

THE BURN

Spring 2026 Wrap Up

Simplifying Firestopping in IMP Assemblies: New UL Systems from Specified Technologies

STI Staff

Insulated Metal Panels (IMPs), prefabricated composite building materials, are becoming increasingly common in many types of construction where speed of construction matters, including utility, pharmaceutical/labs, semiconductor/electronics, energy, manufacturing, and data centers, because they provide a consistent, repeatable wall assembly supporting modern fast-track builds. However, one persistent challenge can undermine these advantages: cable penetrations.

EZ Path® Fire-Rated Pathway devices deliver a critical advantage. With two new UL Systems specifically tested for IMP assemblies, designers, specifiers, and contractors can now use proven EZ Path® solutions in these increasingly common wall types while maintaining speed, flexibility, and code compliance throughout the life of the facility.

Unlike traditional firestop methods that require repetitive removal and reinstallation every time cables are added or changed, EZ Path® devices are designed for high-change environments, making them especially valuable in data centers, where moves, adds, and changes are constant and maintaining uptime, inspection readiness, and construction schedules is critical.

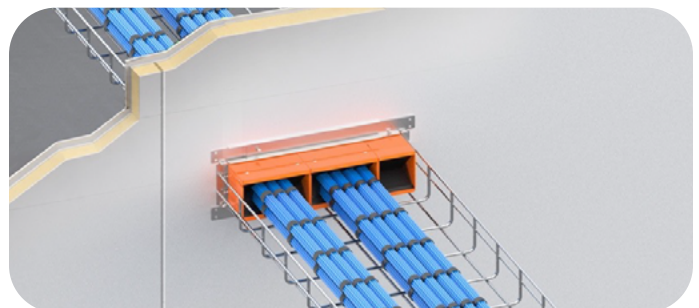
Specified Technologies is excited to announce two new UL systems for use in IMP assemblies: W-N-3003 using EZ Path® Fire-Rated Pathways, and W-N-4001 using EZ Path® Cable Tray Retrofit Devices.

UL System Highlight: W-N-3003 for Cable Pathways in IMP Assemblies

UL System [W-N-3003](#) introduces a tested system for routing cable bundles through insulated metal panel (IMP) assemblies using EZ Path® Fire-Rated Pathway devices. Designed for 1- and 2-hour rated IMP wall assemblies, W-N-3003 provides a reliable, UL-certified method for maintaining fire and smoke performance while accommodating future moves, adds, and changes without the need for re-firestopping. The system allows for the use of all EZ Path® devices, from 0-100% visual fill, including the new Series 84+, giving designers flexibility to match pathway capacity with project requirements.

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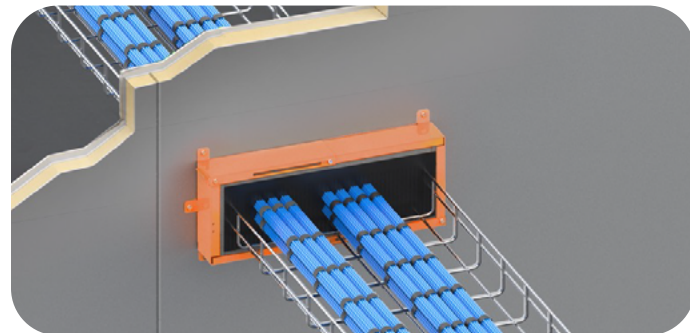


Simplifying Firestopping in IMP Assemblies: New UL Systems from Specified Technologies

(continued)

UL System Highlight: W-N-4001 for Cable Tray Penetrations in IMP Assemblies

UL System [W-N-4001](#) provides a tested system for protecting cable tray penetrations through insulated metal panel (IMP) assemblies using the EZ Path® Cable Tray Retrofit Device. Designed for 1- and 2-hour rated IMP wall assemblies, the system delivers a reliable, UL-certified method for maintaining performance in high-capacity cable tray applications. This system includes cable trays up to 24 inches wide, and cable fills from 25% to 100%, accommodating loaded pathways found in data centers.



Conclusion

With the introduction of UL Systems [W-N-3003](#) and [W-N-4001](#), Specified Technologies provides tested, code-compliant firestopping systems and solutions purpose-built for IMP assemblies. Together, these systems address both pathway-based and cable tray penetrations, enabling future-ready cable management without compromising fire and life-safety or construction schedules.

