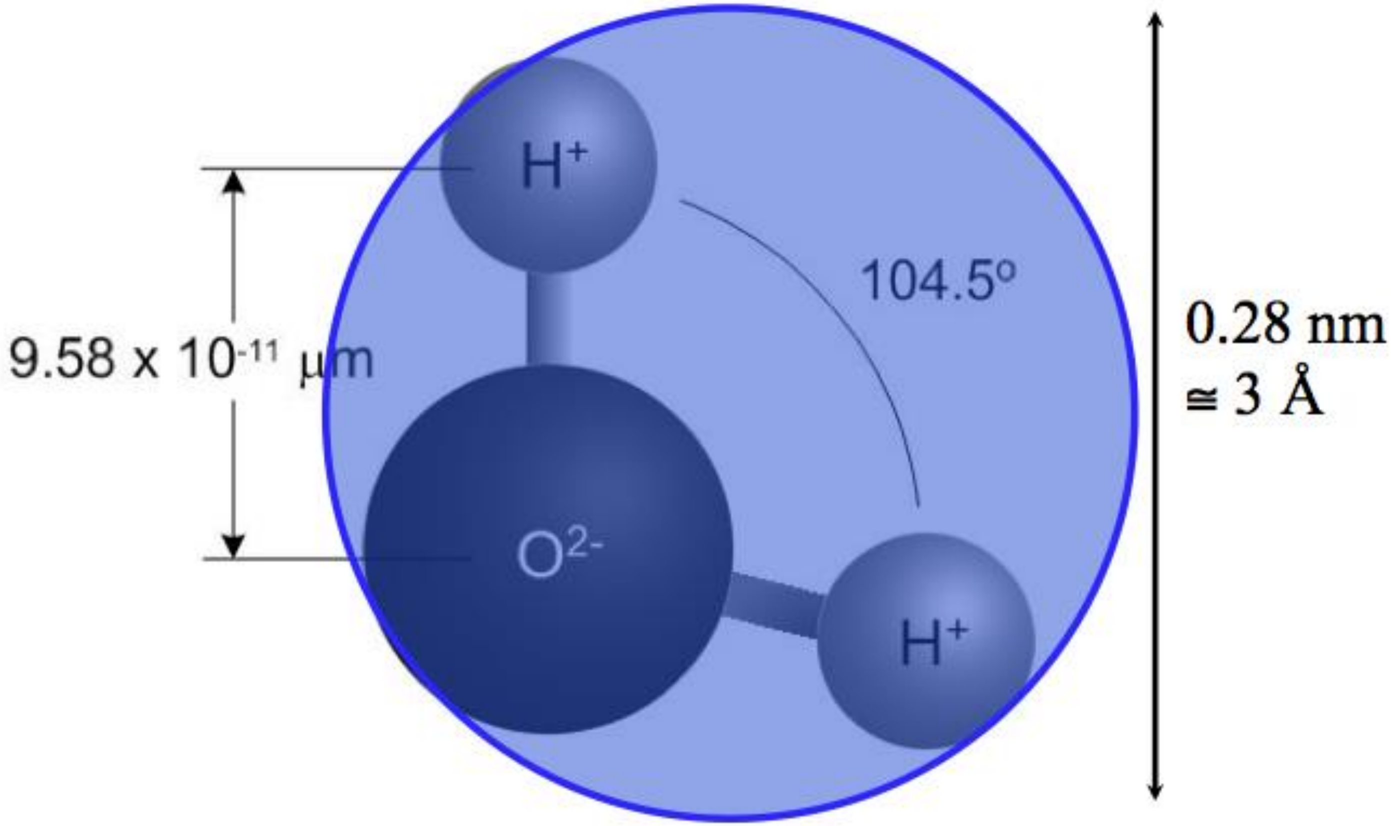
Joseph Lstiburek, Ph.D., P.Eng, ASHRAE Fellow

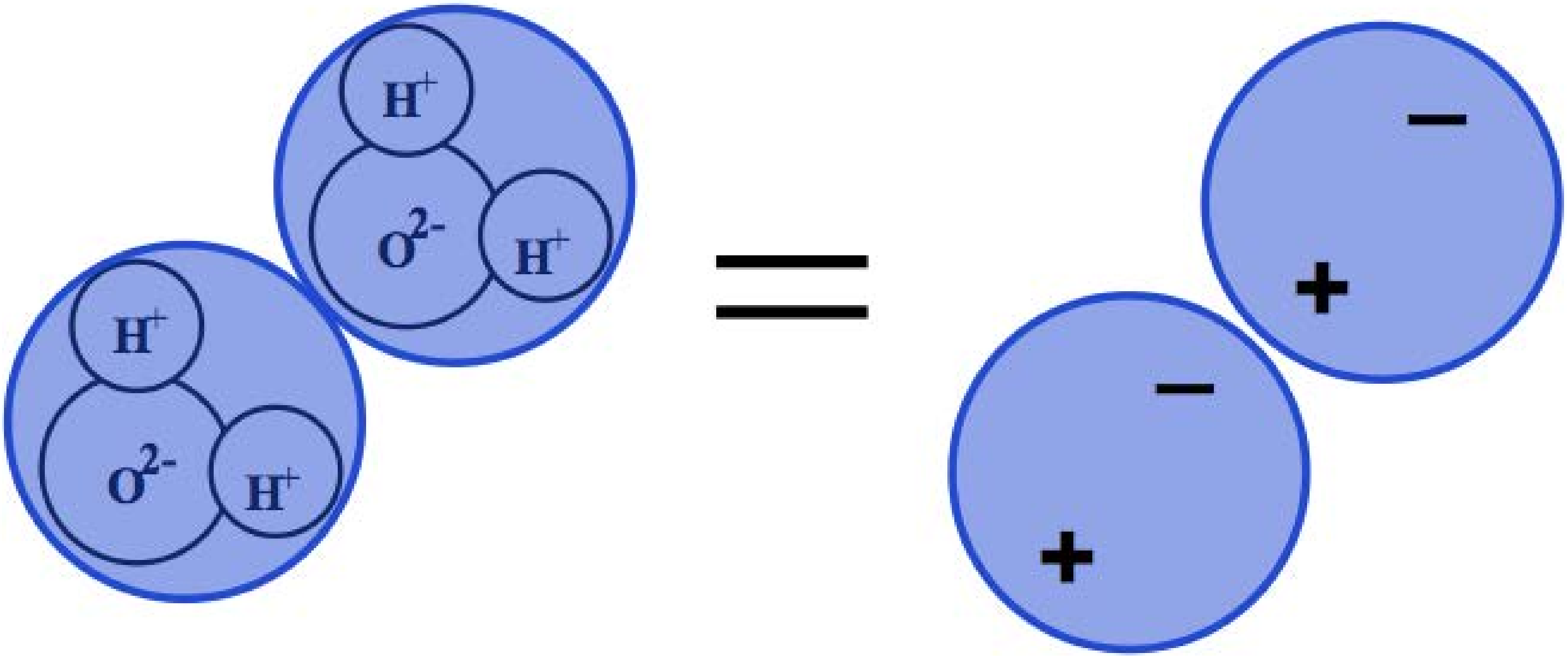
Building Science

The Water Molecule

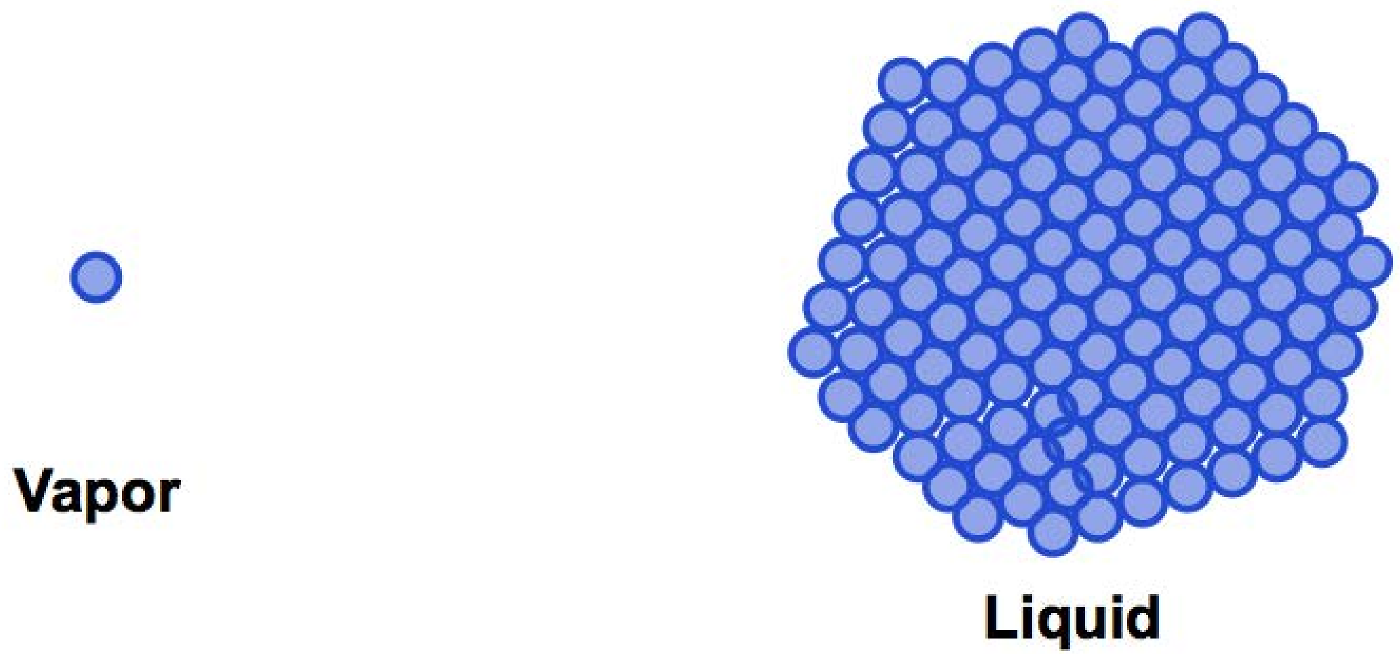
Water Molecules

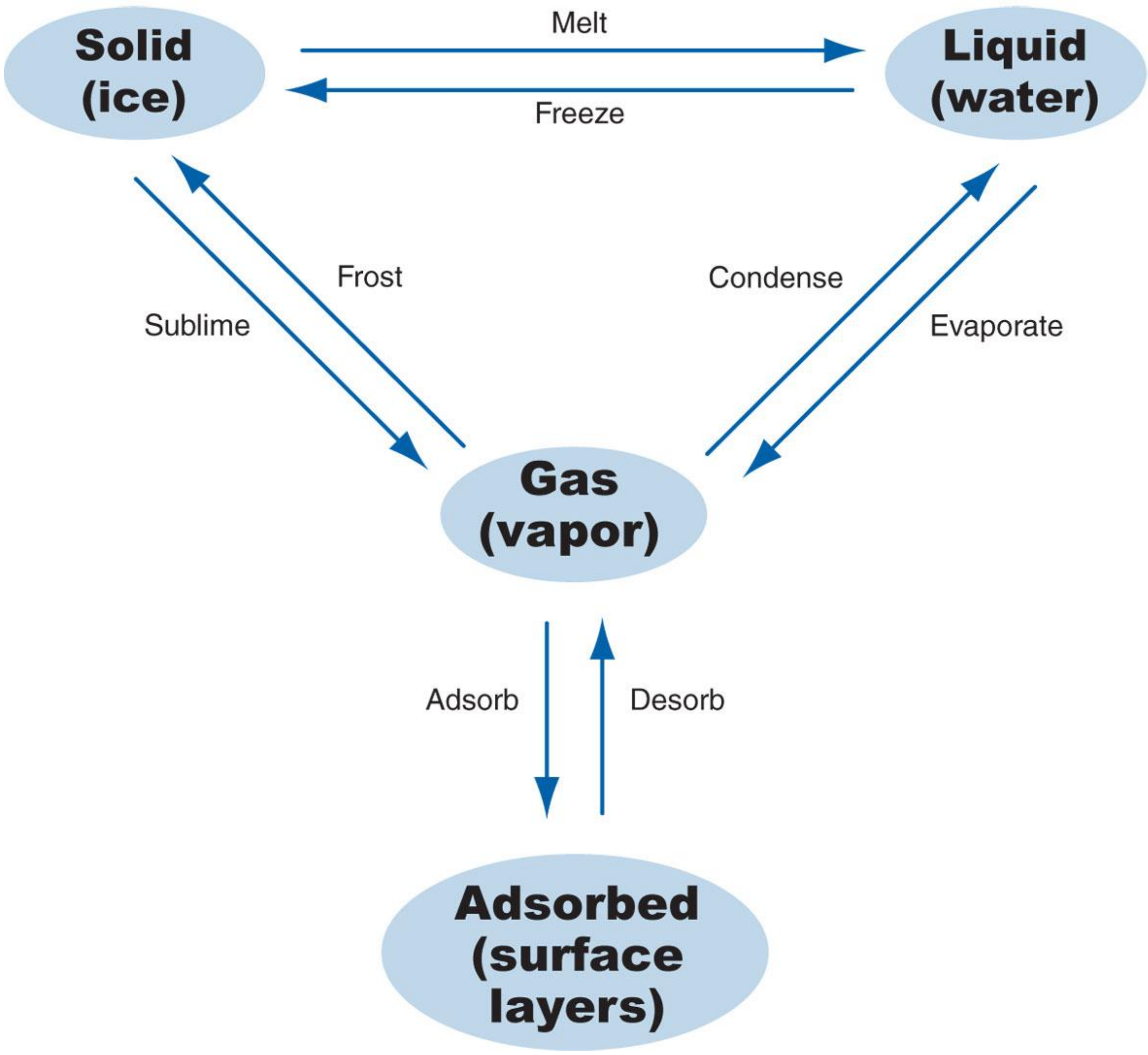

H+
104.5o
9.58 x 10-11 μm
O2-
H+
0.28 nm
≅ 3 Å

Polar Molecule


H+
O2-
H+
H+
O2-
H+
=
−
+
−
+

Size Matters


Vapor
Liquid


Solid
(ice)
Melt
Freeze
Liquid
(water)
Frost
Sublime
Condense
Evaporate
Gas
(vapor)
Adsorb
Desorb
Adsorbed
(surface
layers)

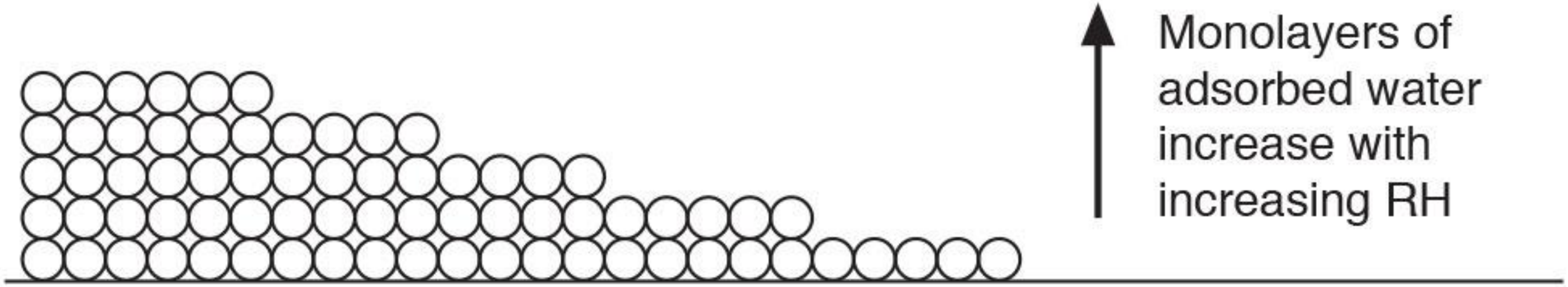
Moisture Transport in Porous Media

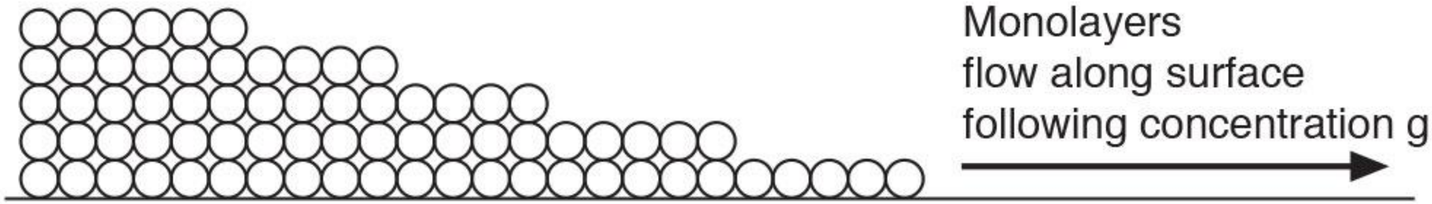
Phase	Transport Process	Driving Potential
Vapor	Diffusion	Vapor Concentration
Adsorbate	Surface Diffusion	Concentration
Liquid	Capillary Flow	Suction Pressure
	Osmosis	Solute Concentration

Moisture Transport in Assemblies

Phase	Transport Process	Driving Potential
Vapor	Diffusion	Vapor Concentration
	Convective Flow	Air Pressure
Adsorbate	Surface Diffusion	Concentration
Liquid	Capillary Flow	Suction Pressure
	Osmosis	Solute Concentration
	Gravitational Flow	Height
	Surface Tension	Surface Energy
	Momentum	Kinetic Energy
	Convective Flow	Air Pressure

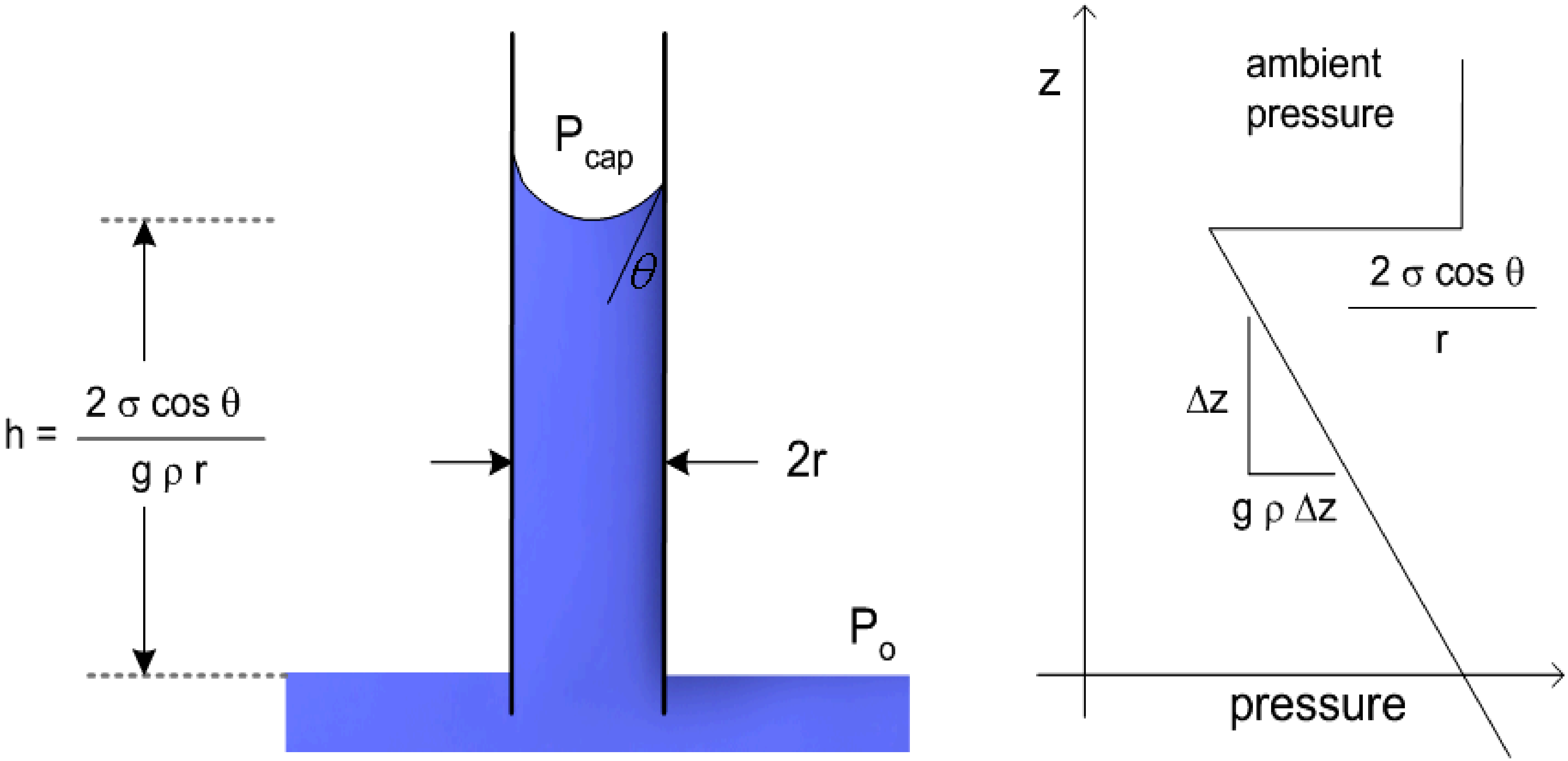
Vapor	Diffusion	Vapor Concentration
	Convective Flow	Air Pressure
Adsorbate	Surface Diffusion	Concentration


