5 QUICK TIPS FOR AIR BARRIER SELECTION

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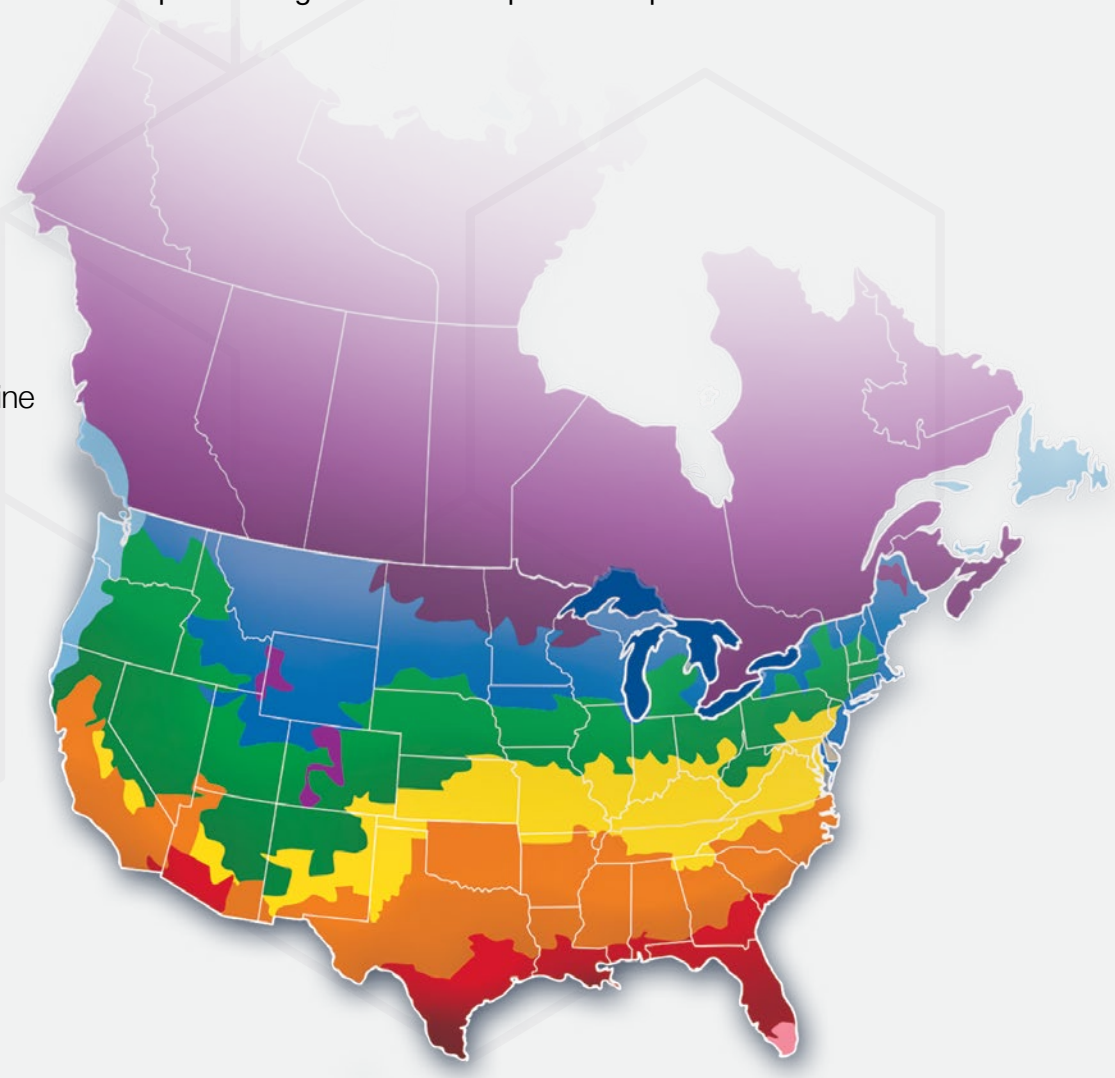
1. Know your climate zone

Air and vapor barrier system design must take the project's climate zone into account. Climate conditions most directly impact moisture mitigation and energy efficiency, but each climate zone presents unique challenges to air and vapor barrier performance.

- Climate zone 1
  Very hot/humid
- Climate zone 2
  Hot-humid/dry
- Climate zone 3
  Warm - humid/dry/marine
- Climate zone 4
  Mixed - humid/dry
- Climate zone 4 marine
  Mixed - marine
- Climate zone 5
  Cool - humid/dry
- Climate zone 6
  Cold - humid/dry
- Climate zone 7 & 8
  Very cold



This map is meant to serve as a representation of the climate zones outlined by ASHRAE. This map was not created or provided by ASHRAE.

2. Consider wall assembly design

What is the substrate onto which the air barrier will be applied? Are there a mplex design details, geometries, or rough surfaces? Where is the insulation located – is it all in the stud space, is it split between the stud space and the cavity, or is it all in the cavity? Finally, what about compliance with NFPA 285? Consideration of all of these factors is key to selecting the best air barrier for the building.

3. Understand building type, purpose and climate

What type of building are you designing and what will the building be used for? You'll need to consider what the requirements and usage of the building are relative to its intended interior climate, or temperature and relative humidity (RH).

4. Consider back-up wall assembly

Do the back-up walls have studs with exterior sheathing, or CMU with masonry ties set into the mortar joints? If it's CMU with masonry ties set into the mortar joints, then a fluid-applied air barrier system makes the most sense, as installing a sheet applied membrane around masonry ties is not practical. If there are complex geometries and transitions, a fluid-applied air barrier system may be a better option.

5. Assess building details and penetrations

Are there lots of penetrations (windows, doors, holes, pipe penetrations, etc.), or are the walls fairly opaque? If there are a lot of window openings and a sheet membrane is the preferred window flashing, then it makes sense to use a sheet membrane in the field. If certain walls are relatively opaque, spraying a fluid-applied membrane will be very efficient.

Need more in-depth air barrier advice?

Before designing your next air barrier, be sure to consider consulting with a trusted resource at Henry Company. For more than 80 years, our products and systems have helped manage the flow of water, air, vapor, and energy throughout the building envelope. Today, our Building Envelope Systems® include an entire portfolio of compatible solutions to help you meet your challenges.

Schedule a meeting with a HenryTrusted Advisor.

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