By combining EZ Path® technology with UL-tested IMP assemblies, designers and installers can simplify firestopping, reduce rework, and confidently support the scalable, high-change environments that modern data centers demand.

Sealing the Gap: Smarter Firestopping with SpecSeal® Closet Flange Firestop Gaskets

STI Staff

Back in 2006, STI engineers watched plumbers struggle with a familiar problem: firestopping toilet drain penetrations, only to have hardened firestop caulk later interfere with proper closet flange installation.

Sealing from below with ladders or scissor lifts was slower. Cutting back firestop caulk from above was messy. Neither respected how the work actually gets done.

So we went back to the office, bought every closet flange we could find, and built something better.

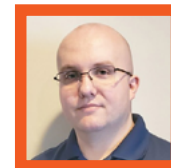
The result was the [SpecSeal® Closet Flange Firestop Gasket](#). A one-piece, intumescent rubber gasket solution that installs from the top side of the floor, fits 3" and 4" flanges, and maintains fire-rated performance without slowing the trade installing it.

Tested to ASTM E814 (UL1479) and CAN/ULC-S115 and UL Certified for up to 2 hours. Approved with cast iron, PVC, and ABS pipes.

A small jobsite problem led to a practical, patented solution now used worldwide. That's customer-driven design. Learn more about the SpecSeal® Closet Flange Firestop Gasket [here](#).



BMP and FCM, a Marriage Made in PDC Heaven and FSL 3.0 Release!



Justin Pine

Senior Manager, Software & Services

The STI Digital Team is excited to announce the initial release of our new BMP-to-FCM workflow, further bridging the gap between fire life safety planning and Building Information Modeling (BIM).

A Barrier Management Plan (BMP) is a critical component of a comprehensive fire life safety strategy, empowering building owners and facility teams to define and maintain approved firestop solutions throughout the lifecycle of a facility. With the latest update to the BMP Tool, those established standards can now be seamlessly integrated into BIM through our Autodesk Revit plugin, Firestop Clash Management (FCM).

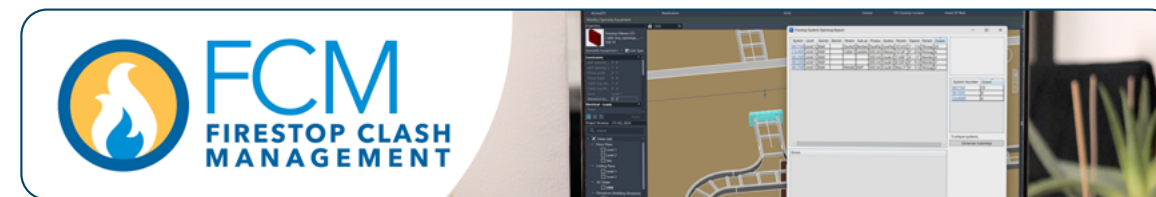
This new workflow enables project participants to export standardized firestop systems directly from BMP and import them into FCM. By making BMP-approved systems the preferred options within the modeling environment, BIM coordinators can confidently select solutions that align with the building's established fire life safety standards. The result is a more streamlined design process, reduced guesswork, and greater consistency from planning through construction.

In addition to the BMP-to-FCM workflow, the Digital Team has released Firestop Locator (FSL) Version 3.0, featuring a completely redesigned synchronization engine. Built from the ground up, this new system delivers improved reliability, faster data transfers, and greater consistency during synchronization.

FSL 3.0 also introduces new Progress, History, and Reporting screens, providing users with greater visibility into synchronization activity. These enhancements offer real-time status updates, detailed completion reports, and a historical record of previous syncs for easy reference and troubleshooting. [Click here](#) to check out the full changelog for additional details.

Rounding out our updates for this edition of The Burn, we're launching a new Dynamic Product Filter experience on our website. This update improves search performance and makes it easier to discover products based on additional attributes and features. As STI's portfolio of firestop solutions continues to grow, the Digital Team remains focused on delivering a faster, more intuitive experience across our website and digital applications.

Follow STI on social media and keep an eye on NewsStop to stay up to date on the latest digital releases and product innovations.