Monolayers of
adsorbed water
increase with
increasing RH

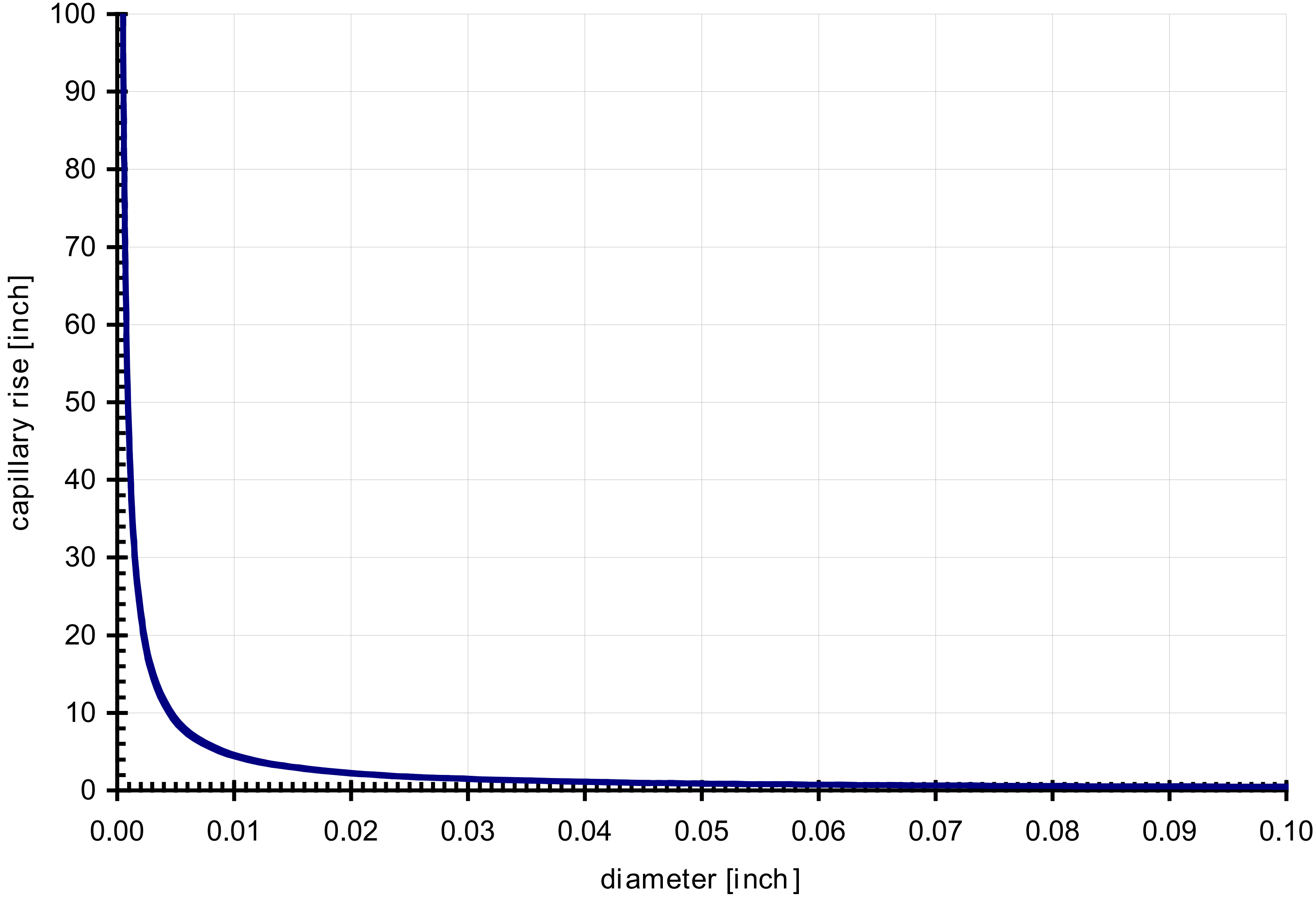

Monolayers
flow along surface
following concentration gradient

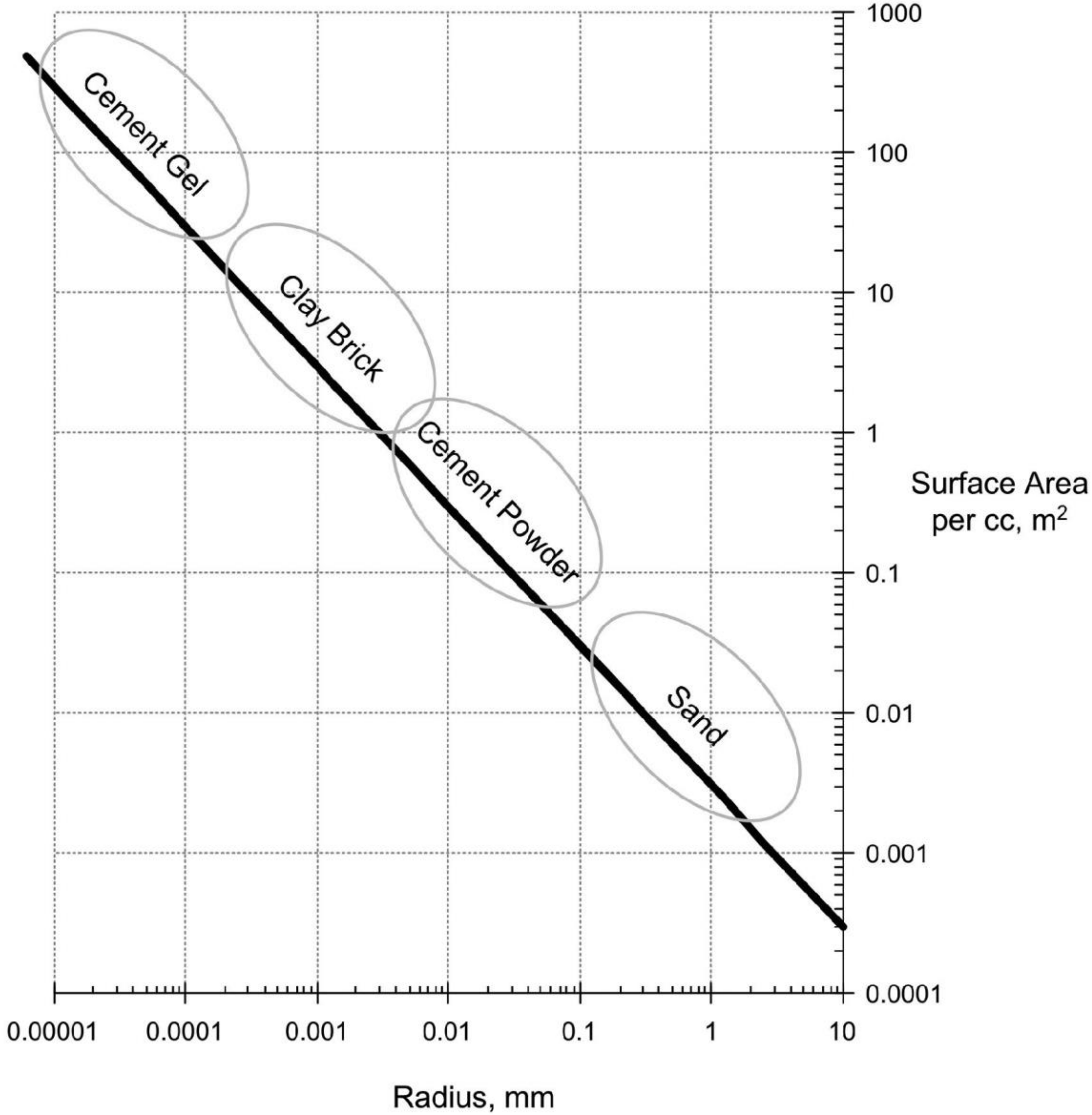
Vapor	Diffusion	Vapor Concentration
	Convective Flow	Air Pressure
Adsorbate	Surface Diffusion	Concentration
Liquid	Capillary Flow	Suction Pressure

Calculating capillary rise



Capillary rise versus diameter





Surface area vs. particle size
From Straube & Burnett, 2005

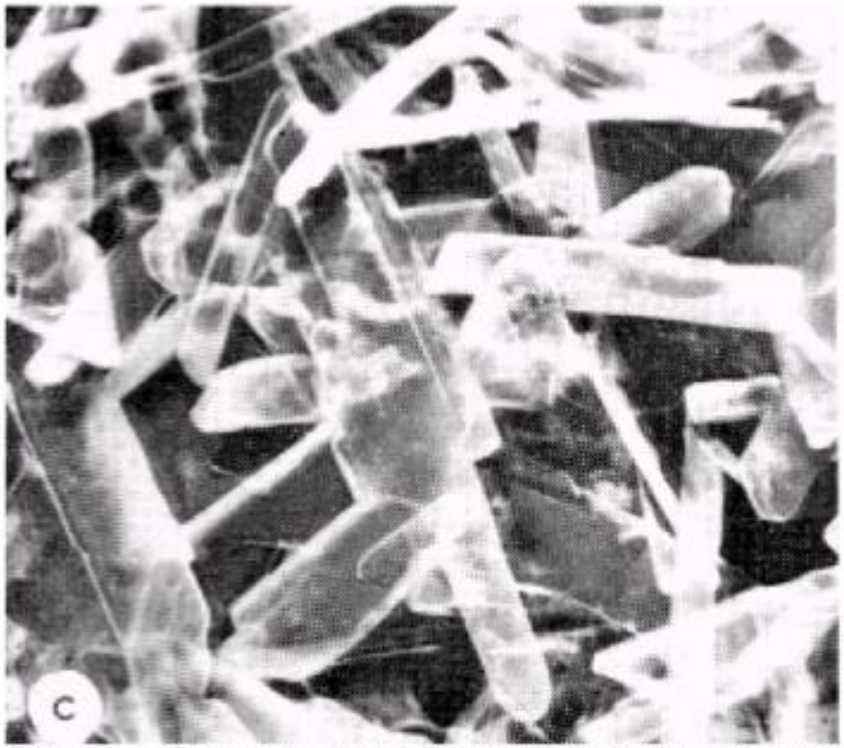


Figure 1c. Gypsum, hydrated from plaster of paris and water, porosity 30 per cent.

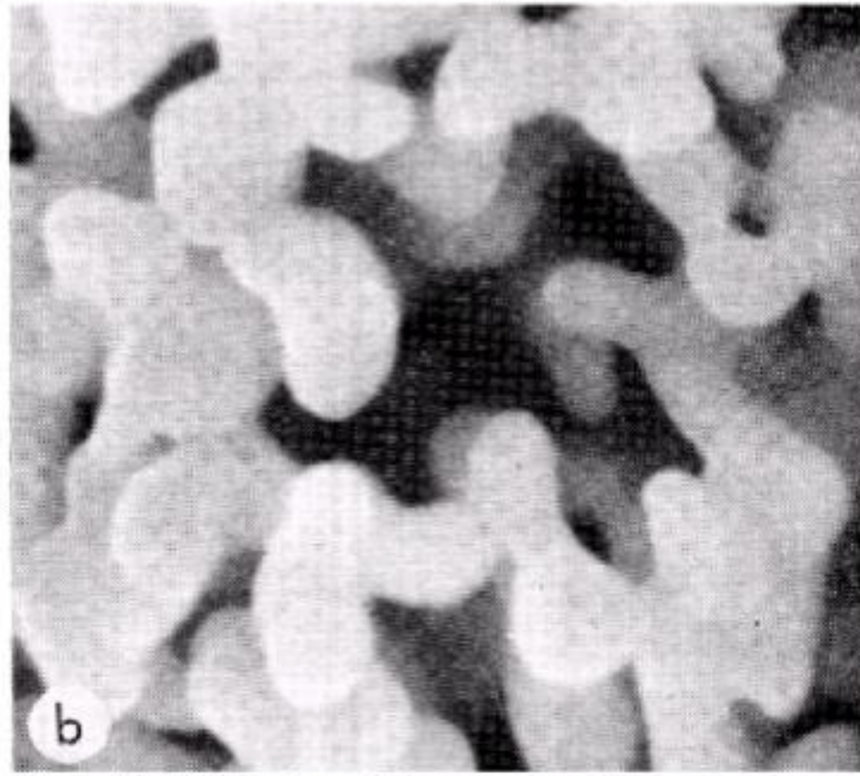
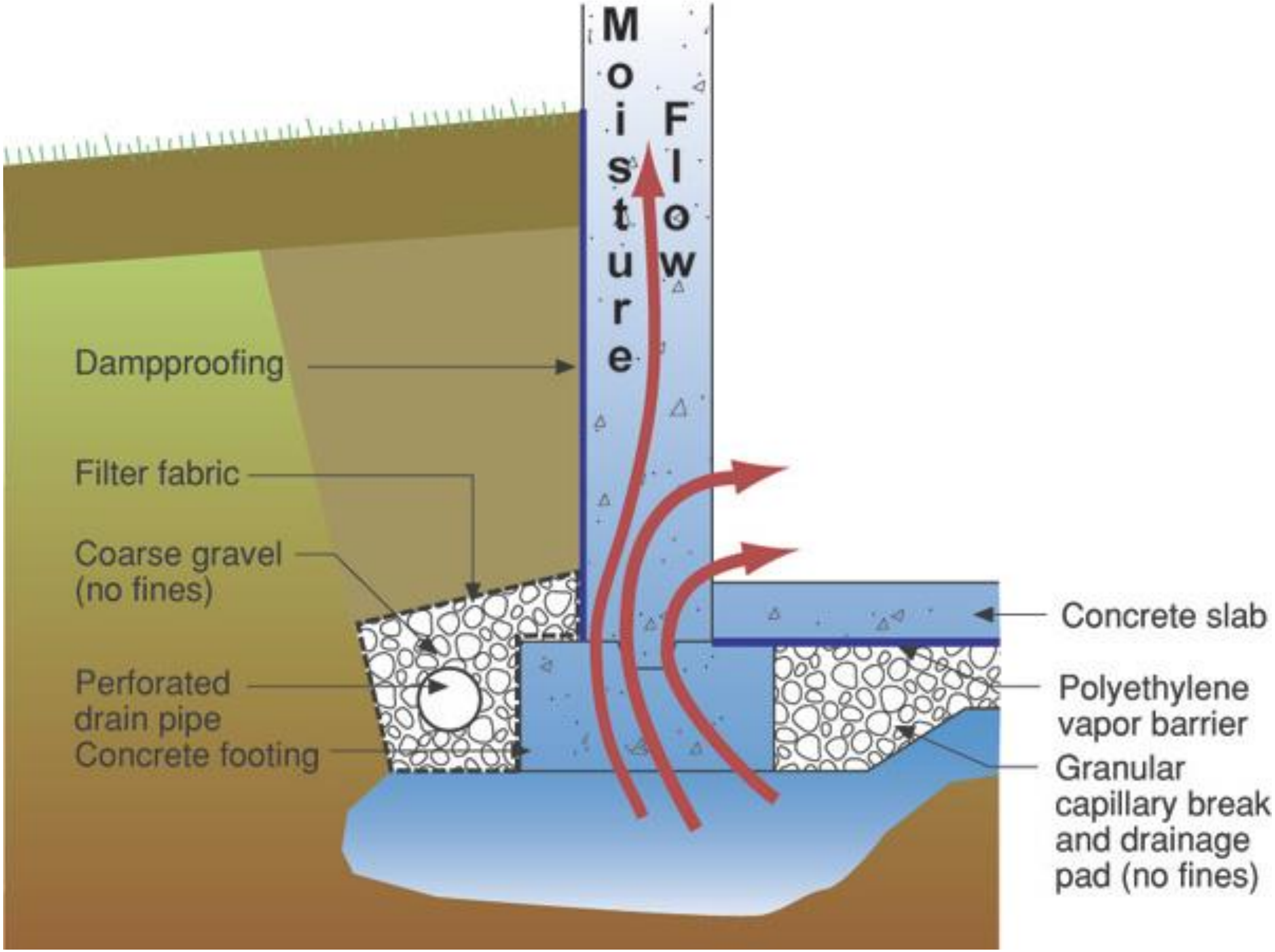
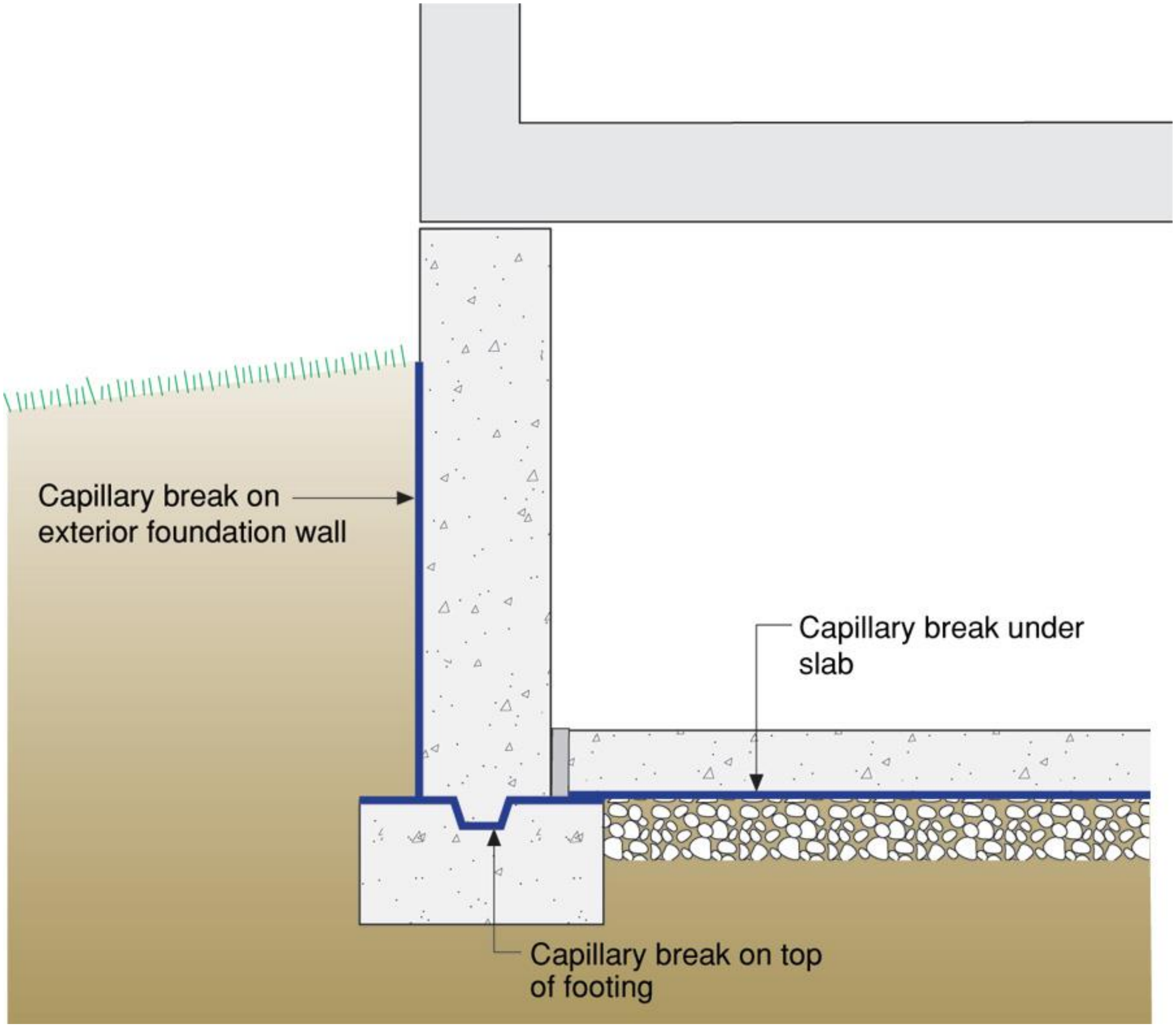
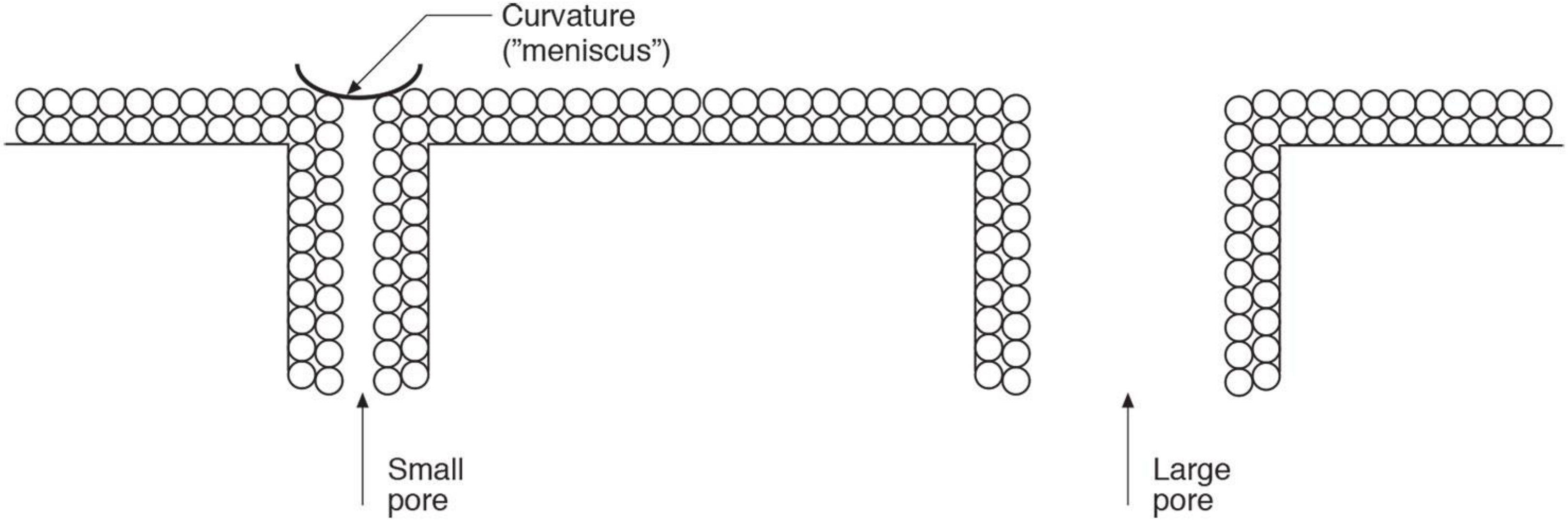


