

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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## STCA Update

[www.steeltruss.org](http://www.steeltruss.org)

### Tools that Aid in Risk Management by STCA Staff

*Providing effective jobsite warnings and instructions to your customers is paramount in any worthwhile risk management program. STCA has developed some tools to aid this process.*

One of the key missions of STCA is to work with its resources to promote and advance the use of cold formed steel trusses and components. STCA has the strong desire to assist this emerging market in fostering the safe and structurally sound use of steel trusses. One of the issues that can hinder the success and growth of an emerging industry like steel components is the failure to undertake due diligence in the product liability arena. One of the key benefits of a trade association like STCA is that competitors can cooperate and provide a united industry front to reduce risk and increase profits by improving insurability.

Below are some important comments from Kent Pagel's article regarding recommendations for manufacturers to reduce this risk in the November 2000 SBC Magazine article, "[Jobsite Submittal or Delivery Packages: Part 4.](#)"

### PRODUCT LIABILITY

Product liability claims can be difficult to defend. A product may be considered defective not only physically, that is, in its design or manufacture, but also in the marketing sense because of a lack of instructions or warnings regarding the safe operation of such product. What is important to remember is that a product is deemed defective from a legal perspective because of the "inadequate instructions or warnings."

In litigation, the courts will, what lawyers call, "closely scrutinize" warnings and instructions in determining their effectiveness. Juries do the same thing. Judges and juries both recognize that warnings and instructions are oftentimes ineffective because either the users of the products may not be adequately reached, will likely be inattentive, or may be insufficiently motivated to follow the instructions or heed the warnings.

### GENUINELY WARN & INSTRUCT

Risk and liability (and the things that go with them such as "time, expense, complexity and uncertainty") can be significantly reduced through effective jobsite warnings and instructions.

The goal here is to genuinely warn and instruct.

The [steel component manufacturer's] scope of work, and suitable warnings and instructions need to be clearly denoted: (1) in the truss manufacturer's contract with its customer, (2) on the truss design drawings, approved by the project architect and engineer, and delivered to the jobsite for review by the truss installers, (3) on the Warning Poster provided by the truss manufacturer to the truss installers and (4) on any warning tags attached to the trusses that were delivered.

Furthermore, your delivery ticket should include a line item for the jobsite package, the jobsite package should be signed by your customer at delivery, or if that is not possible a photo can be taken by the truck driver to show that it was delivered to the site and if possible have the customer acknowledge that they will follow these recommendations.

To that end, STCA has undertaken and completed the projects to support your duty to genuinely warn and instruct (For more information visit the [STCA web site](#).):

#### **JOBSITE WARNING POSTER**

- **11" x 17" Warning Poster** features engineered illustrations on proper techniques for unloading, storing, lifting, erecting and bracing steel trusses.

#### **STICKER TAGS**

- **Bearing Location:** Place this tag at points where additional or interior bearing supports should be located under the truss.
- **Concentrated Load Here:** Place this tag at the spot where a truss is to support a concentrated or point load.
- **Do Not Cut, Bend or Alter Truss Members:** This tag emphasizes that trusses should not be cut or modified in any way.
- **Do Not Use Damaged Trusses:** This tag warns against using trusses that are damaged and urges the installer to call the manufacturer for repair information.
- **Do Not Weld:** This tag warns against the altering of trusses by welding.
- **Permanent Lateral Bracing Required:** This tag indicates that one or two lateral braces may be required on the tagged member and instructs the installer to look for more information on the truss design drawing.
- **TOP - This Side Up:** This tag reduces the chance that parallel chord trusses will be inadvertently installed upside down.
- **Warning!:** This tag emphasizes that trusses are unstable until properly braced. It urges the installer to consult the job site package for temporary bracing information.

STCA continues to be a very small organization, although for its size has undertaken several

considerable projects to assist its membership with improved product liability. As this industry grows and a critical mass of support develops for STCA activities, the only limit to what the association can do to support all steel truss and component manufacturers in growing their markets is our imaginations.

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