STI Delivers Eight AIA Learning Lounge Sessions in San Diego



John Zalepka
Director of Training & Industry Engagements



The 2026 AIA Conference on Architecture & Design in San Diego brought together thousands of architects, designers, specifiers, engineers, and construction professionals from around the world to share ideas, explore innovations, and earn continuing education credits. As part of the conference, Specified Technologies Inc. hosted eight educational sessions in our AIA Learning Lounge, engaging attendees in discussions centered on life-safety, building performance, and firestop compliance.

Over two days, [John Zalepka](#), Director of Training & Industry Engagements, [Tim Mattox](#), Senior Manager of Systems & Testing Development, and [Nathan Waye, CHC](#), Strategic Account Manager – Healthcare, delivered sessions covering a broad range of topics important to today's design community.

The presentations included:

- Understanding Firestop Specifications: From Design to Jobsite
- Firestop FUN-damentals
- Restoring Sound Transmission Class Through Proper Installation of Building Materials
- Barrier Management for Compliance in Healthcare Facilities

Each session was presented twice over the two-day conference, providing attendees multiple opportunities to participate and earn continuing education credits.

The Learning Lounge proved to be an ideal venue for interactive discussion, with architects and designers asking thoughtful questions about specification development, firestop system selection, acoustical performance, healthcare compliance, and long-term building maintenance. A common theme throughout the conversations was the growing desire to move beyond minimum code compliance and toward solutions that improve constructability, maintainability, and continuous compliance throughout the life of a building.

The specification and fundamentals sessions highlighted the importance of early coordination between design teams, contractors, manufacturers, and owners to ensure firestop requirements are properly detailed and executed. The healthcare-focused sessions generated particularly strong engagement as attendees explored strategies for managing fire and smoke barriers in occupied facilities while balancing operational and regulatory requirements. And the sessions on STC ratings underscored the importance of proper installation practices in achieving not only fire and smoke ratings, but acoustical performance and occupant privacy.

STI appreciates everyone who attended a Learning Lounge session, stopped by the booth, or shared project challenges and ideas with our team. The opportunity to connect directly with architects and design professionals remains one of the most valuable aspects of the AIA Conference, and we look forward to continuing these conversations throughout the year.



Spotlight on UL Systems

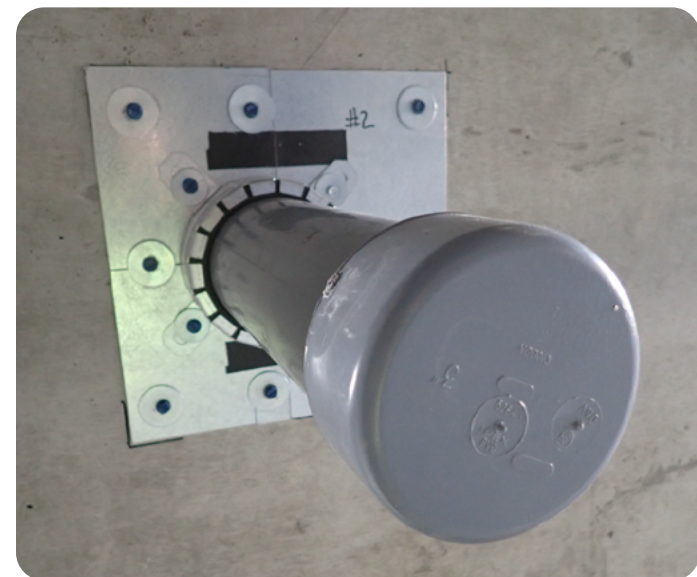


David Vail

P.E., Project Manager & Codes/Standards



Exposed Side of Firestop Blocks Following Fire Endurance and Hose Stream Test (C-AJ-8360)



Steel Plate Allowing Collar Installation (C-AJ-2998)

Firestop Blocks!