Figure 1b. Brick, sintered clay, porosity 40 per cent.


Moisture Flow
Dampproofing
Filter fabric
Coarse gravel
(no fines)
Perforated
drain pipe
Concrete footing
Concrete slab
Polyethylene
vapor barrier
Granular
capillary break
and drainage
pad (no fines)


Capillary break on
exterior foundation wall
Capillary break under
slab
Capillary break on top
of footing

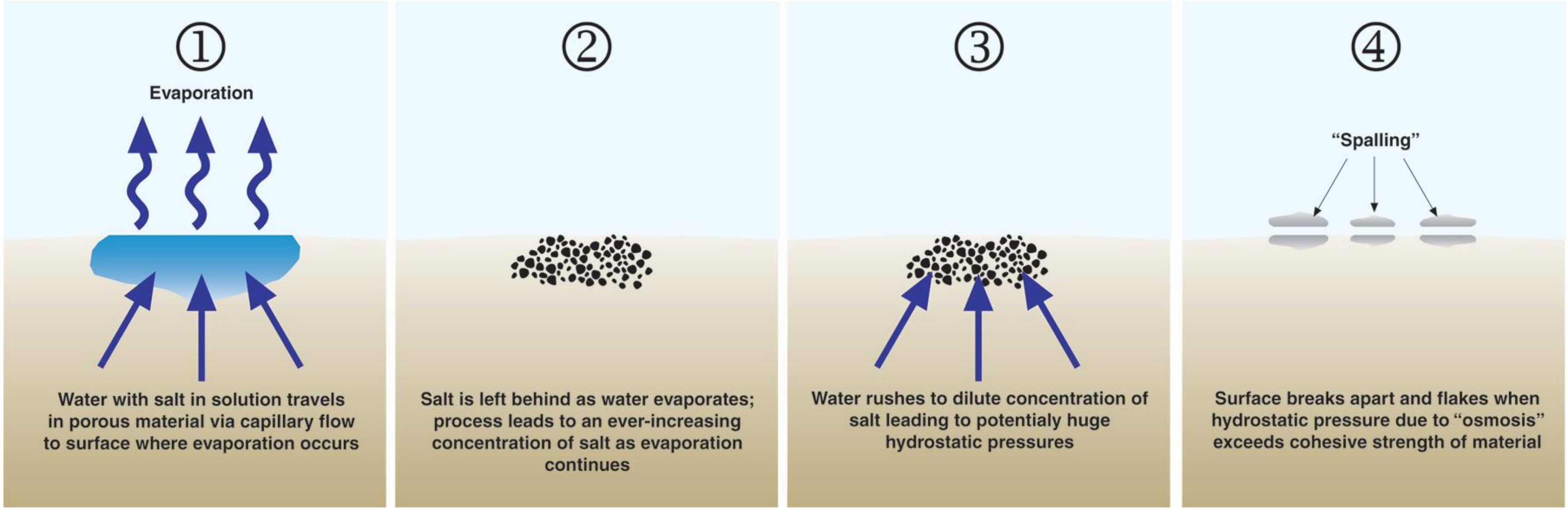


Curvature
("meniscus")
Small
pore
Large
pore

Vapor	Diffusion	Vapor Concentration
	Convective Flow	Air Pressure
Adsorbate	Surface Diffusion	Concentration
Liquid	Capillary Flow	Suction Pressure
	Osmosis	Solute Concentration

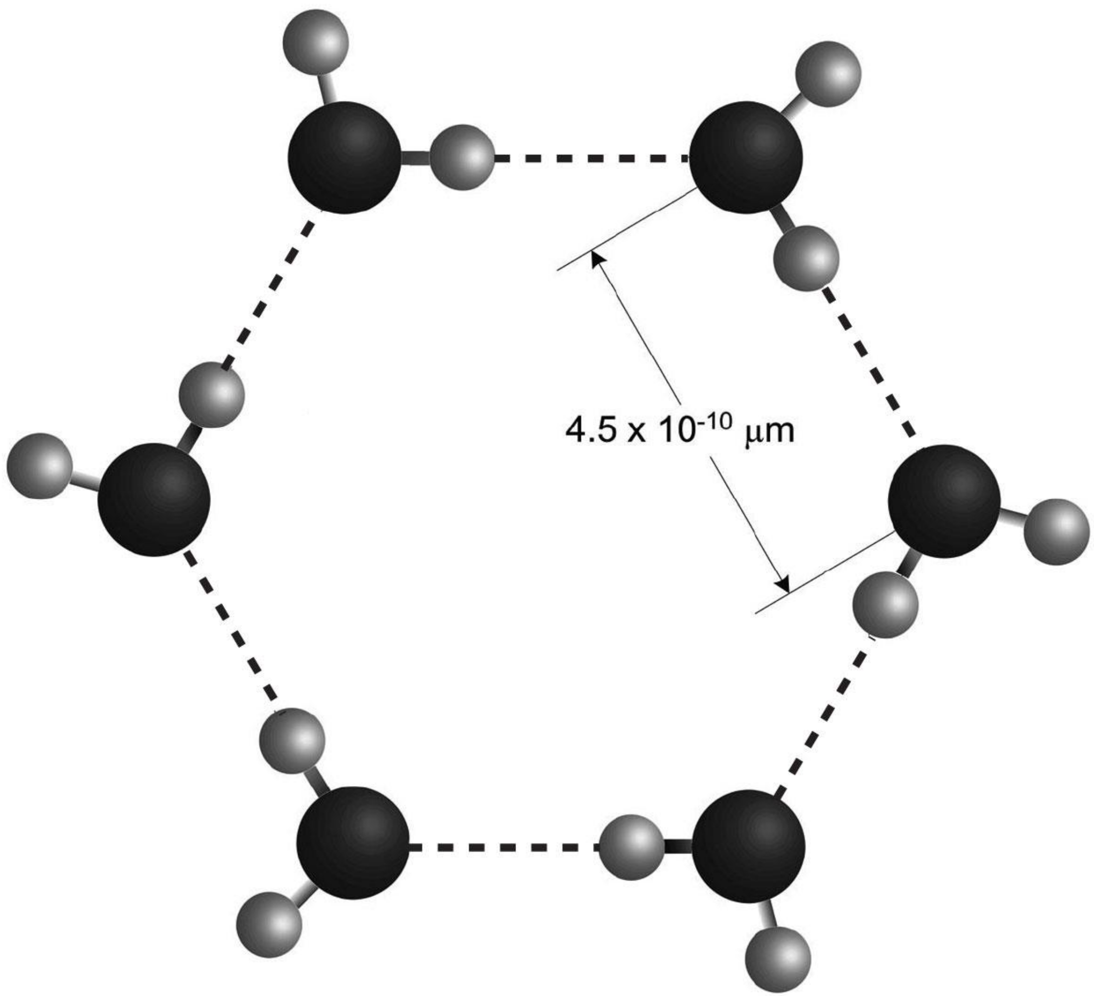
Capillarity + Salt = Osmosis

- Mineral salts carried in solution by capillary water
- When water evaporates from a surface the salts left behind form crystals in process called efflorescence
- When water evaporated beneath a surface the salts crystallize within the pore structure of the material in called sub-efflorescence
- The salt crystallization causes expansive forces that can exceed the cohesive strength of the material leading to spalling


①
Evaporation
Water with salt in solution travels
in porous material via capillary flow
to surface where evaporation occurs
②
Salt is left behind as water evaporates;
process leads to an ever-increasing
concentration of salt as evaporation
continues
③
Water rushes to dilute concentration of
salt leading to potentialy huge
hydrostatic pressures
④
"Spalling"
Surface breaks apart and flakes when
hydrostatic pressure due to "osmosis"
exceeds cohesive strength of material

Pressures

• Diffusion Vapor Pressure	3 to 5 psi
• Capillary Pressure	300 to 500 psi
• Osmosis Pressure	3,000 to 5,000 psi


