "the duty to genuinely warn and instruct"). From a legal perspective, you can be found to have produced a "defective" product or one that is "not reasonably safe" simply by providing inadequate instructions or warnings. Have you reviewed your jobsite delivery package contents lately? Have you looked into the new package that's available from WTCA? Following is a quote from Kent Pagel's seminar, Risk Management and Liability Avoidance for the Truss and Component Manufacturer. (Information on all of these topics can be found on the [WTCA web site](#).)

As we know, the work WTCA does in the publications area is intended to either promote or protect the business interest of its members. Protection is viewed as best done through education and instruction. I find that publications such as the WTCA Jobsite Warning Poster, warning tags and the TTB series of documents do a great job of educating.

Not only do the WTCA Jobsite Warning Poster, warning tags and TTB publications help to genuinely warn and instruct erectors, the commonality and linkage that exist with these documents is extremely beneficial. For example the warning tags and the TTB publications make direct reference to the warning poster thereby

conveying a consistent and repetitive message that is important to those handling, erecting and bracing the components this industry manufactures and provides.

Is your company consistent with its jobsite package? If the goal of your jobsite package is to genuinely warn and protect, it may really be acting as cheap insurance for your company.

## TAKE THINGS ONE STEP FURTHER

What about your local fire service? Do you view them as friend or foe? How do they view you?

When was the last time you invited your local fire department into your plant for a tour? It is a very simple thing to do, and it will go a long way toward developing the relationships that we need at the grassroots level. Only through the efforts of every component manufacturer will we dispel some of the myths that the fire service is being fed. By having a close relationship with your local fire department, we can take the emotions out of some of the issues we share and come to common ground for furthering dialog, testing and cooperative training. No one wants to see firefighters get hurt, particularly when they are your friends and neighbors. Develop the relationship on your own turf. Bring the department into your shop, share thoughts and ideas. Provide them with the training and accurate information they so desperately want and need. If you want, your local WTCA Chapter will help you with this.

Dylan ended *The Times They Are A-Changin'* with the following verse:

*The line it is drawn  
The curse it is cast  
The slow one now  
Will later be fast  
As the present now  
Will later be past  
The order is  
Rapidly fadin'.  
And the first one now  
Will later be last  
For the times they are a changin'.*

What part can you help to change? What can you do today that will start the cycle in your company? The times are changing. Will you be involved? It's your choice.

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