SpecSeal® Firestop Blocks were also featured in the previous [Winter 2026](#) issue of the Burn with four systems for blank openings. The hits keep coming and we are excited to roll out another batch of four new listings in this issue! The first two systems are powerful UL 8000 Series listings, which capture multiple penetrants in concrete floor/wall assemblies via [C-AJ-8360](#) and in gypsum walls with [W-L-8156](#). These are both for large openings of up to 3.11 square feet with a max dimension of 32 inches. Installers will appreciate the fact that even with these large allowable openings/dimensions that no wire mesh is required to hold the blocks in place! Allowable penetrant types include metallic and nonmetallic pipes/conduits/tubes, insulated metallic pipes/tubes, cable bundles, steel duct, steel strut and steel angles. The other two systems are for individual insulated metallic penetrants contained within concrete floor/wall assemblies or gypsum wall assemblies through [C-AJ-5492](#) or [W-L-5413](#) respectively. Insulation types include fiberglass or AB/PVC and NBR flexible foam. The coverage for the two systems in concrete assemblies (C-AJ-8360 and C-AJ-5492) goes up to a 3 Hr F Rating and for the two systems in gypsum walls (W-L-8156 and W-L-5413) it is either a 1 or 2 Hr F Rating dependent on the rating of the assembly itself.

Collar with Steel Bridge Plate for Large Annulus!

A system developed solely for Canadian markets with a 50 Pa pressure differential as required by many Canadian building codes for nonmetallic penetrants is [C-AJ-2998](#). This design makes it possible to install a firestop collar when there is up to a 2-1/4 in. annular space between the penetrant and the opening in a concrete floor or wall by spanning that gap with a steel plate. A wrap strip collar consisting of SpecSeal® SSW1000EX, RED, RED2, BLU or BLU2 Wrap Strip layers is installed against the surface of the steel plate. This system allows max 3 in. diameter PVC and XFR pipe with equal F and FT Ratings of 2 Hr. When SpecSeal® SIL300 or SIL400 Sealant is utilized as the smoke seal at the top of the floor assembly then coverage for a W Rating is provided. Alternatively, SpecSeal® Series SSS, LCI, SIL300 or SIL400 Sealant or Putty may be installed as the smoke seal at the top or bottom surface of the floor assembly and both surfaces of a wall assembly, and all materials establish L Ratings to demonstrate control of smoke migration.

Intumescent Sleeves in CLT Assemblies!

STI continues to develop firestopping solutions for CLT assemblies. We recently worked with UL to publish three new listings in CLT floors and the firestops all feature SpecSeal® Intumescent Sleeves for a variety of penetrants. Metallic pipes and conduits up to a max 4 in. diameter can be firestopped per [F-G-1002](#). Similarly, nonmetallic pipes and conduits can utilize [F-G-2004](#) for max 4 in. diameter penetrants. Finally, metallic pipes with a max diameter of 4 in. and insulated with max 2 in. thick fiberglass insulation may be firestopped via [F-G-5003](#). These systems all enjoy F Ratings of 1 or 2 Hr corresponding to the rating of the CLT floor assembly.



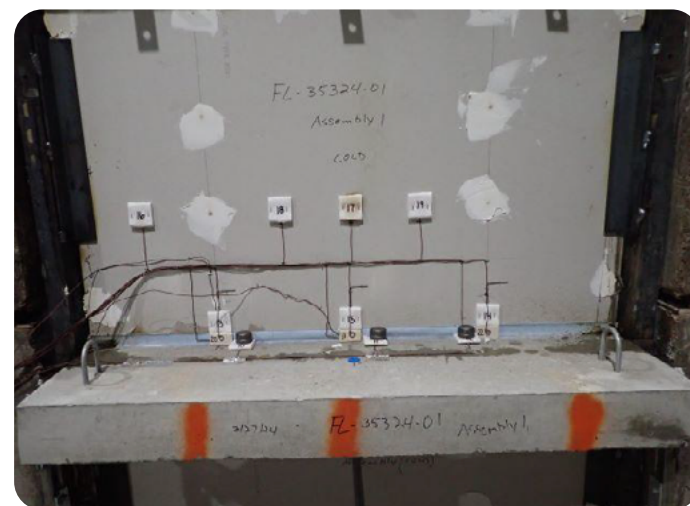
Intumescent Sleeves Following Fire Test in CLT Floor Assembly (F-G-1002, F-G-2004 and F-G-5003)

Of All the Bottom-Of-Wall Joints in All the Towns in All the World, She Firestopped Mine.



Tim Mattox

Senior Manager of Systems & Testing Development



Sir Winston Churchill is often credited with coining the phrase, “Never let a good crisis go to waste.” Few examples illustrate this wisdom more perfectly than the unlikely saga of the bottom-of-wall (BOW) joint in the firestop industry.