4.5 x 10-10 µm

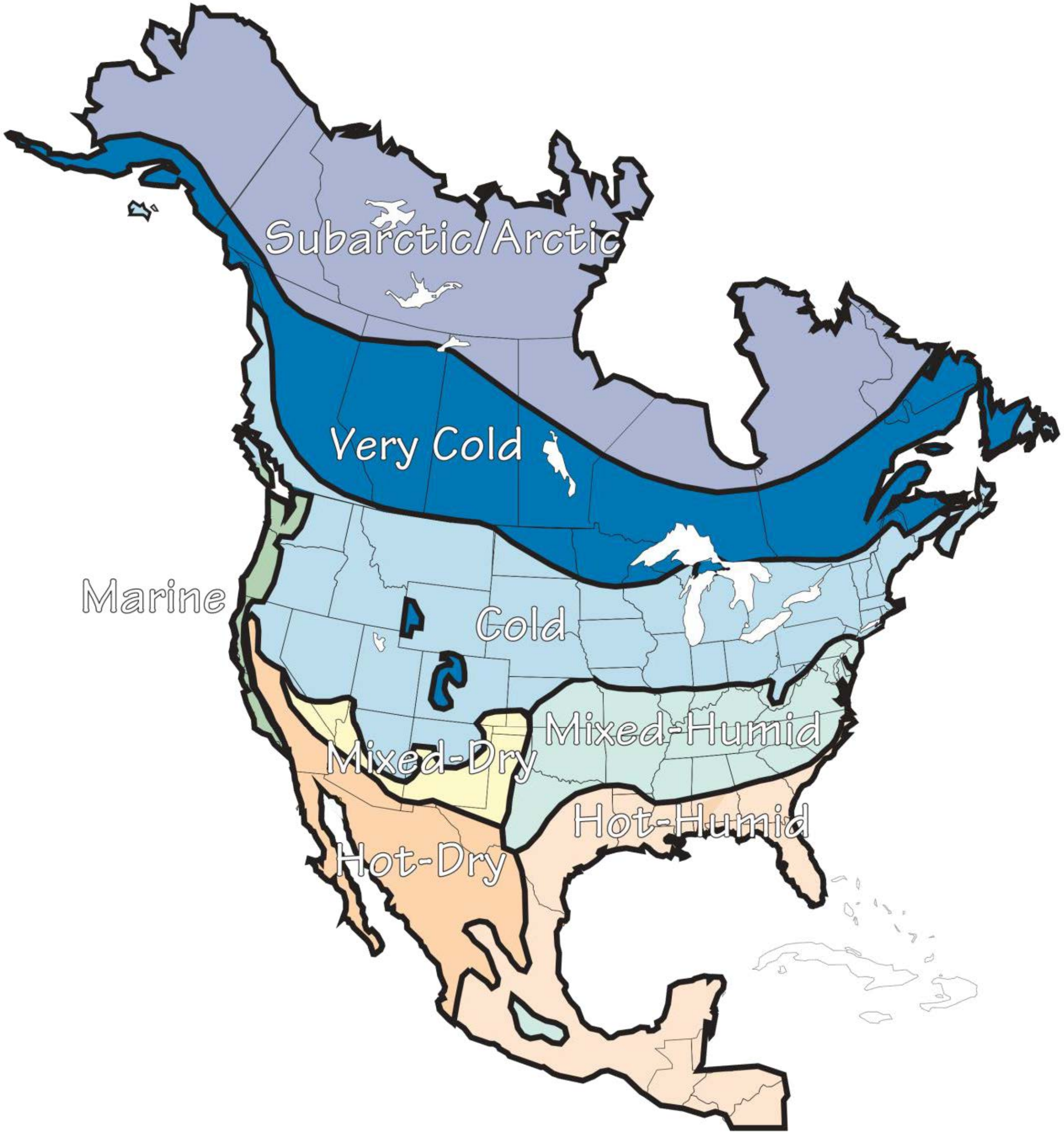
Freeze-Thaw Damage

Freeze-Thaw Damage

Freezing Temperatures

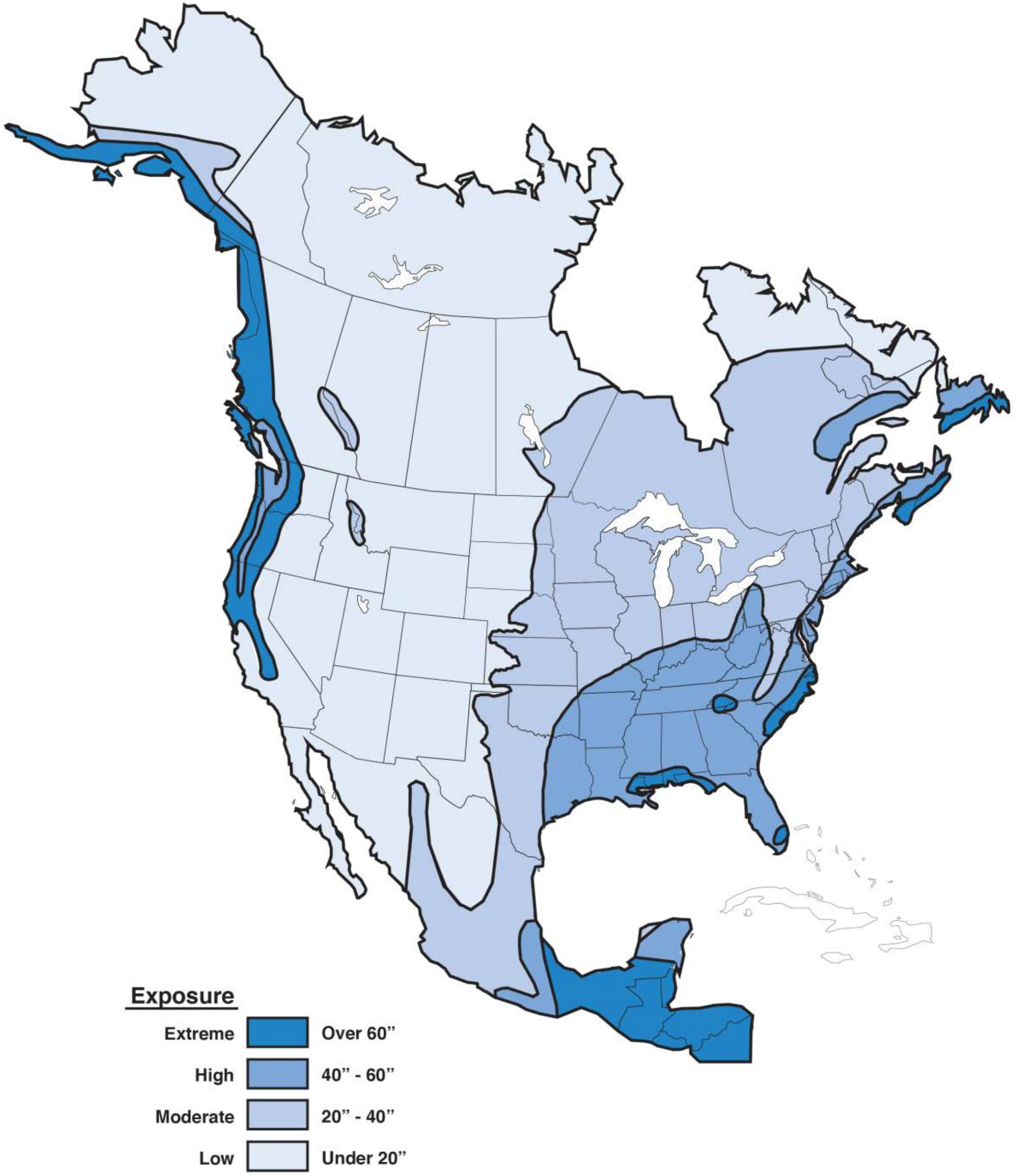
Water

Susceptible Brick

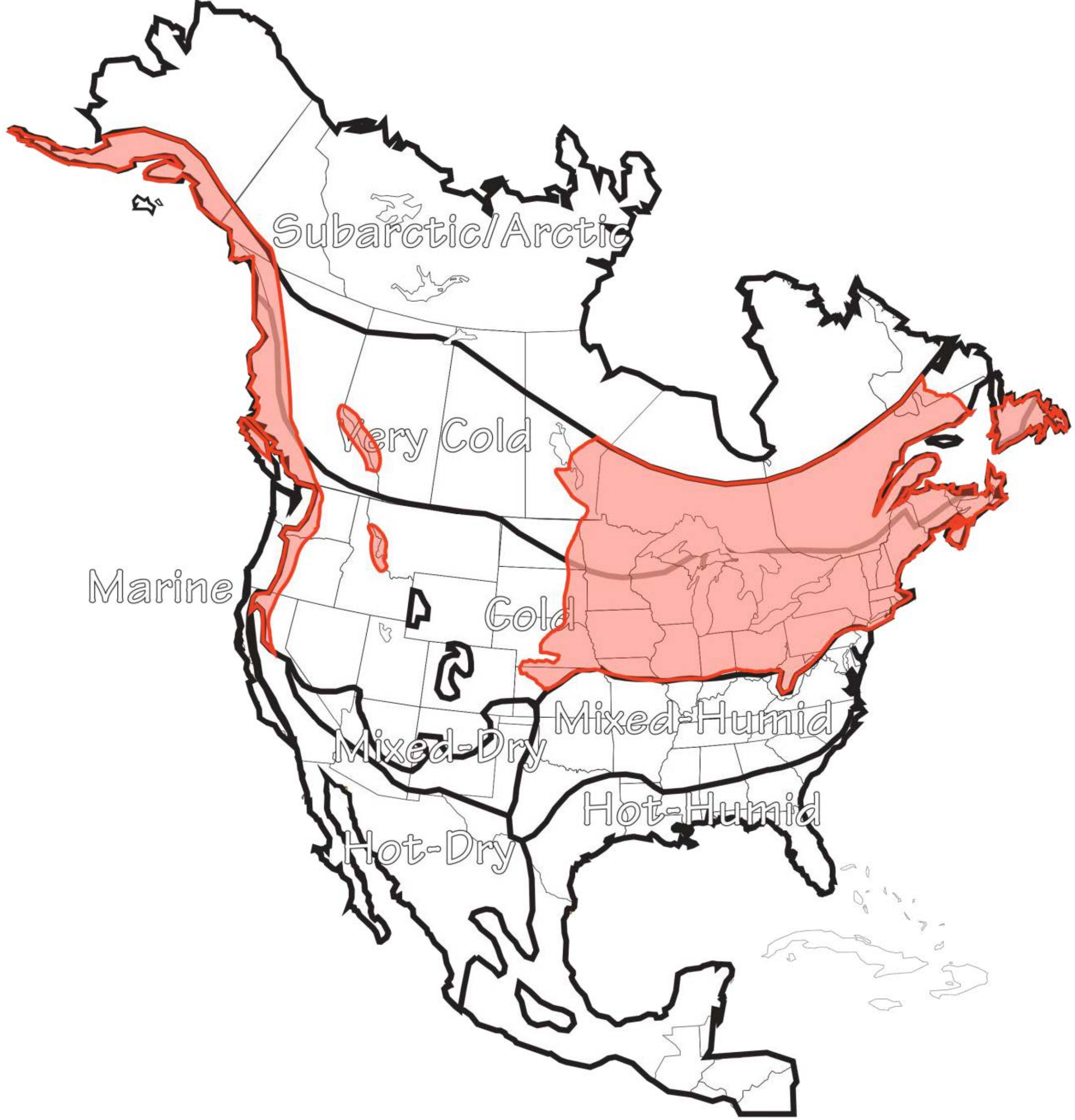


Subarctic/Arctic
Very Cold
Marine
Cold
Mixed-Humid
Mixed-Dry
Hot-Humid
Hot-Dry

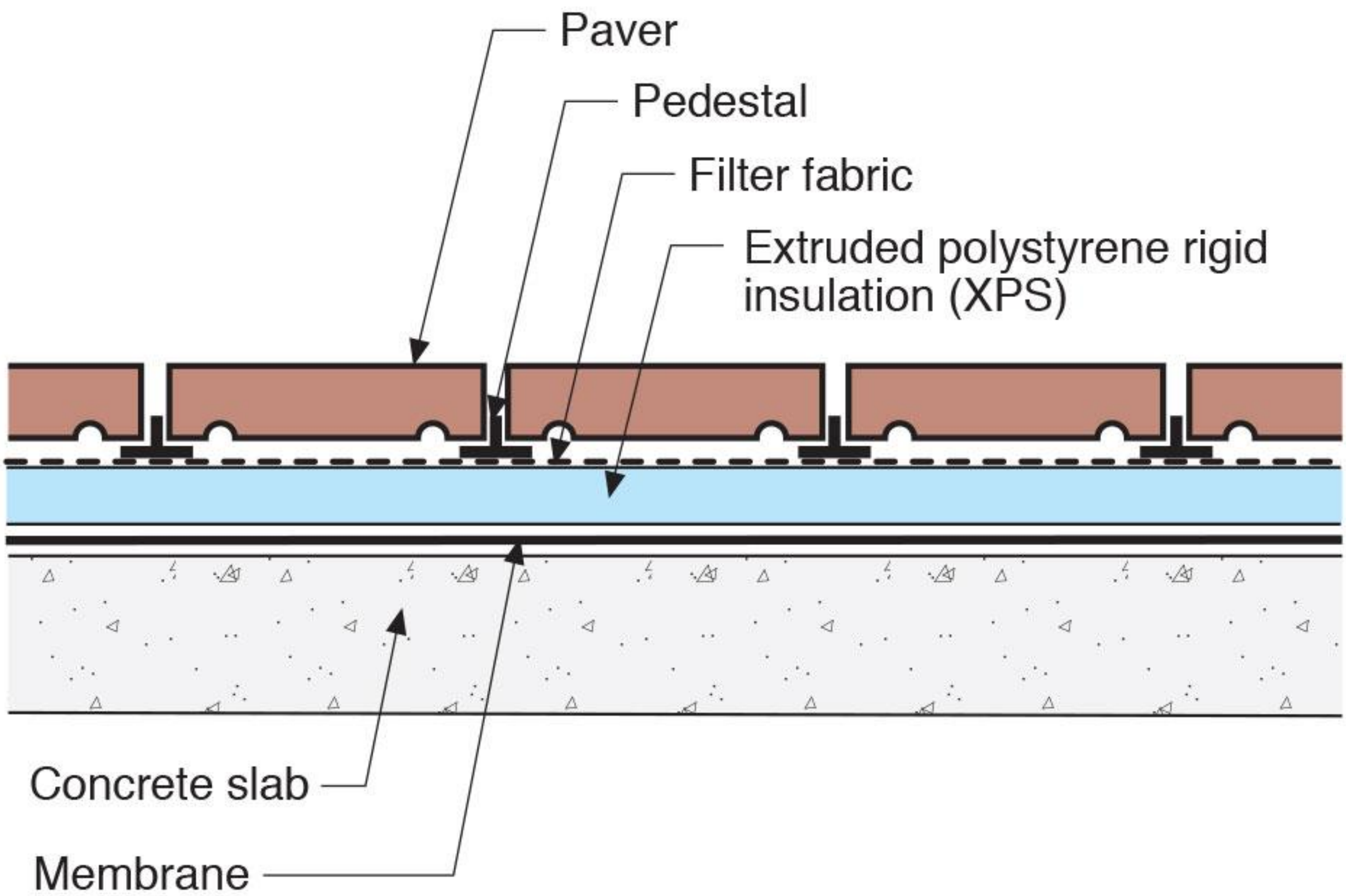

Arctic Bay
Anchorage
Seattle
Minneapolis
Los Angeles
El Paso
Houston
Monterrey
Havana
Belize City
Tropical Wet
Tropical Wet-Dry
Steppe
Desert
Mediterranean
Subtropical humid
Marine West Coast
Continental humid
Subarctic
Tundra
Ice sheet
Highlands

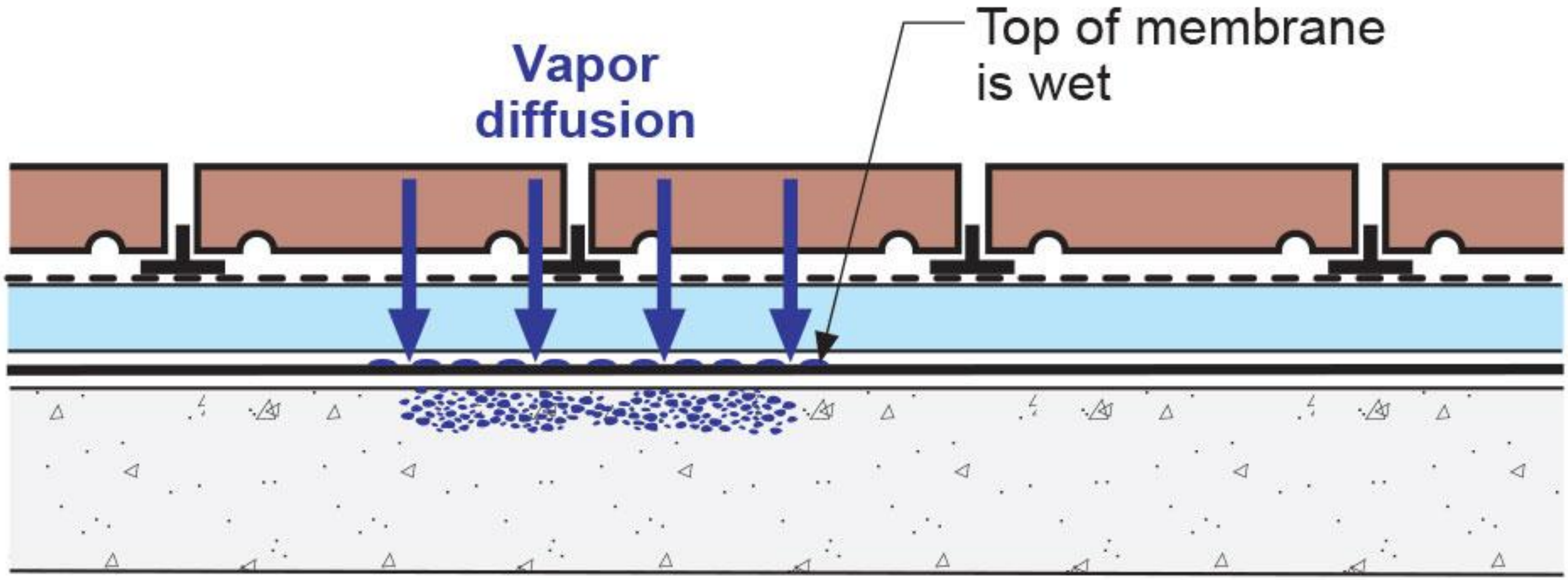


Exposure
Extreme
Over 60"
High
40" - 60"
Moderate
20" - 40"
Low
Under 20"

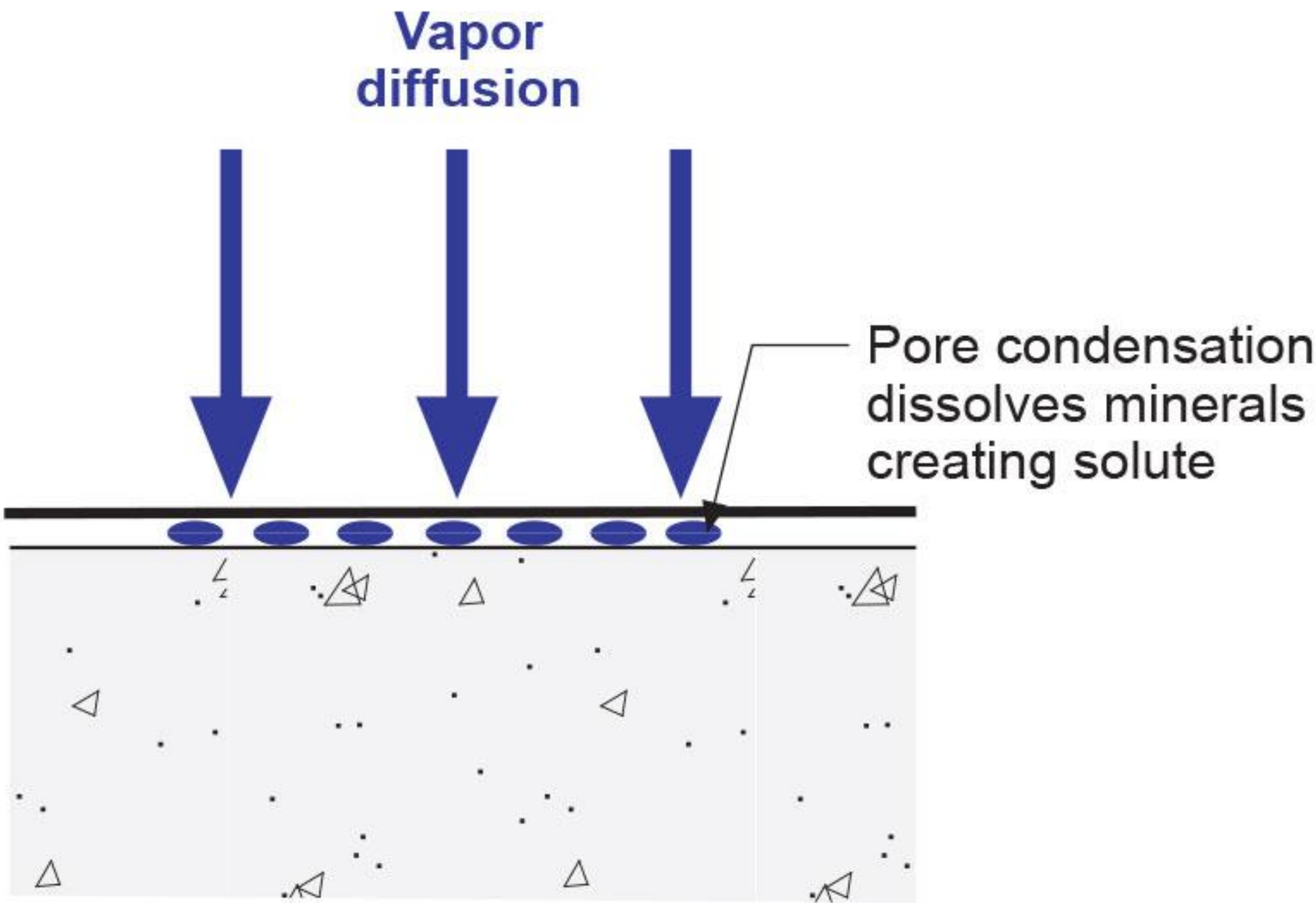

Subarctic/Arctic
Very Cold
Marine
Cold
Mixed-Humid
Mixed-Dry
Hot-Humid
Hot-Dry

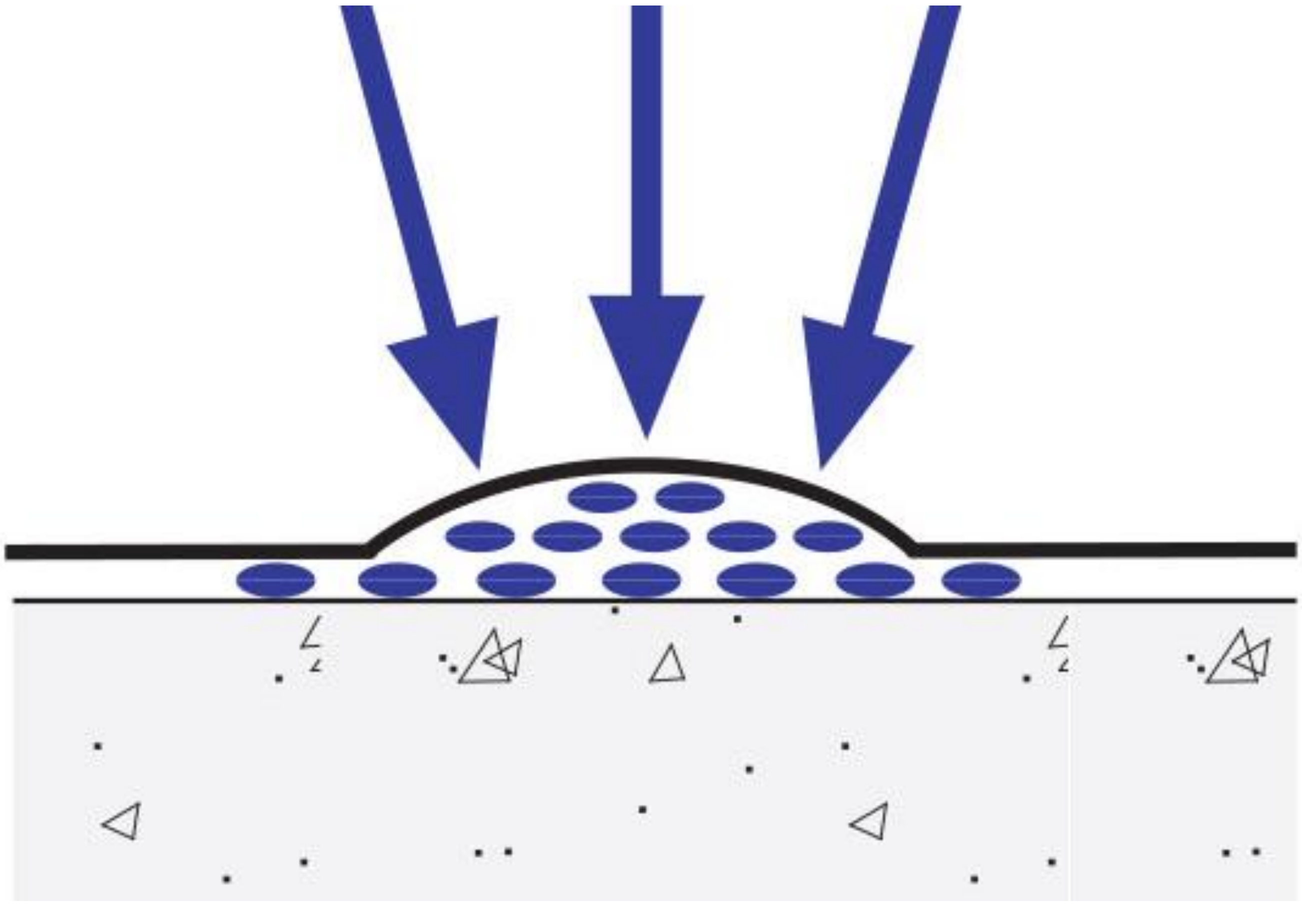
More Osmosis


Paver
Pedestal
Filter fabric
Extruded polystyrene rigid insulation (XPS)
Concrete slab
Membrane



