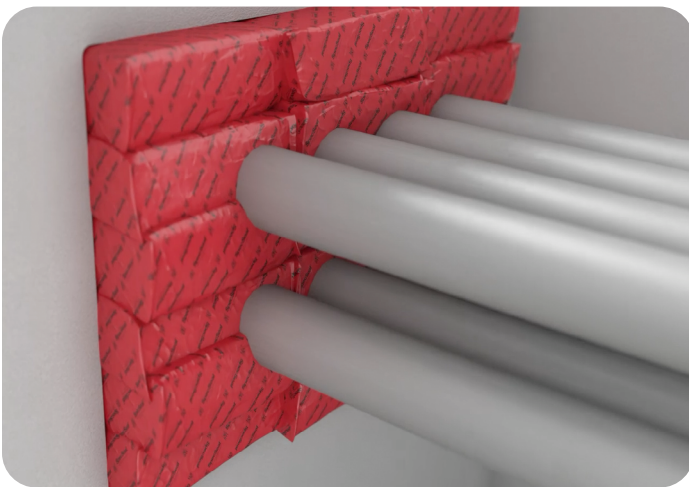


Single-Sided Access Firestop Conditions

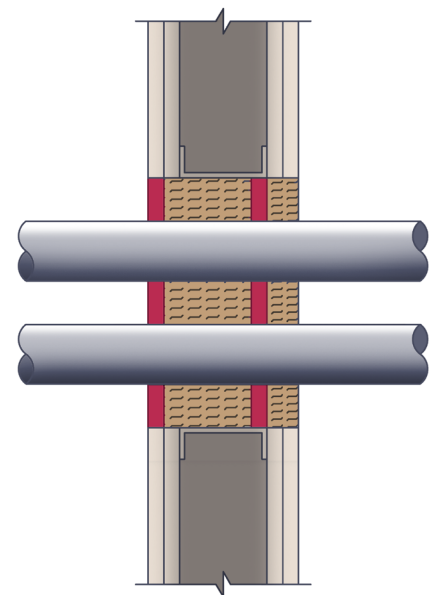
When Access is Limited, Performance Can't Be: The Case for Firestop Pillows and Blocks



We understand that limited or single-sided access conditions can be challenging in the field, and installers are often looking for practical ways to complete the work efficiently. One approach we frequently see proposed is what's commonly referred to as the "ice cream sandwich" method, where mineral wool is packed from the accessible side, sealant is applied, additional mineral wool is placed, and a second application of sealant is installed.

While this method may appear workable in concept, it presents several performance and constructability concerns that make it difficult to recommend in many firestop applications.

From a practical standpoint, blind placement of mineral wool makes it impossible to verify proper compression, continuity, and backing depth. In these installations, multiple applications of sealant are often used in an attempt to compensate for limited access, but this approach introduces variability in sealant thickness, adhesion, and overall system consistency. These factors are critical to firestop system performance, particularly where inspection and long-term reliability are concerned.



Example of "ice cream sandwich" installation method

Single-Sided Access Firestop Conditions (cont.)

For single-sided access conditions, Firestop Pillows or Firestop Blocks are specifically designed to address these limitations. They can be installed entirely from one side, provide consistent and repeatable fill, and eliminate the uncertainty associated with blind backing placement. In gypsum board wall assemblies, these products better protect the vulnerable cut gypsum edge, helping maintain wall integrity under fire and hose stream exposure, especially where access is limited.

It is also important to consider hose stream performance. In some sealant heavy, single-sided installations, the ability of the assembly to withstand hose stream impact may be questionable due to limited backing support and reliance on exposed sealant faces. In these cases, firestop system designs (including engineering judgments) often require the addition of steel cover plates or other mechanical protection to achieve acceptable performance. When these supplemental measures are factored in, the overall installation frequently becomes more complex and more costly than a pillow or block solution.

We recognize that sealant-based approaches may appear less expensive when viewed solely from a material standpoint. However, in practice, increased labor time, multiple applications, inspection challenges, and the potential need for steel cover plate protection often offset any perceived material savings.

Our role in designing firestop systems and developing engineering judgments is to recommend solutions that are predictable, defensible, and expected to perform if tested. For single-sided access wall conditions, we often recommend Firestop Pillows or Firestop Blocks as a more reliable and efficient solution. Under certain limited circumstances, alternative sealant-based approaches may be considered, but these conditions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis with performance and constructability as the primary drivers.



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