For over 30 years, I’ve watched our industry innovate with sophisticated, nuanced firestop designs from STI and others. These systems push boundaries and set new standards—almost always in an attempt to improve the simplicity and provide robustness to the fire containment solutions offered. Passing a tough test on one of these assemblies brings a genuine sense of accomplishment. Yet one humble system has long been undervalued and misunderstood: the bottom-of-wall joint. For many years, to use a golf term, it was the ultimate “gimme.”

Picture this: Your golf ball sits just a foot from the cup. You glance at your partner with that hopeful look and murmur, “Gimme?” If they’re a good sport, they nod. You pick up the ball, count the stroke, and stroll to the next hole—no risk of missing that easy putt. That’s exactly how BOW joints were treated for years. Simple. Forgiven. Overlooked.

Then, in 2024, everything changed. Suddenly, the BOW joint was no longer a gimme. It became the center of a surprising controversy.



The Crisis That No One Saw Coming

During the Committee Action Hearings for the 2027 International Building Code (IBC), a proposal emerged that would have removed the requirement to firestop any BOW joint not specifically designed for movement. If approved, this would have effectively eliminated firestopping for the vast majority of these joints. The proposal was initially disapproved as the code action committee found the language too broad. But a modified version advanced as a public comment and was approved at a subsequent hearing.

Without much warning, we were now facing a crisis. A crisis almost no one had anticipated, because who really pays attention to the humble gap at the bottom of a wall? Yet this moment of potential vulnerability created a golden opportunity—not just to defend the status quo, but to educate the industry, deepen our understanding, and highlight why these seemingly minor joints truly matter for building safety.

The clock was ticking loudly. The issue surfaced in October 2024, leaving the industry with a tight window to resolve this misunderstood joint. Public comments were due by March 2025. There was no time to waste. We needed hard data to prove what we instinctively knew: leaving these joints unprotected wasn’t just a minor oversight—it could compromise fire and smoke containment in real-world conditions.

Digging Deeper: The Hidden Importance of the BOW Joint

We began by examining standard practices and real-site conditions. The Gypsum Association’s GA-216 requires that gypsum panels be installed with a minimum ¼-inch gap above the floor. Contractors shared stories of seeing gaps expand to a full inch or more on a frequent basis. What looks like a tiny, inconsequential space on paper can become a significant pathway for fire and smoke when the stakes are highest.

A group of leaders from the firestop industry launched an ambitious testing program: 19 different assemblies evaluated across five accredited fire test laboratories (certified for UL 2079 or operating under the UL Client Test Data program). The goals were clear—compare unprotected ¼-inch gaps, unprotected 1-inch gaps, properly firestopped joints, and the common issue of discontinuous bottom plates (frequently observed on actual job sites).

The Results Speak Louder Than Words

The outcomes were as predictable as they were compelling. All six tests incorporating approved firestop systems at the BOW joint sailed through the rigorous UL 2079 criteria. In stark contrast, the 13 tests with deviations—whether unprotected gaps of varying sizes or discontinuous stud plates—failed to meet the performance standards in every case, often dramatically.

These weren’t abstract lab curiosities. They mirrored the messy realities of construction sites everywhere: imperfect alignments, variable gaps, and discontinuous tracks. The data provided overwhelming evidence that BOW firestopping is far from a “gimme”—it’s a critical line of defense.

A United Industry Response

Leaders across the firestop industry rallied, channeling expertise into clear, evidence-based communications. The goal wasn’t just to kill the proposal but to elevate awareness of this often-ignored detail. Through technical bulletins, presentations, stakeholder meetings, and the compelling test results, the message resonated: Firestopping the bottom-of-wall joint isn’t bureaucratic red tape—it’s essential protection that safeguards lives and property. In the end, the proponents of the original code change gracefully and thankfully withdrew their proposal. The BOW joint requirement remained intact, ensuring our buildings continue to progress through enhanced life safety.

Why This Matters – And What Comes Next

This reminds us that even the smallest details in fire protection can have massive impacts. The BOW joint story is more than a code battle; it’s a testament to the power of proactive industry collaboration, rigorous science, and a willingness to turn a potential crisis into lasting progress.



As we move forward with the 2027 IBC and beyond, let’s carry this momentum. Pay attention to the “gimmies”—because in fire safety, there’s no such thing as a free putt. Every joint, every seal, every system plays its part in the bigger picture of resilient, code-compliant construction.