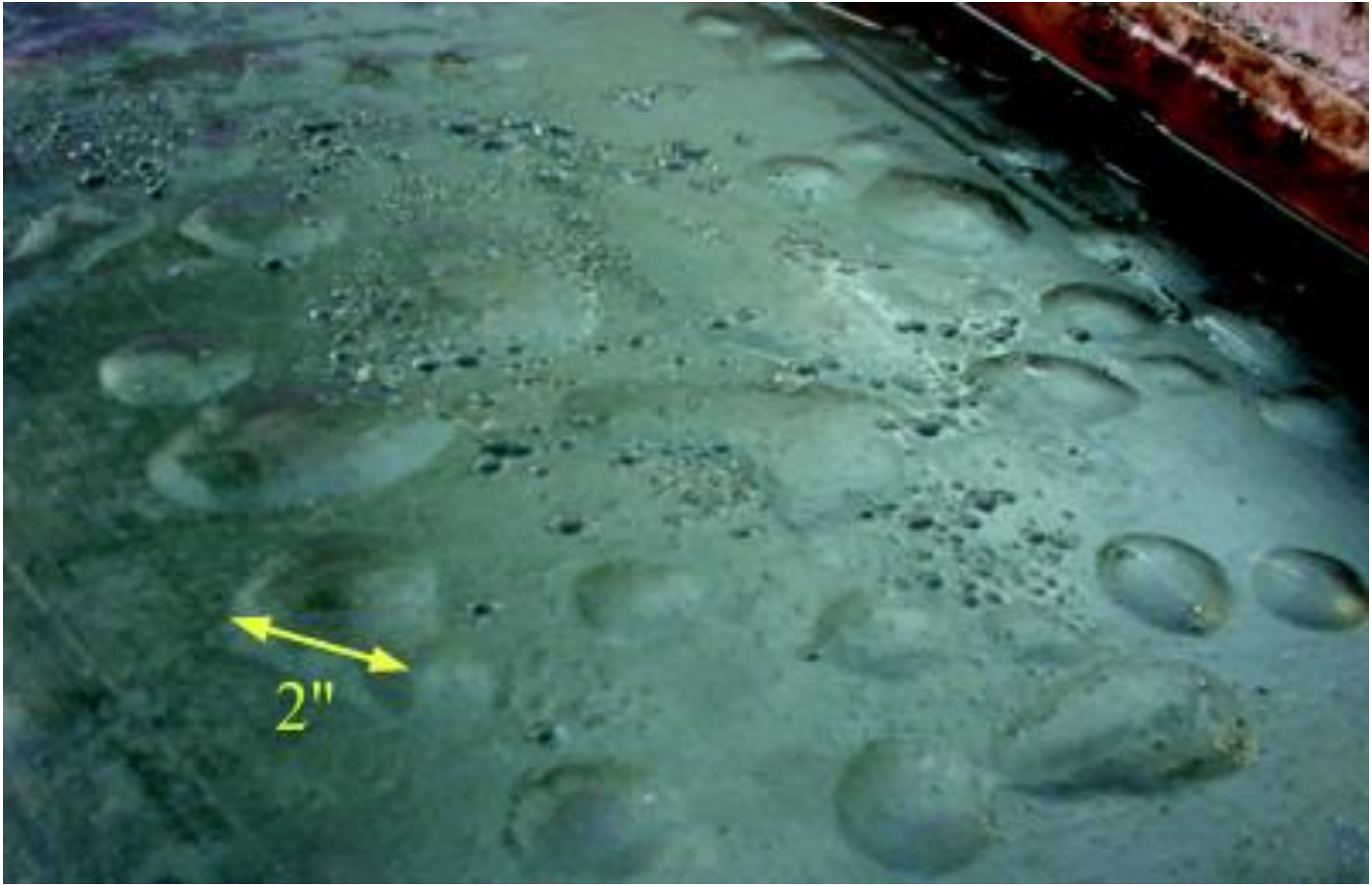
Vapor diffusion
Top of membrane is wet


Vapor
diffusion
Pore condensation
dissolves minerals
creating solute

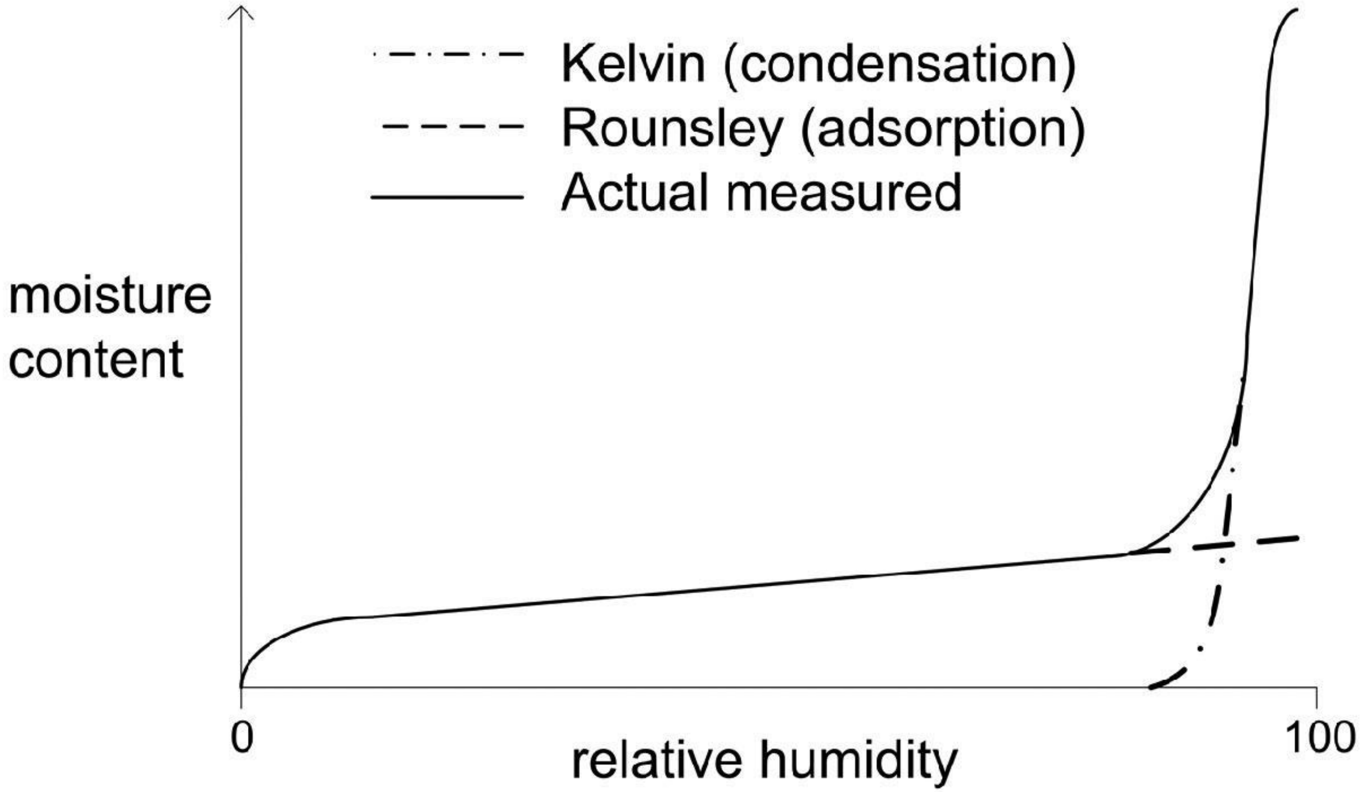



Paver Water Beds!


Really Heavy
Pink Stuff
Liquid Waterproofing
over Concrete Deck

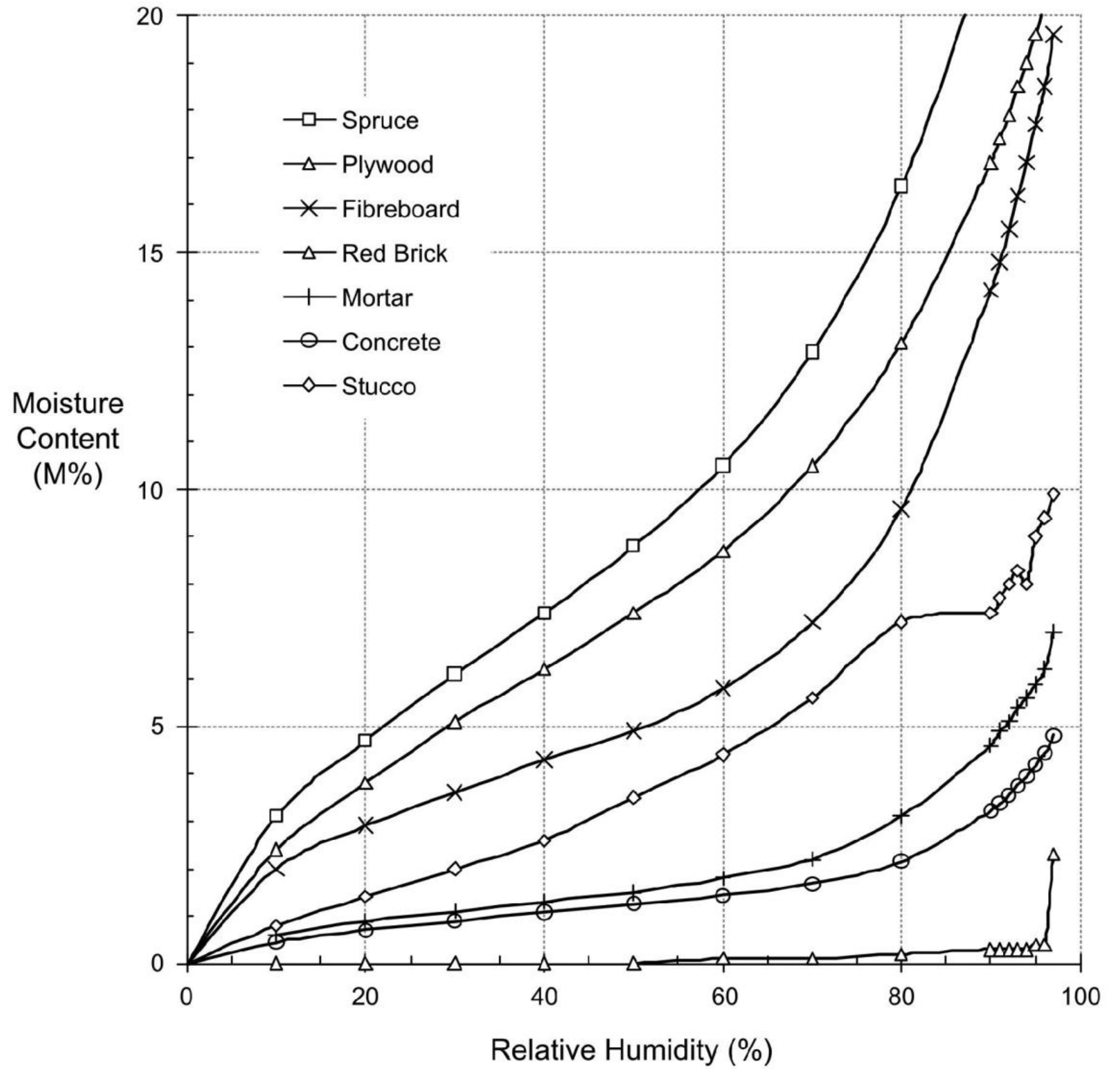

2"

Combined Flows



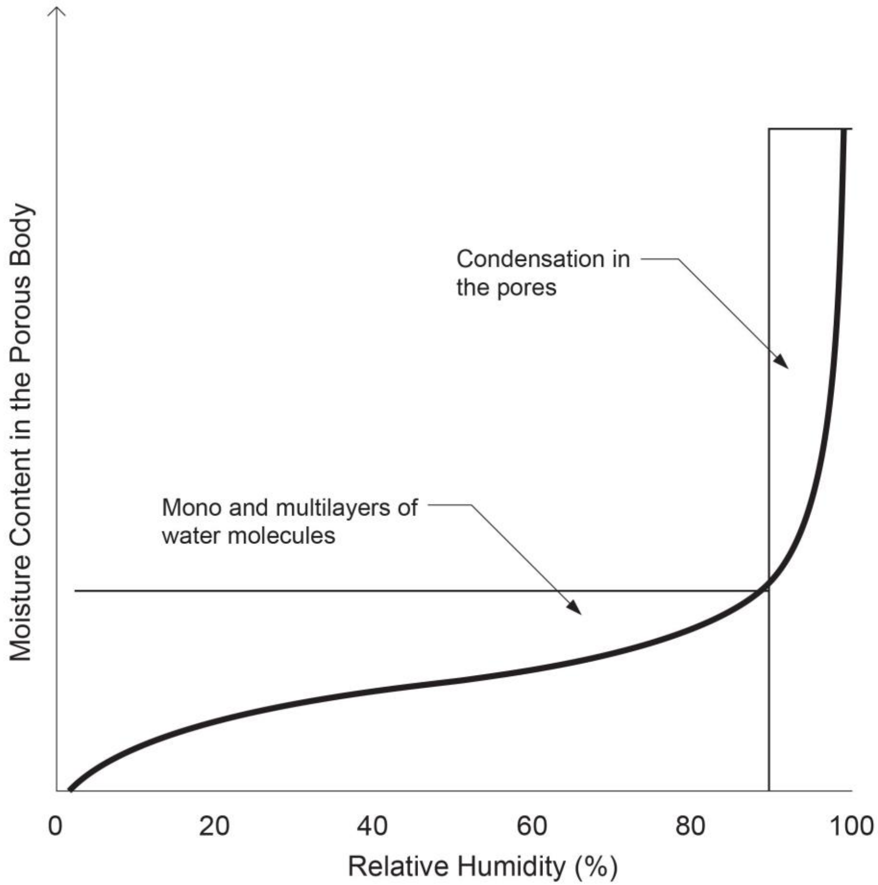
Typical predicted sorption isotherm according to Kelvin equation and modified BET theory

From Straube & Burnett, 2005



Sorption isotherm for several building materials [Kumaran 2002]

From Straube & Burnett, 2005

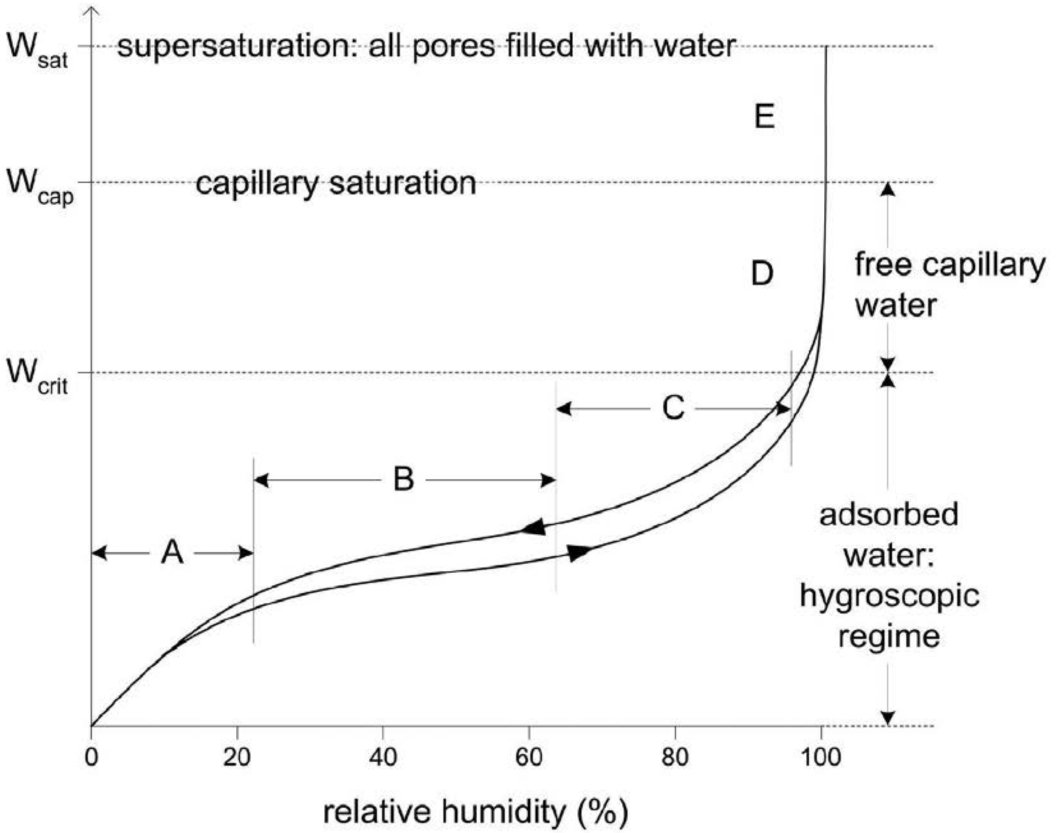


Partial Pressure of Water Vapor

Change in the storage of moisture in a porous building material as the partial pressure of water vapor in the ambient air increases from zero to full saturation value at a given temperature.

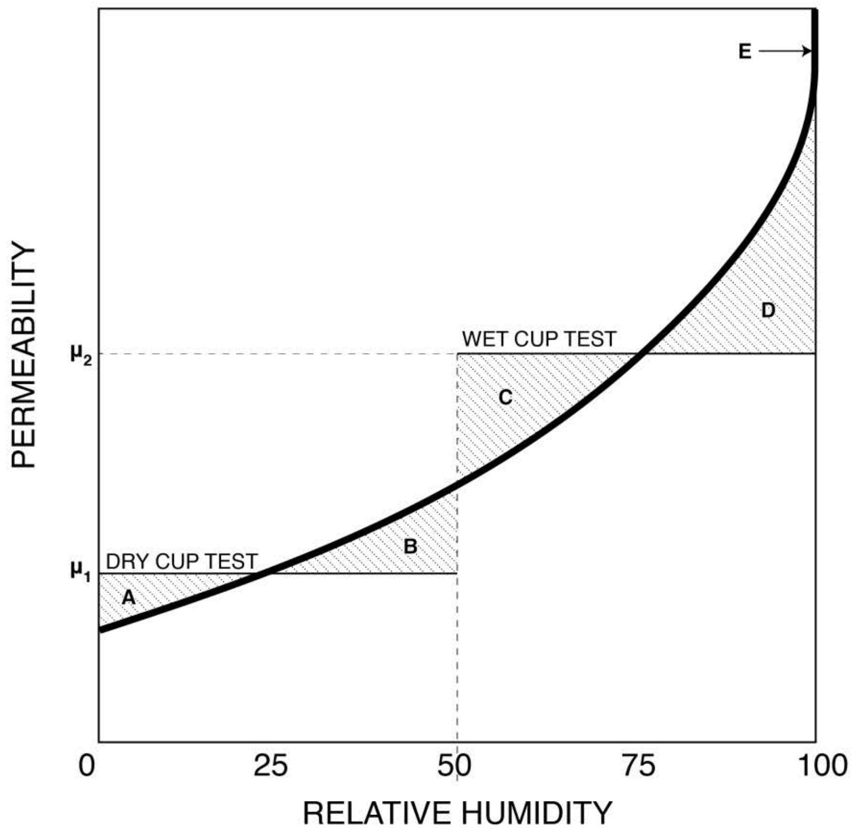
Sorption Curve

From M.K. Kumaran, ASTM MNL 18-2nd Edition, Moisture Control in Buildings, 2009



A: Single-layer of adsorbed molecules
B: Multiple layers of adsorbed molecules
C: Interconnected layers (internal capillary condensation
D: Free water in Pores, capillary suction
E: Supersaturated Regime

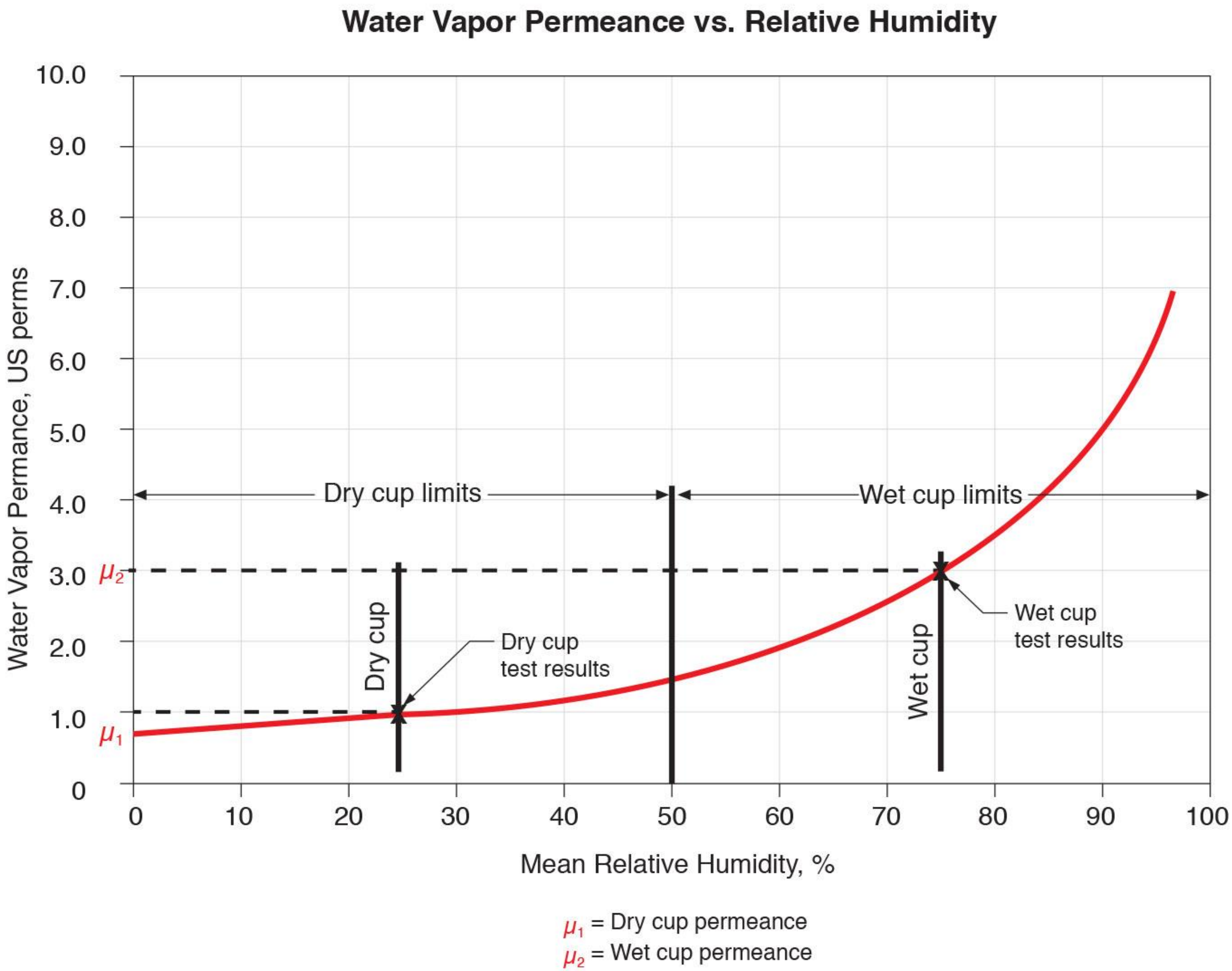
Regimes of moisture storage in a hygroscopic porous material
From Straube & Burnett, 2005

