

## Blueskin® Air Barrier Membranes

---

### ***What does an air barrier do?***

An air barrier keeps inside air in and outside air out of a building. Uncontrolled air movement through exterior walls can lead to failure of building components, higher energy costs and potential indoor air quality problems. Uncontrolled air leakage through exterior walls is a major concern.

### ***Are air barriers and vapour barriers the same thing?***

No. Air Barriers keep air from moving through a wall. Moist air carries a lot more water vapour into wall assemblies than what diffuses through a vapour barrier. Therefore, an air barrier is much more important than a vapour barrier in controlling how much vapour results in a wall. Vapour in walls could condense and deteriorate the wall components, leading to wet carpets, staining, mould growth and indoor air quality (IAQ) problems. It is possible however to have one product acting as both air barrier and vapour barrier such as Blueskin®.

### ***What is Blueskin®?***

Blueskin® is Canada's no. 1 membrane type sheet air barrier. It is a rubberized membrane, which is packaged in rolls of various widths, which can be self-adhered, thermofused or applied with cold adhesives to all types of wall assemblies such as gypsum board and concrete block. Blueskin® is an air barrier, a vapour barrier and water barrier all in one product.

### ***Do Blueskin® products comply with new code requirements?***

Yes. The 1995 National Building Code (NBCC) requires that air barrier materials allow a maximum of 0.02 L/m<sup>2</sup>/s of air leakage at a pressure of 75Pa. All Blueskin® membranes meet or exceed this requirement.

### ***Why should Blueskin® be the specifier's air barrier of choice?***

Blueskin® has been on the market in Canada since air barriers were first introduced into the NBCC in 1985 and is now the premier membrane of choice on the market today. And it's more than the product itself. Henry Canada personnel have been consulting with designers, guiding contractors on site and setting up first class product distribution in every region of the country. Our technical details, backed by solid design and on-site experience, have been adopted by provincial agencies as "best practice" for rain screen cavity wall construction.

### ***As a designer / specifier, we are being approached by manufactures of other systems such as urethane, which they claim to be air & vapour barrier? Is this true?***

In many tests, the urethane foam system has proven to meet the requirements of NBCC. The question remains however as to the longer-term performance of urethane foam. Blueskin® has been designed to perform for the intended service life of the building as an air and vapour barrier. There are still many questions relative to urethane foam as to its long-term performance. Buildings move, expand, contract, and creep - if the urethane foam doesn't, where is the air barrier? Also, insects seem to like urethane. What does this mean? As a vapour barrier, it is far from being as good as Blueskin® and therefore we feel that Blueskin® is still your no. 1 choice.

### ***Blueskin® SA seems to be the most popular Blueskin® product? Why?***

Blueskin® SA is the self-adhered Blueskin®. Its easy application makes it a favorite among applicators and owners who want quality at a low installed cost. It also meets the requirements of a Type 3 Air Barrier in accordance with the 1995 National Building Code. As a system, Blueskin® SA first requires the use of a primer. Blueskin® Primer is the preferred primer in the industry for self-adhered membranes. The combination of the primer and membranes are unbeatable. Blueskin® SA "LT". This membrane is designed for cold weather applications, which can be applied down to temperatures of -12°C!

***What are the three steps to a successful Blueskin® job?***

1. *Prime* – Apply the primer uniformly and wait at least 30 minutes before applying the Blueskin®.
2. *Press* – Just like wallpaper, the Blueskin® SA membrane will self-adhere much better if hand and roller pressure is applied. To limit wrinkling, do the “breaststroke”. Start by applying pressure to the middle of the roll and work the wrinkles out towards the edges.
3. *Seal* – Use Air-Bloc or POLYBITUME® 570-05 around brick ties and other projections to ensure continuity and a good seal.

***How long can Blueskin® be exposed for?***

Best practice is to protect Blueskin® from damage from other trades and from sunlight as quickly as possible. Generally speaking, six weeks is good practice. Longer exposure is possible. Contact Henry Canada if you anticipate longer exposure or would like more information on this topic. <>