The next time you see that modest gap at the bottom of a wall, remember: It might just be the one that needs firestopping most of all.

For more information on the bottom-of-wall testing program led by the International Firestop Council, please [click here](#) to access the Public Comment, the Test Report, the White Paper, and the supporting statement letter from Underwriter’s Laboratories. In addition, a special thank you is extended to Intertek for their outstanding support in helping our testing efforts.

Getting Your EJ Right the First Time



Christopher DeMarco, CFPS

Director of Engineering Services



A Contractor's Guide to Fast, Accurate Engineering Judgments

Engineering Judgments (EJs) work best when they are accurate, defensible, and fast. The biggest driver of all three is not what happens inside Engineering, it is the quality of what comes in from the field. We've consistently seen that contractor-submitted EJs move faster and require fewer revisions, largely because the contractor onsite has firsthand knowledge of the actual conditions. If you want a clean, first-pass EJ, here is how to get there.

Start with the Right Question

Before submitting, take a step back:

- **Confirm an EJ is actually needed**
 - o Many requests are already covered by tested and listed systems
 - o If for a submittal, consider a close tested system and reserve the EJ to address the actual condition once built
- **Define the deviation clearly**
 - o What is different from the listed system?
 - o Focus only on what affects firestop performance

EJs exist to bridge the gap between tested systems and real-world conditions, not to document everything happening in the field.

Be Precise, Not Exhaustive

More information is not always better. High-quality submissions:

- Focus on the core condition that impacts performance
- Avoid layering in irrelevant construction details
- Stick to what you know, not what you assume

What slows things down:

- Extra detail that does not affect performance
- Trying to make the EJ look like a complete as-built drawing

EJs are meant to be schematic and representative, not construction documents.

Photos Win. Every Time.

If there is one habit that improves EJ quality immediately, it is this: Include clear, useful photos. Photos eliminate guesswork and reduce back-and-forth.

What to include:

- Overall view of the condition for context
- Close-up of the penetration or joint
- A reference for scale (e.g., tape measure, hand, known object)

Best practices:

- Shoot straight-on, not at extreme angles
- Make sure lighting shows materials and gaps clearly
- Capture both sides if accessible

A good photo often answers questions that would otherwise take multiple clarification cycles.

Is a hand sketch helpful?

Absolutely. If a photo is not available, or if features of the condition are not readily apparent in a photo, a hand sketch goes a long way to help the engineer understand the condition.

Define the Critical Variables

At minimum, your submission should clearly communicate the conditions that directly impact firestop performance:

- **Assembly type and construction**
 - o Wall, floor, or floor/ceiling assembly
 - o Framed vs. Concrete or Concrete Block
- **Assembly specifics**
 - o **Concrete or Concrete Block** thickness of slab or wall
 - o **CLT**: number of plies, overall thickness if known
 - o **Framed assemblies**: stud size, spacing, number of gypsum layers. For framed floors, subfloor type and thickness.
- **Fire-resistance details**
 - o Hourly rating
 - o **UL Design Number**, if available, is a major accelerator
- **Opening characteristics**
 - o Size and geometry (round, rectangular) Annular space
 - o Minimum and maximum between penetrants and periphery of opening
 - o Minimum and maximum between the penetrants

Penetrant details

- o Type, size, material
- o Specifically, what is the present? Avoid referencing a system number for this information.

Joint characteristics

- o Joint type (head-of-wall, wall-to-wall, etc.)
- o Joint width
- o What two barriers are involved?
- o If there is a joist, beam, or column involved, provide the size and clearance dimensions measured to the barrier.

These inputs form the backbone of the evaluation. Missing or unclear information here is one of the primary drivers of revisions and delays because the engineer is forced to fill in gaps or come back with questions. If you know the assembly, define it. If you don't, show it clearly in photos.

Don't Guess

If something is unknown:

- Say it
- Estimate it based on measurement
- Support it with photos
- Depending on what information is not known, it may be best to stop and consider submitting the engineering judgment when all information is available.
- If submitting, the engineer handling the case may not be able to proceed until this information is available.

What causes problems:

- Filling in gaps just to complete the form
- Submitting based on assumptions

Many revisions trace back to early guesses that turn out to be wrong.

One Condition per EJ Request

Keep it clean:

- One condition = one EJ Request
- Avoid bundling multiple scenarios into a single request

Bundling creates confusion, slows the entire EJ process including review, and increases the likelihood of revisions.