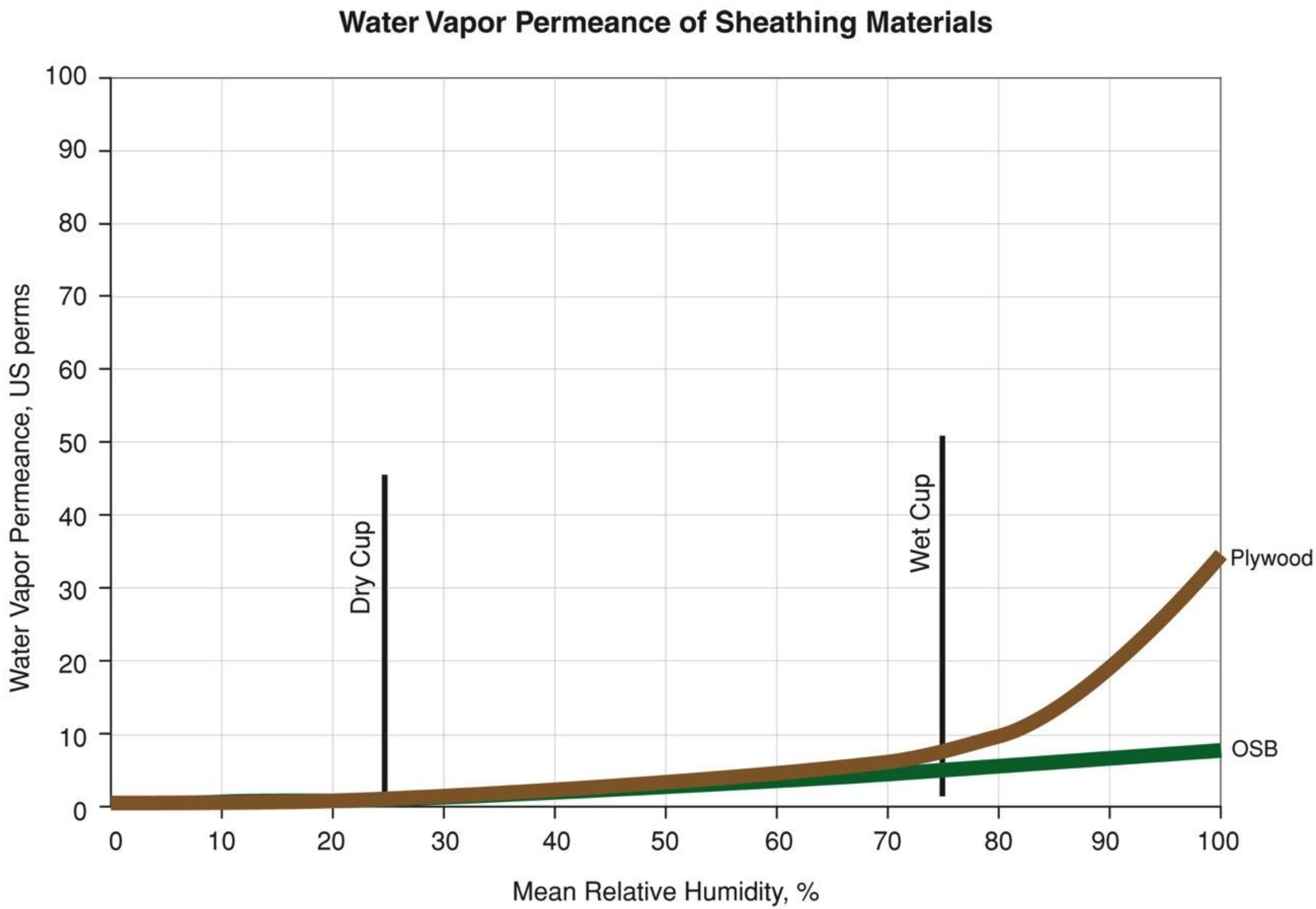


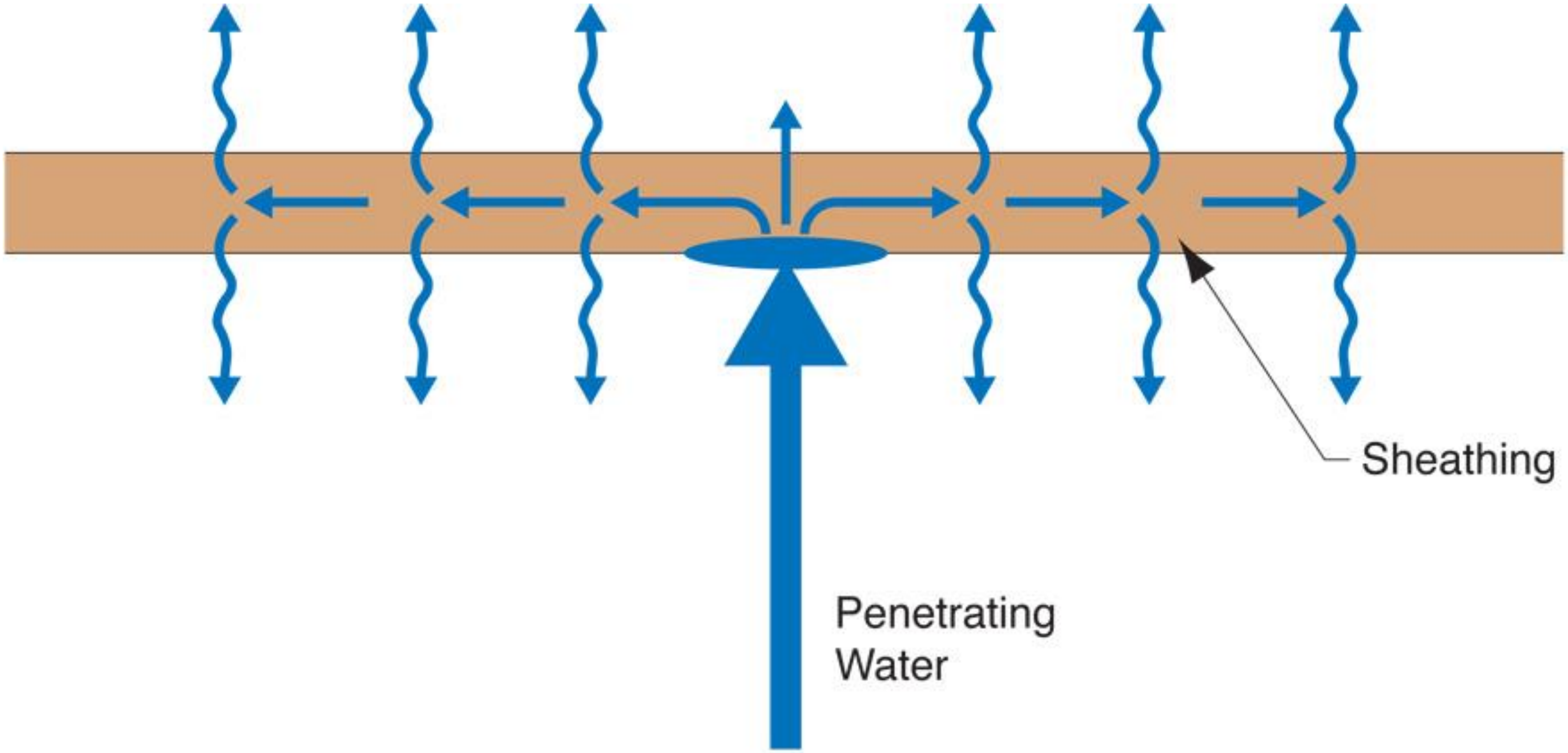
A - Single-layer of absorbed molecules
B - Multiple layers of absorbed molecules
C - Interconnected layers (internal capillary condensation)
D - Free water in pores, capillary suction
E - Supersaturated regime

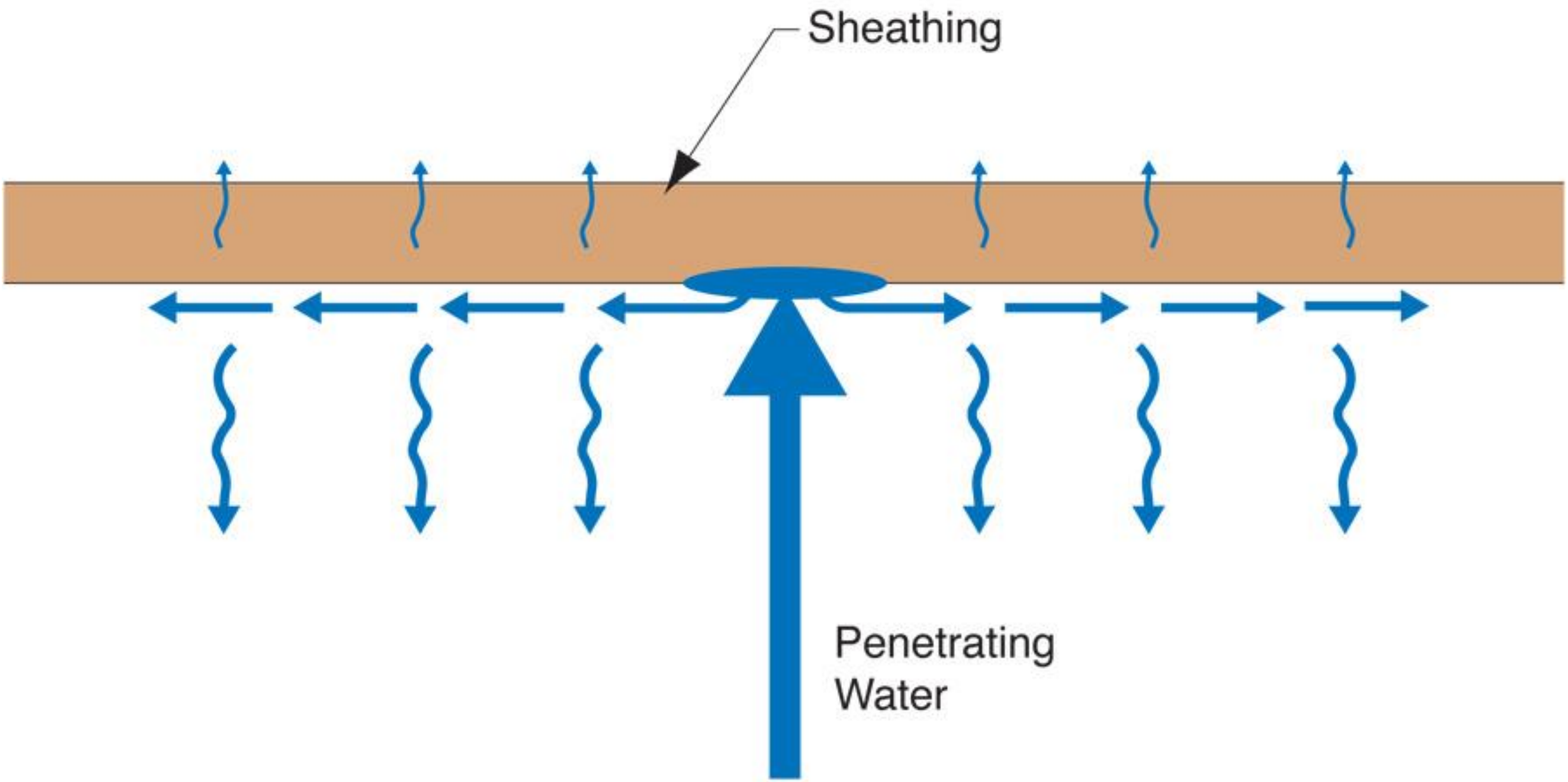
Relationship between Dry Cup and Wet Cup
Adapted from Joy & Wilson, 1963

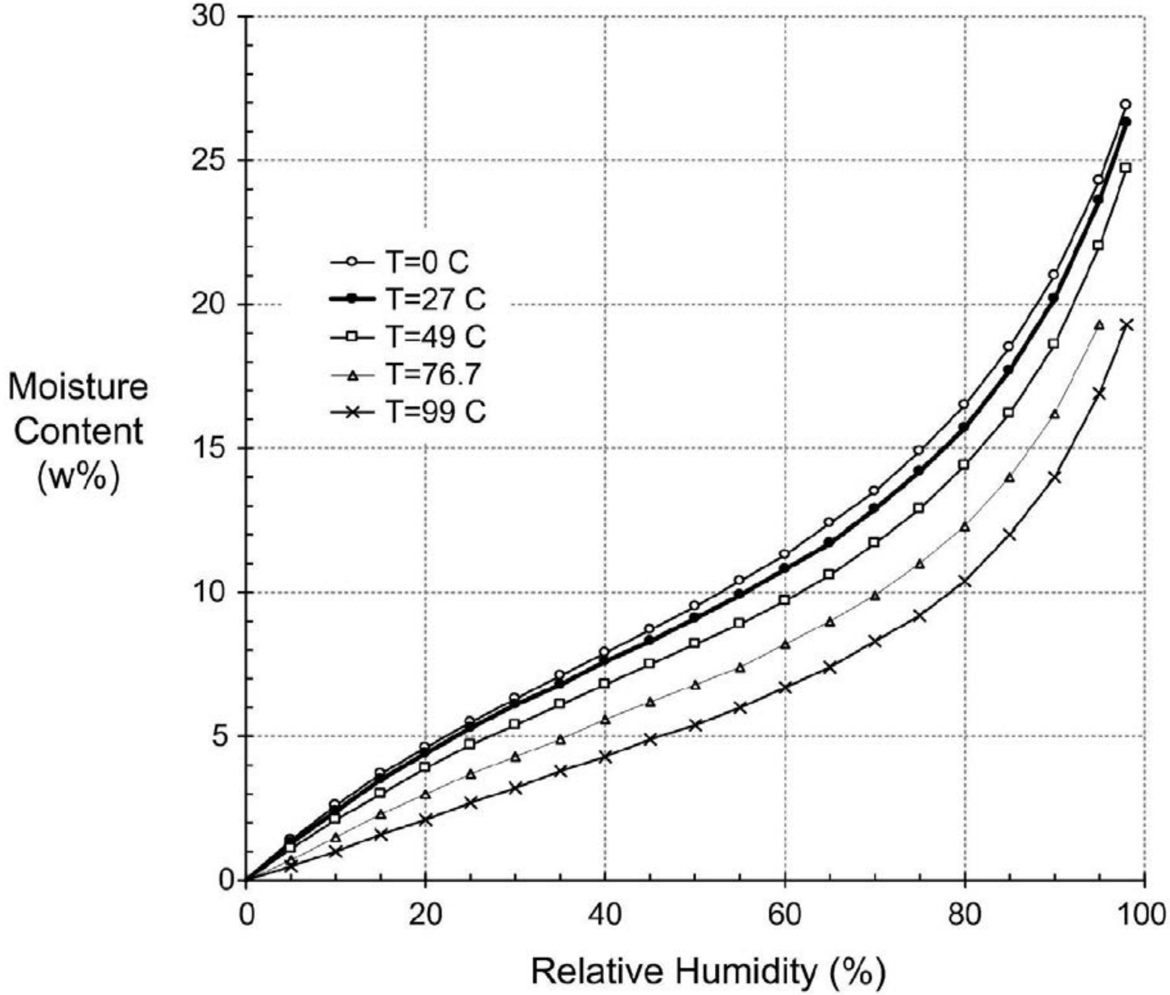
R-11 3½"
OWENS-CORNING
Fiberglas Building Insulation
FIBERGLAS
ASSURED THERMAL PERFORMANCE
WARNING:


Water Vapor Permeance vs. Relative Humidity
Water Vapor Permance, US perms
10.0
9.0
8.0
7.0
6.0
5.0
4.0
3.0
2.0
1.0
0
μ_2
μ_1
Dry cup limits
Wet cup limits
Dry cup
Wet cup
Dry cup test results
Wet cup test results
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Mean Relative Humidity, %
μ_1 = Dry cup permeance
μ_2 = Wet cup permeance

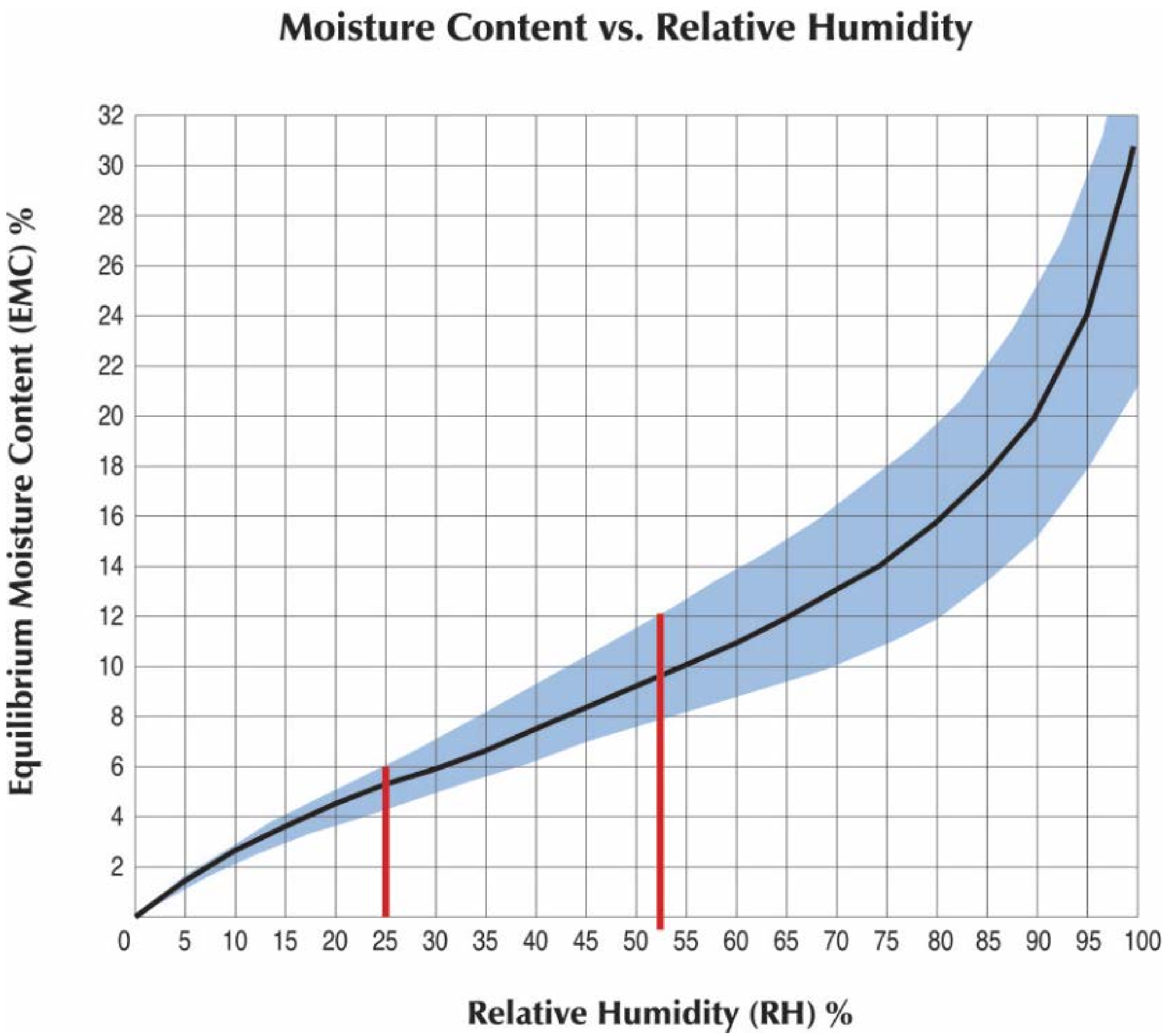

Water Vapor Permeance of Sheathing Materials
Water Vapor Permeance, US perms
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Dry Cup
Wet Cup
Plywood
OSB
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Mean Relative Humidity, %

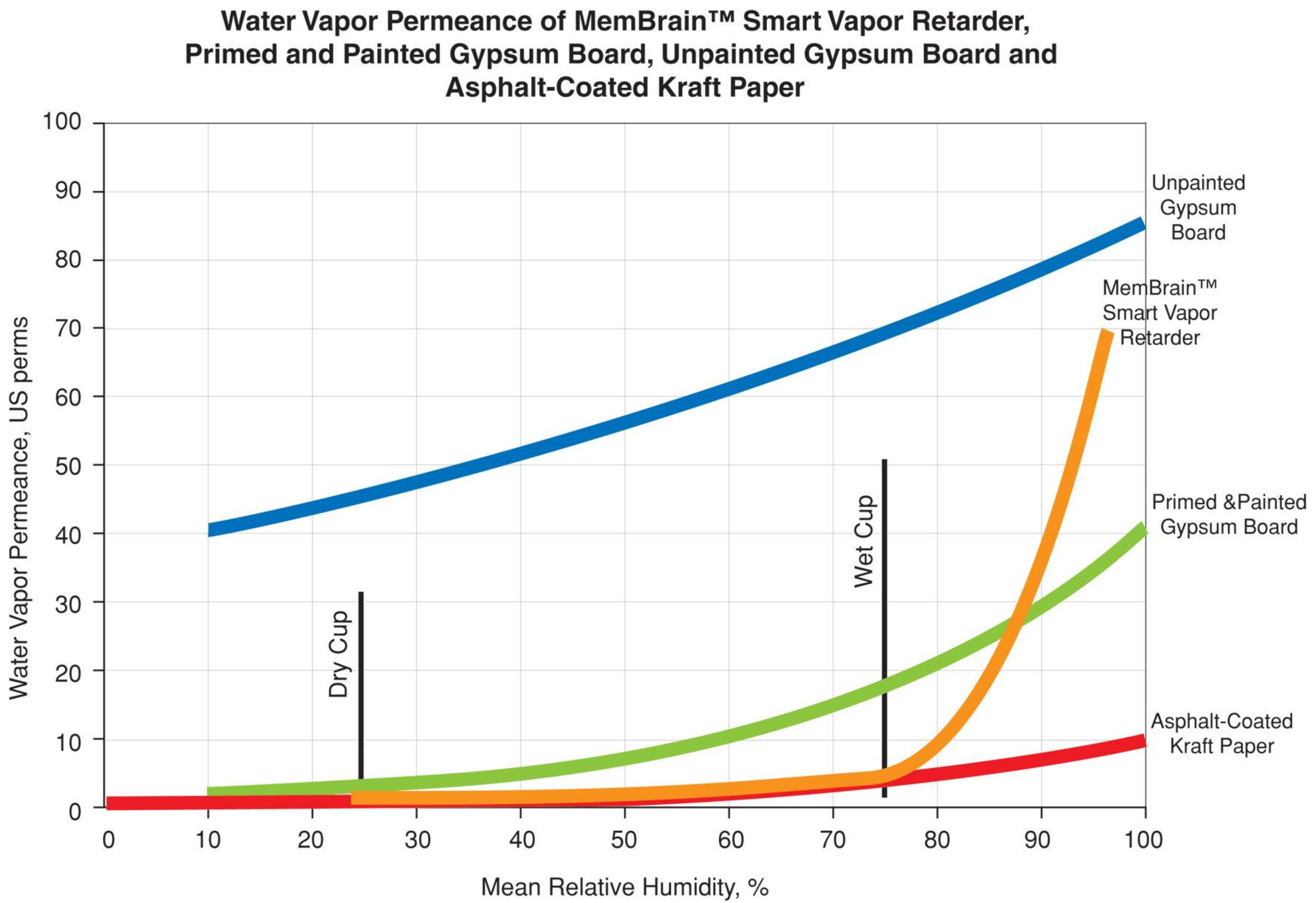

Sheathing
Penetrating
Water

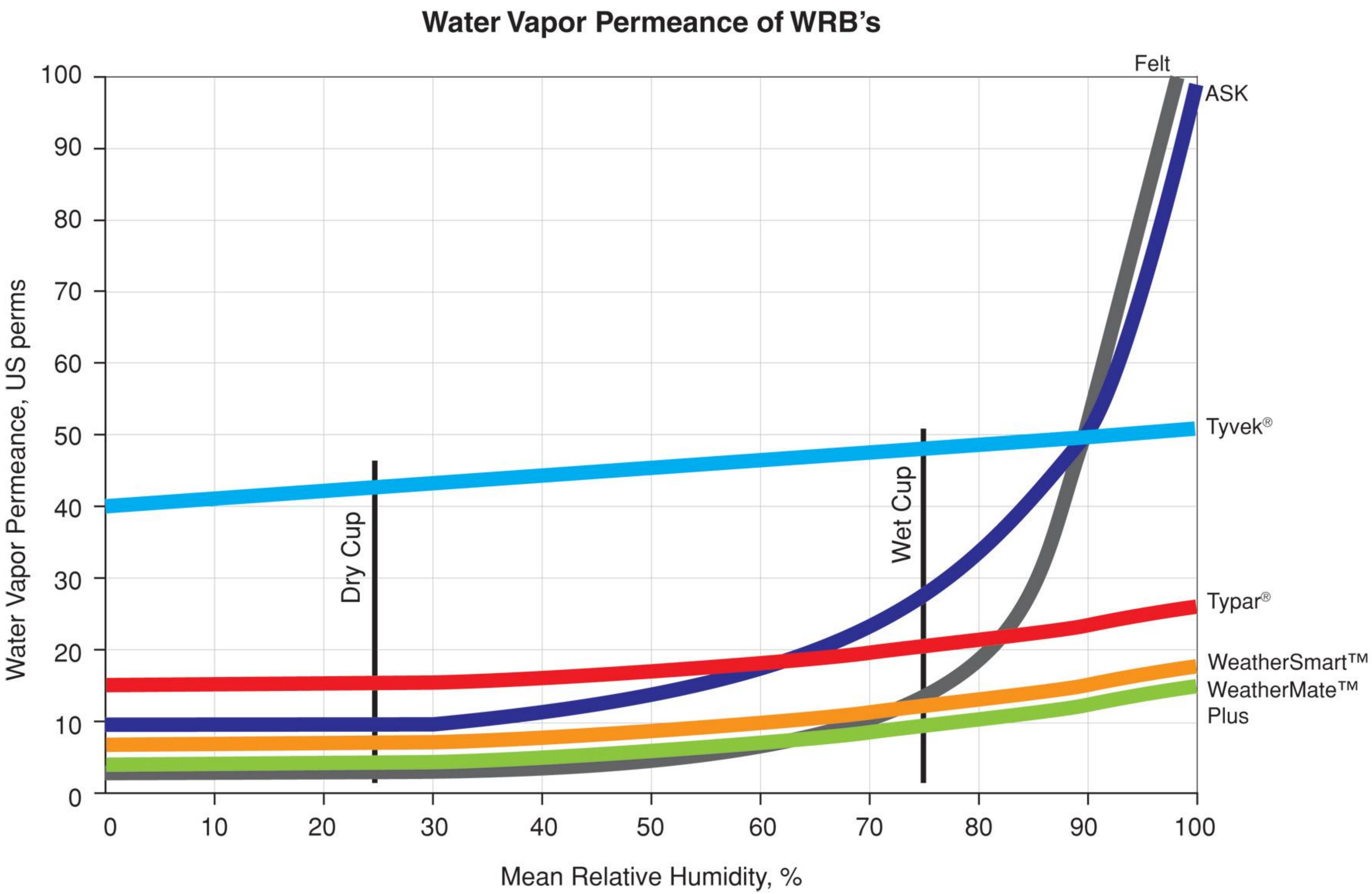

Sheathing
Penetrating
Water



Average sorption isotherm for wood as a function of temperature
From Straube & Burnett, 2005


Moisture Content vs. Relative Humidity
Equilibrium Moisture Content (EMC) %
32
30
28
26
24
22
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
55
60
65
70
75
80
85
90
95
100
Relative Humidity (RH) %


Water Vapor Permeance of MemBrain™ Smart Vapor Retarder,
Primed and Painted Gypsum Board, Unpainted Gypsum Board and
Asphalt-Coated Kraft Paper
Water Vapor Permeance, US perms
Mean Relative Humidity, %
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Unpainted Gypsum Board
MemBrain™ Smart Vapor Retarder
Primed &Painted Gypsum Board
Asphalt-Coated Kraft Paper
Dry Cup
Wet Cup



Water Vapor Permeance of WRB's
Felt
ASK
Tyvek®
Typar®
WeatherSmart™
WeatherMate™ Plus
Dry Cup
Wet Cup
Water Vapor Permeance, US perms
Mean Relative Humidity, %
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

Laws of Thermodynamics

Zeroth Law – Equal Systems

First Law - Conservation of Energy

Second Law - Entropy

Third Law – Absolute Zero

2^{nd} Law of Thermodynamics

In an isolated system, a process can occur only if it increases the total entropy of the system

Rudolf Clausius

Moisture Flow Is From Warm To Cold

Moisture Flow Is From More To Less

Moisture Flow Is From Warm To Cold

Moisture Flow Is From More To Less

Thermal Gradient – Thermal Diffusion

Concentration Gradient – Molecular Diffusion

Moisture Flow Is From Warm To Cold

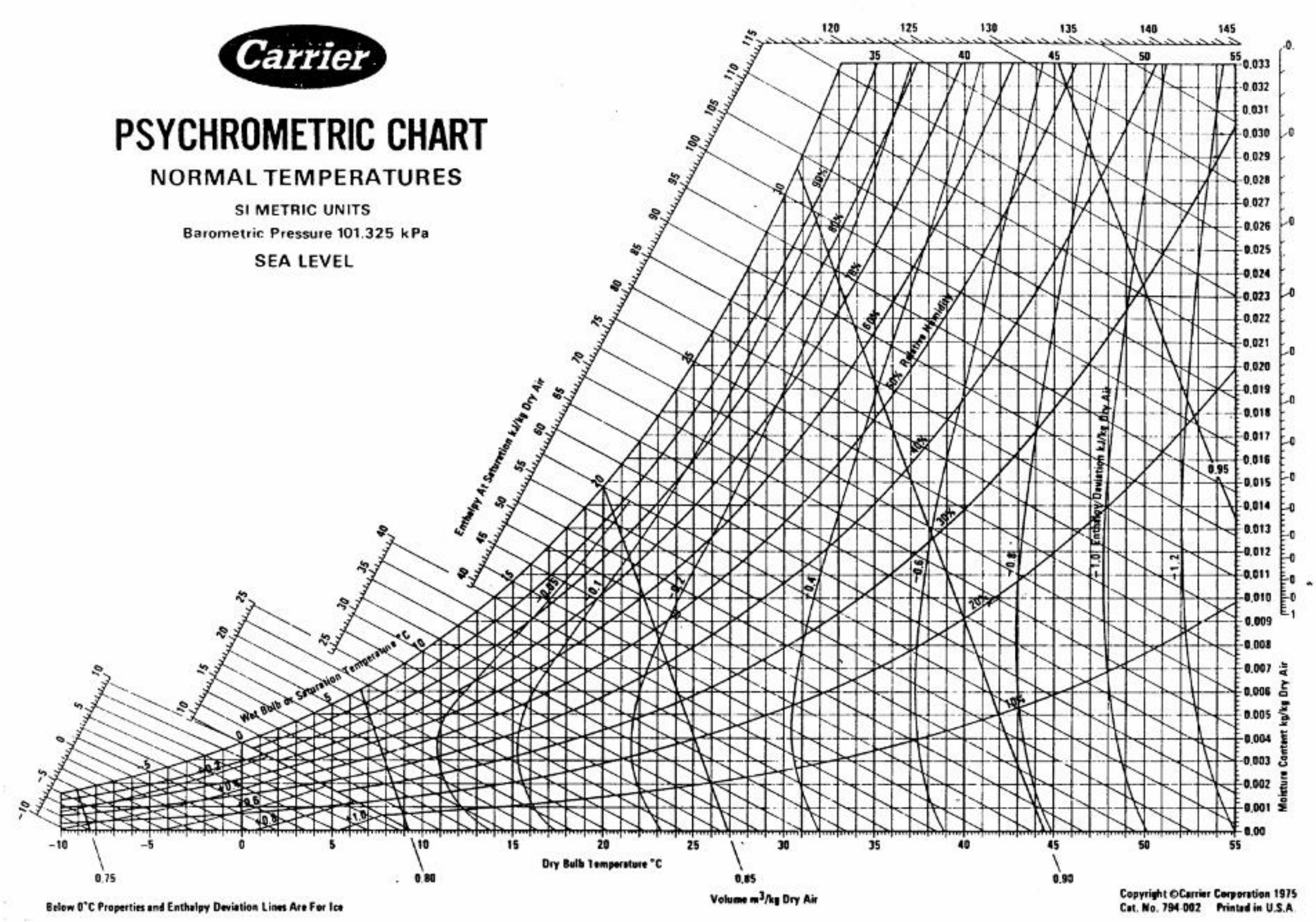
Moisture Flow Is From More To Less

Thermal Gradient – Thermal Diffusion

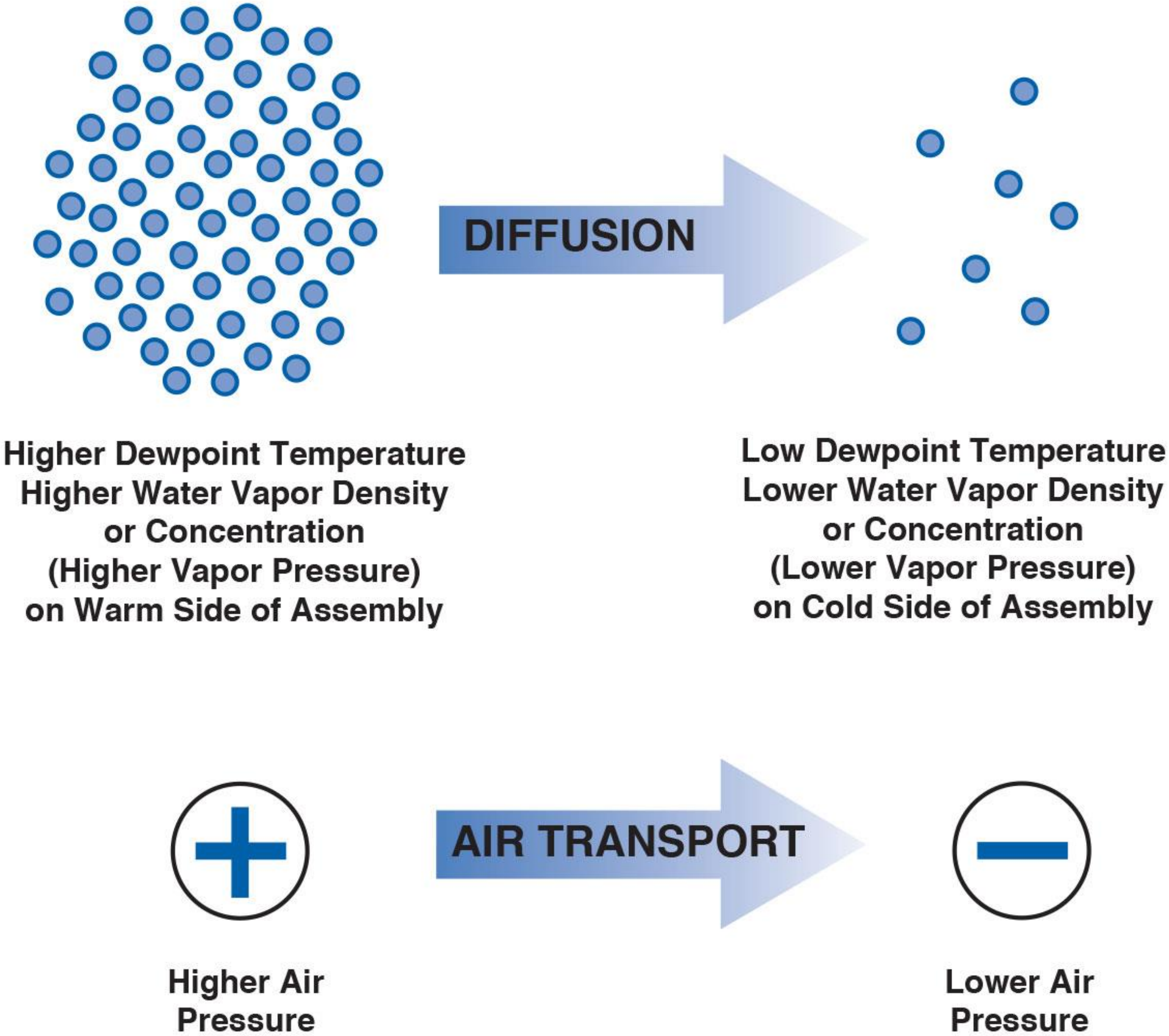
Concentration Gradient – Molecular Diffusion

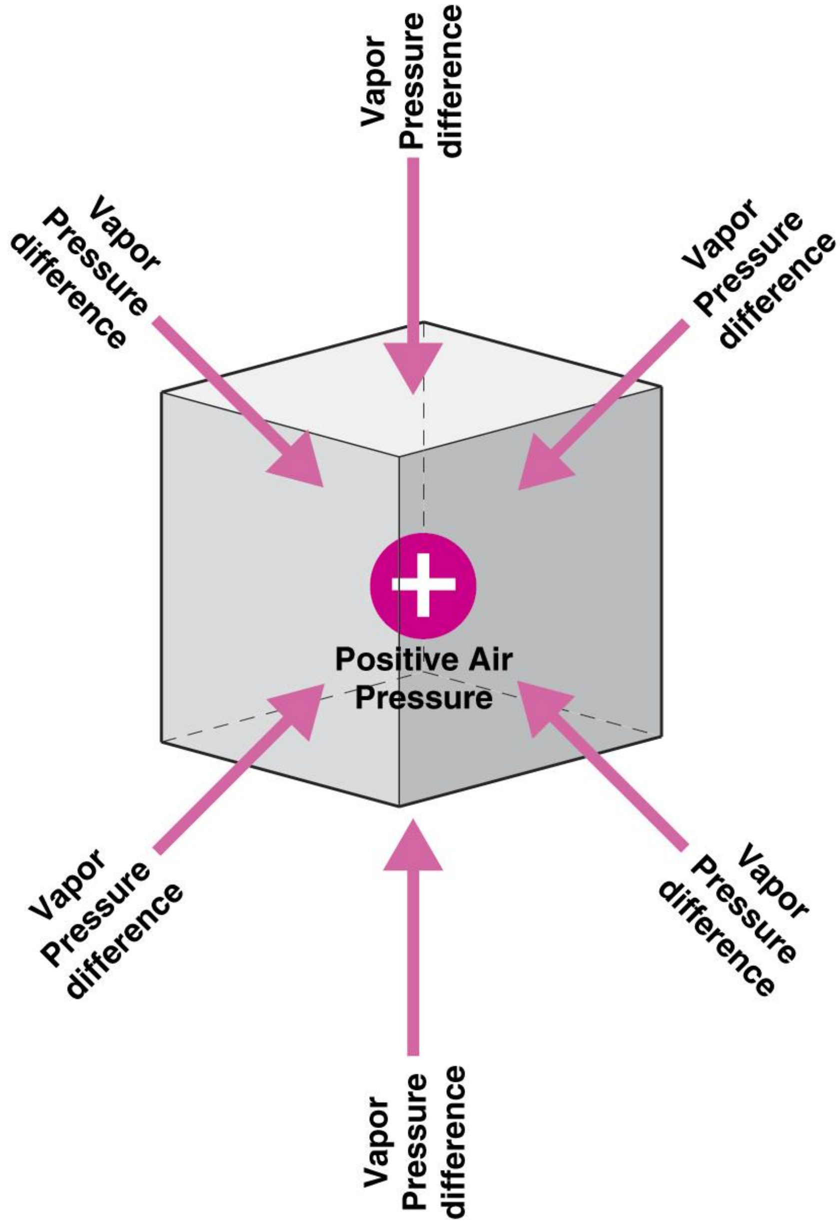
Vapor Diffusion

Thermodynamic Potential


Carrier
PSYCHROMETRIC CHART
NORMAL TEMPERATURES
SI METRIC UNITS
Barometric Pressure 101.325 kPa
SEA LEVEL
Dry Bulb Temperature °C
Volume m3/kg Dry Air
Wet Bulb or Saturation Temperature °C
Enthalpy At Saturation kJ/kg Dry Air
Enthalpy Deviation kJ/kg Dry Air
Moisture Content kg/kg Dry Air
Relative Humidity
Below 0°C Properties and Enthalpy Deviation Lines Are For Ice
Copyright ©Carrier Corporation 1975
Cat. No. 794-002 Printed in U.S.A.