Timing Matters

Submit when you have:

- Verified field conditions
- Real dimensions
- A clear understanding of the problem

Submitting too early often leads to:

- Changes later
- Preventable revisions

The Payoff

When submissions are clear and accurate:

- Faster turnaround
- Fewer revisions
- Better alignment with inspectors and AHJs
- Less rework in the field

And most importantly, you get an EJ that reflects reality the first time.

A word about revisions

Revisions are intended to amend an existing EJ, and the latest revision supersedes all prior versions. Revisions should not be used to address new or materially different conditions. If an existing EJ is similar to the condition being requested, reference that EJ in the new request rather than revising the original.

Bottom Line

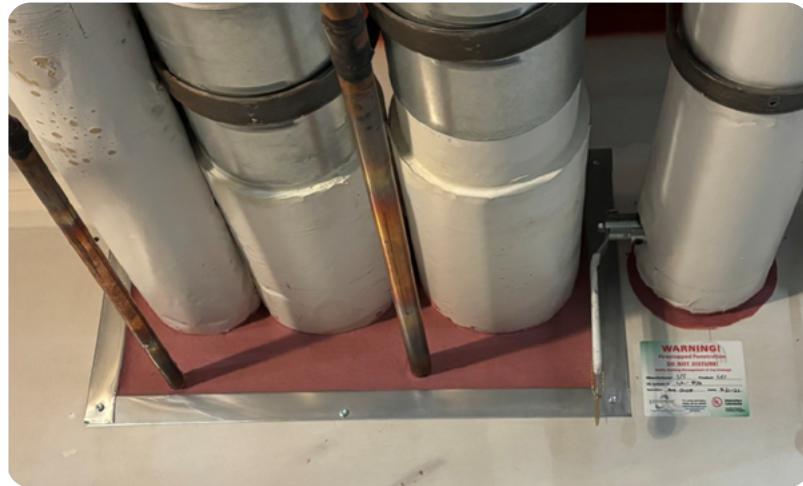
If you:

- Focus on what actually affects firestop performance
- Provide clear dimensions and assembly details
- Include strong, useful photos or a hand sketch where relevant

...you dramatically increase the likelihood of a first-pass EJ. That is better for you, better for us, and better for the job.

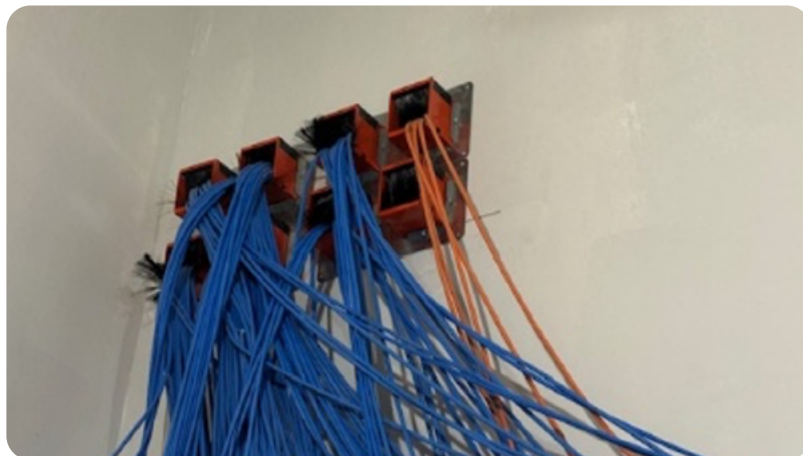


Product Field Shots



LCI Intumescent Sealant for Metallic and Insulated Metallic Penetrants

Project: NIH Rocky Mountain Labs
Location: Hamilton, MT
Contractor: Hudson Bay Insulation



EZ Path Installation

Project: Lee Health Fort Myers Hospital
Location: Fort Myers, FL
Contractor: State-Line Products of South Florida, Inc.



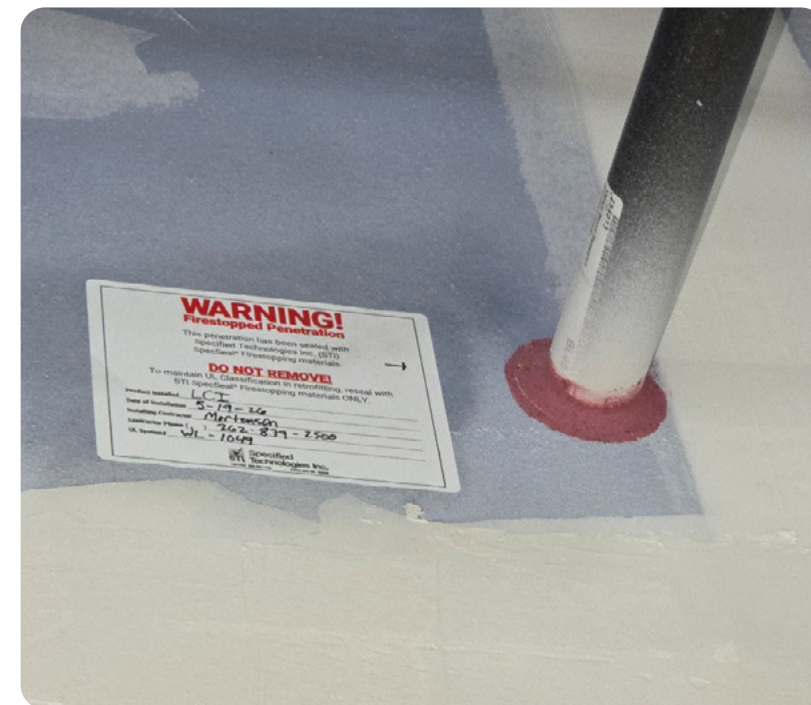
LCI Intumescent Sealant for Metallic Penetrants

Project: Lee Health Fort Myers Hospital
Location: Fort Myers, FL
Contractor: State-Line Products of South Florida, Inc.



Cast-In Device Installation

Project: St Luke's Downtown Boise
Location: Boise, ID
Contractor: Layton



LCI Intumescent Sealant for Metallic Penetrant

Project: Versiti Blood Center
Location: Milwaukee, WI
Contractor: Mortenson

Upcoming Trade Shows

Facades+ Boston

07/23/26, Boston, Massachusetts

Health Care Facilities Innovation Conference (HFIC)

08/02/26 - 08/05/26, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Booth #719

BICSI Beyond 2026

08/30/26 - 09/02/26, Las Vegas, Nevada
Booth #623

Facades+ Chicago

09/17/26, Chicago, Illinois

Meet the TEAM

Shah Israil

Senior Engineering Services Specialist



What is your role at Specified Technologies Inc. and how long have you been here?

I'm a Senior Engineering Services Specialist in the Engineering Services Department. I joined STI as an intern in January 2026 and transitioned into my current role in March 2026 after completing my degree in Fire Protection Engineering Safety & Technology at Eastern Kentucky University.

What is one bucket list item of yours?

One bucket list item of mine is learning how to DJ using vinyl records and turntables.

What project have you worked on in your career that you are most proud to have been a part of?

Having just started my career in fire protection, I'm proud of the wide range of projects I've had the chance to see grow since joining STI. During my internship, I gained valuable insight into the product development world as I got to observe testing, sit in on discussions and hear about the progression of new products. In my current role, I've already had the chance to contribute to diverse projects including hospitals, data centers, government facilities, and high-rise developments. It's especially rewarding to see projects come to life in places familiar to me across the world, sometimes even recognizing project addresses and realizing my friends work in the building! It really makes the experience even more meaningful.

What is your favorite part about working in the firestop industry?

My passion for fire and life safety began when I became a volunteer firefighter during my senior year of high school, which opened my eyes to an industry and service many people overlook. I took the responsibility of being a first responder very seriously and I've been fortunate to combine that passion with my interest in engineering. Fire Protection Engineering allows me to contribute to solutions that directly protect people and property. I also enjoy the practical creativity involved in firestop—whether adapting tested systems to real-world conditions or developing new solutions for conditions that haven't been encountered before. Turning ideas into effective, executable plans is rewarding.

What is one fun fact about yourself?

I was born in New York City and spent my early years in New Jersey before living abroad for a decade. My family and I bounced around Kazakhstan, the United Kingdom, and Malta. I later returned to New Jersey to finish high school, then moved to Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and finally returned once again to New Jersey this past year. I think I might have picked up some nomadic traits back in Kazakhstan!