Vapor	Diffusion	Vapor Concentration
	Convective Flow	Air Pressure


DIFFUSION
Higher Dewpoint Temperature
Higher Water Vapor Density
or Concentration
(Higher Vapor Pressure)
on Warm Side of Assembly
Low Dewpoint Temperature
Lower Water Vapor Density
or Concentration
(Lower Vapor Pressure)
on Cold Side of Assembly
AIR TRANSPORT
Higher Air
Pressure
Lower Air
Pressure

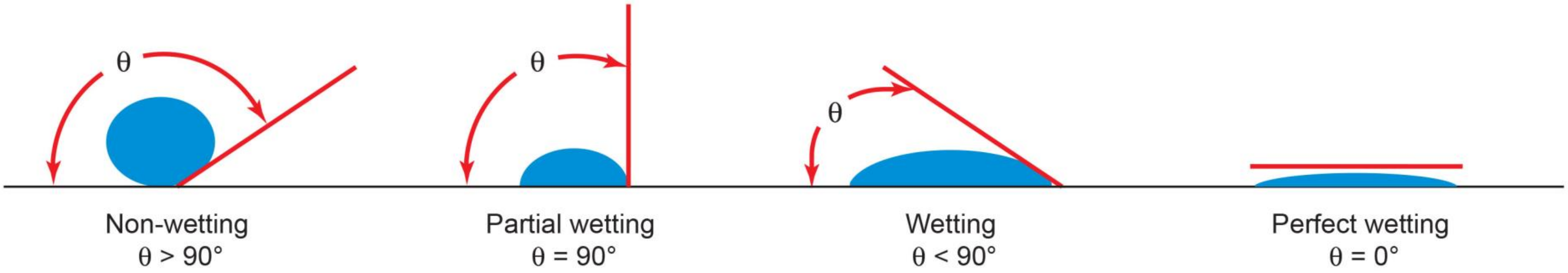


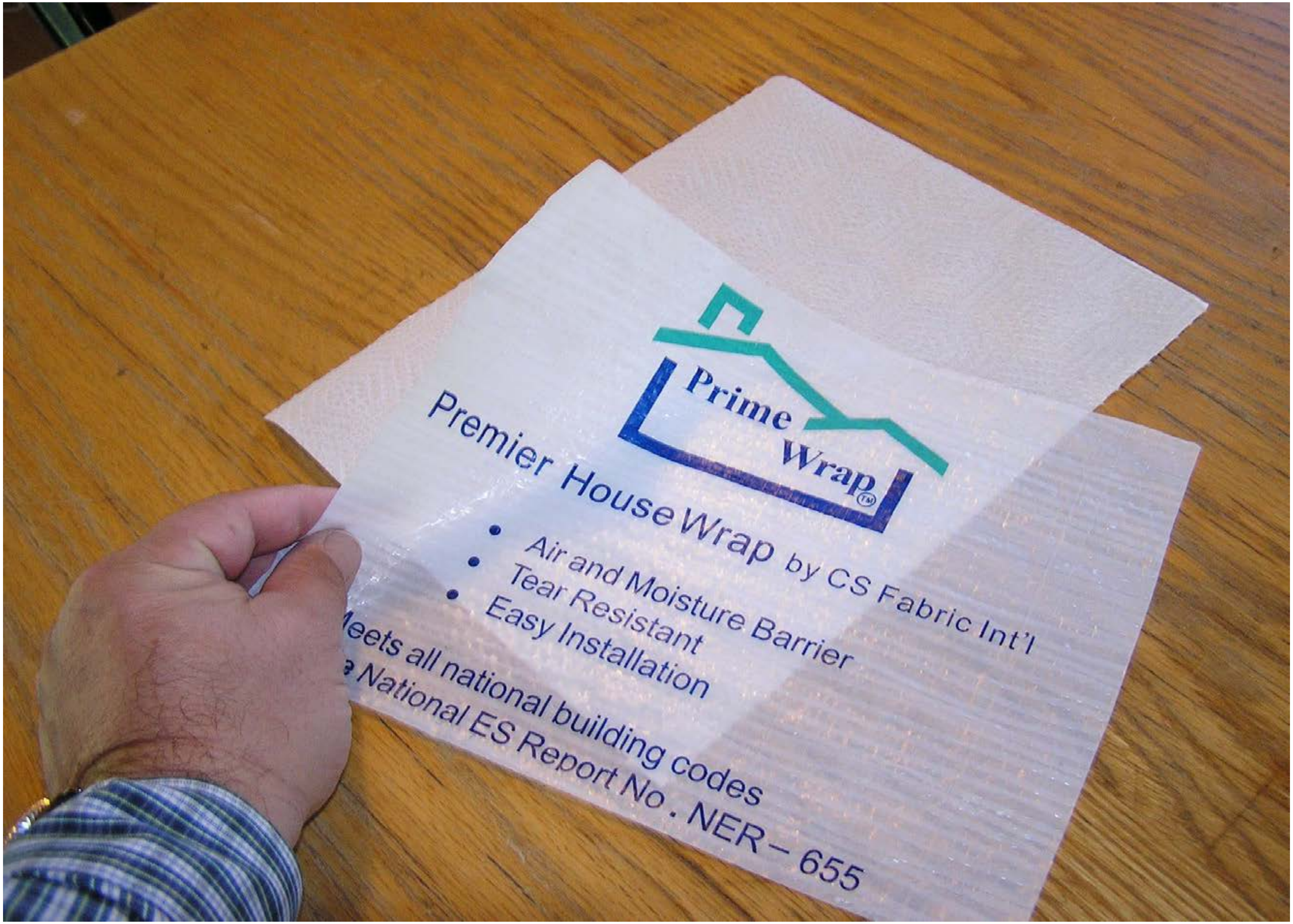
Vapor Pressure difference
Vapor Pressure difference
Vapor Pressure difference
Positive Air Pressure
Vapor Pressure difference
Vapor Pressure difference
Vapor Pressure difference

How Does Wetting Occur?

- "non-wetable" surface
- water repellant surface
- hygrophobic surface
- water more attracted to itself than to surface
- surface energy of water greater than surface energy of surface
- water "beads up"
- "greasy" surface
- high contact angle "θ"

- "wetable" surface
- non-water repellant surface
- hygroscobic surface
- water more attracted to surface than itself
- surface energy of surface greater than surface energy of water
- water "spreads out"
- "non-greasy" surface
- low contact angle "θ"


θ
θ
θ
Non-wetting
θ > 90°
Partial wetting
θ = 90°
Wetting
θ < 90°
Perfect wetting
θ = 0°


Prime Wrap
Premier House Wrap by CS Fabric Int'l
• Air and Moisture Barrier
• Tear Resistant
• Easy Installation
eets all national building codes
National ES Report No. NER – 655

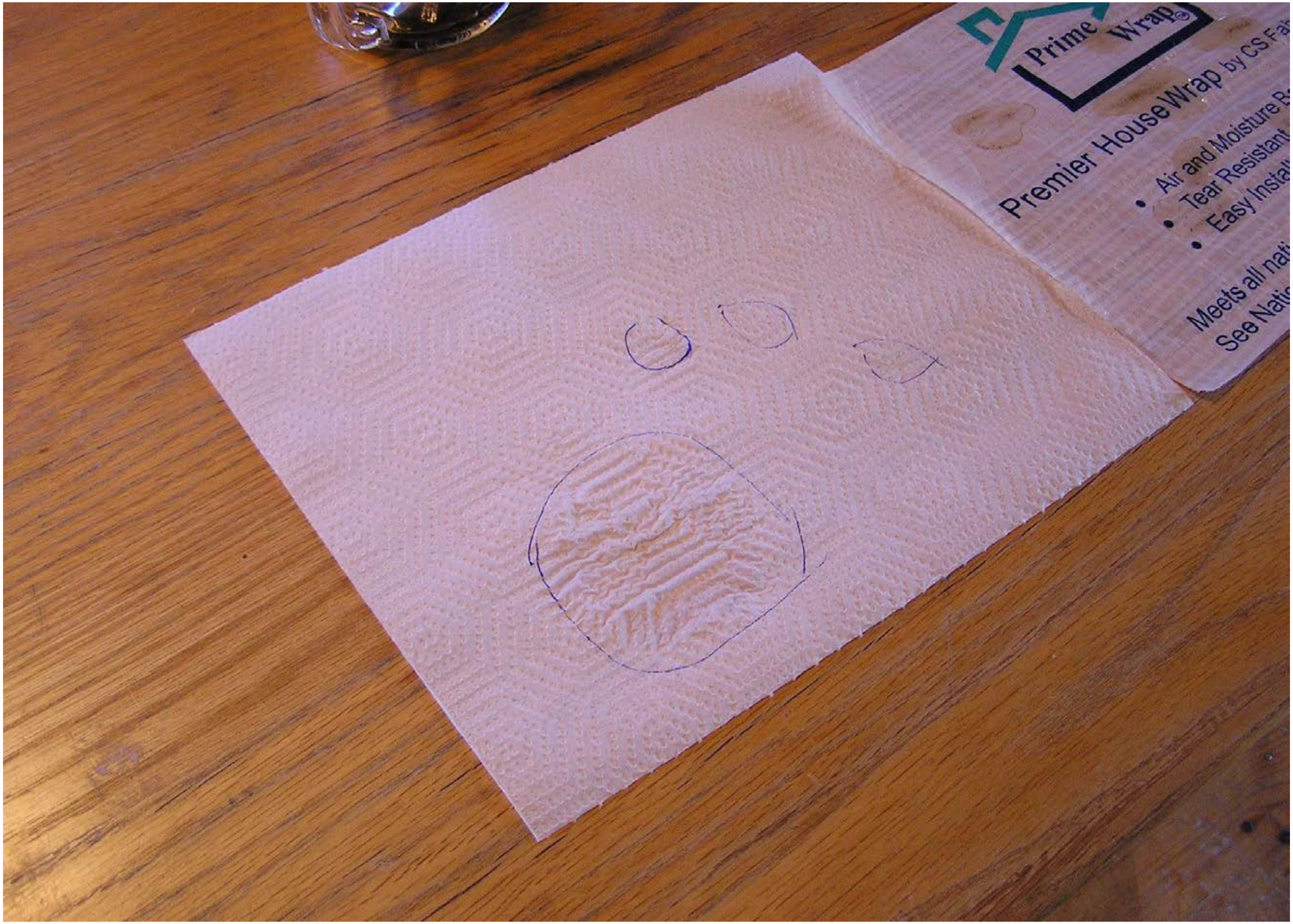

Prime
Wrap
Premier House Wrap by CS Fabric Int'l
• Air and Moisture Barrier
• Tear Resistant
• Easy Installation
Meets all national building codes
See National ES Report No . NER – 655


Prime
Wrap
TM
emier House Wrap by CS Fabric
• Air and Moisture Barrier
• Tear Resistant
• Easy Installation


Fabric Int'l
nd Moisture Barrier
Resistant
codes
Report No. NER – 655


2 CUPS
START


Prime Wrap
Premier House Wrap by CS Fabric Int'l
• Air and Moisture Barrier
• Tear Resistant
• Easy Installation
Meets all national building codes
See National ES Report No . NER – 655
PYREX

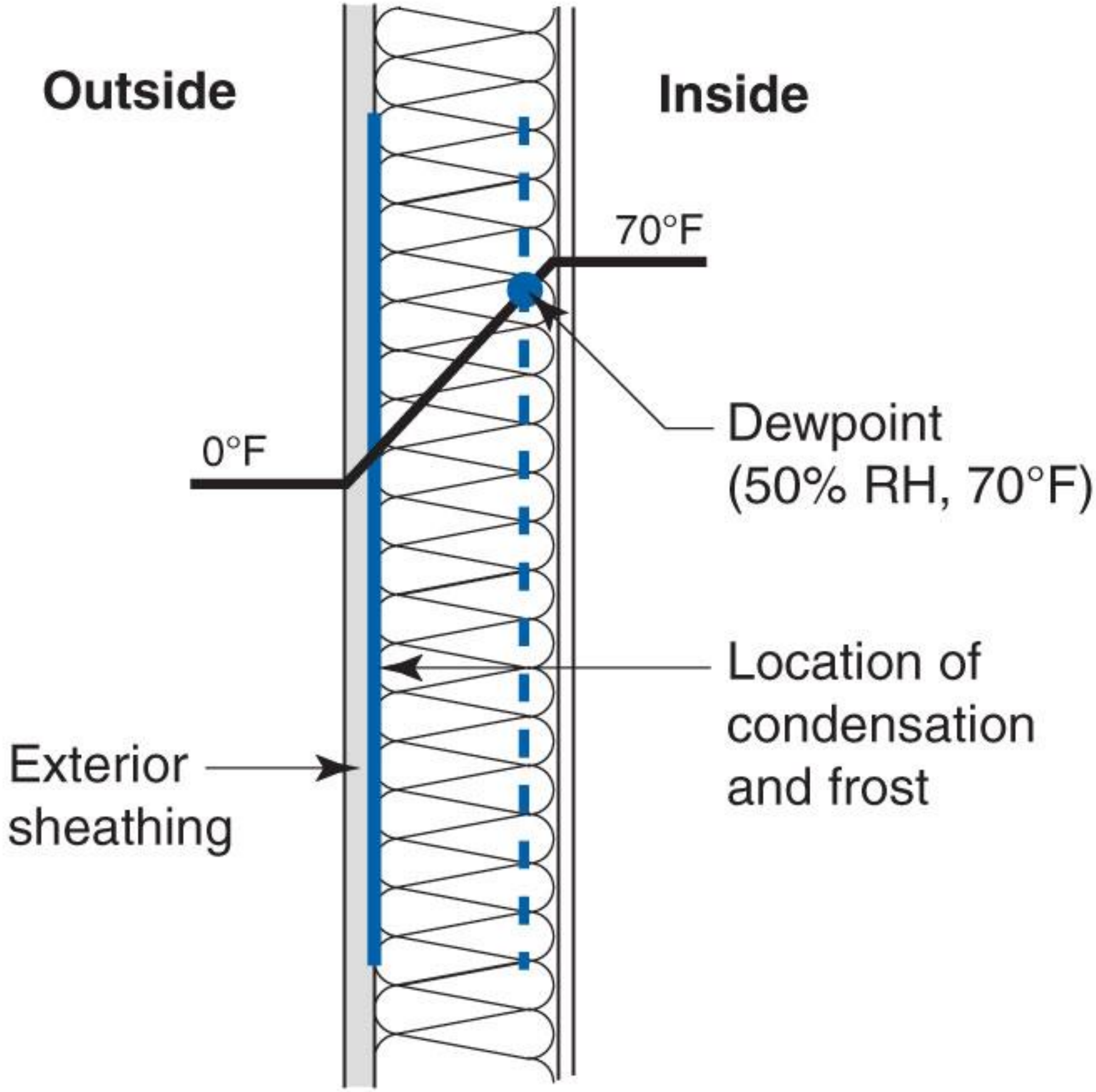

Prime Wrap
Premier HouseWrap by CS Fa
Air and Moisture B
Tear Resistant
Easy Instal
Meets all nat
See Natio


Cambridge

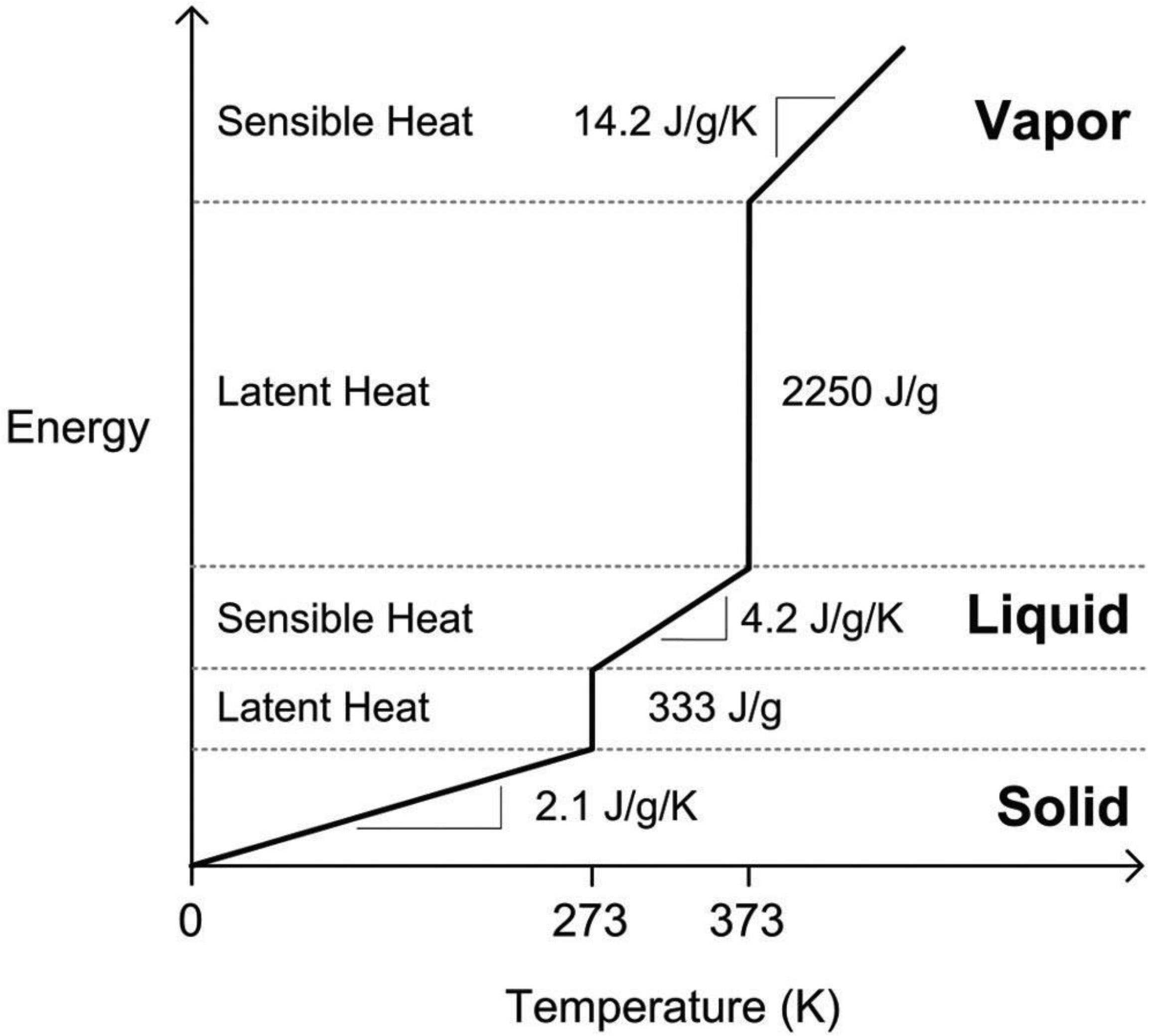

TYPAR
HouseWrap
TYPAR
HouseWrap

	Surface Energy
Water (20 C)	73 dynes/cm
Water (100 C)	59 dynes/cm
Epoxy	46 dynes/cm
Polyethylene	31 dynes/cm
Soapy water	30 dynes/cm
Paraffin wax	25 dynes/cm
Silicone	24 dynes/cm
Teflon	18 dynes/cm

When Phases Change

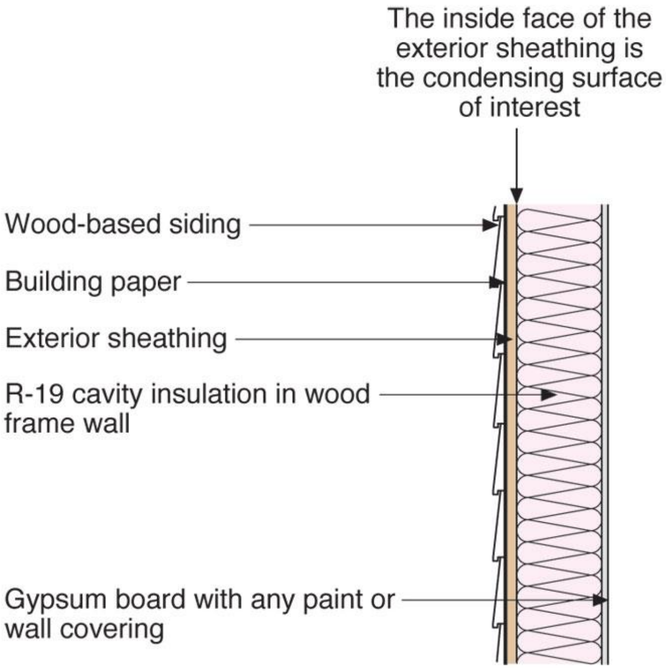


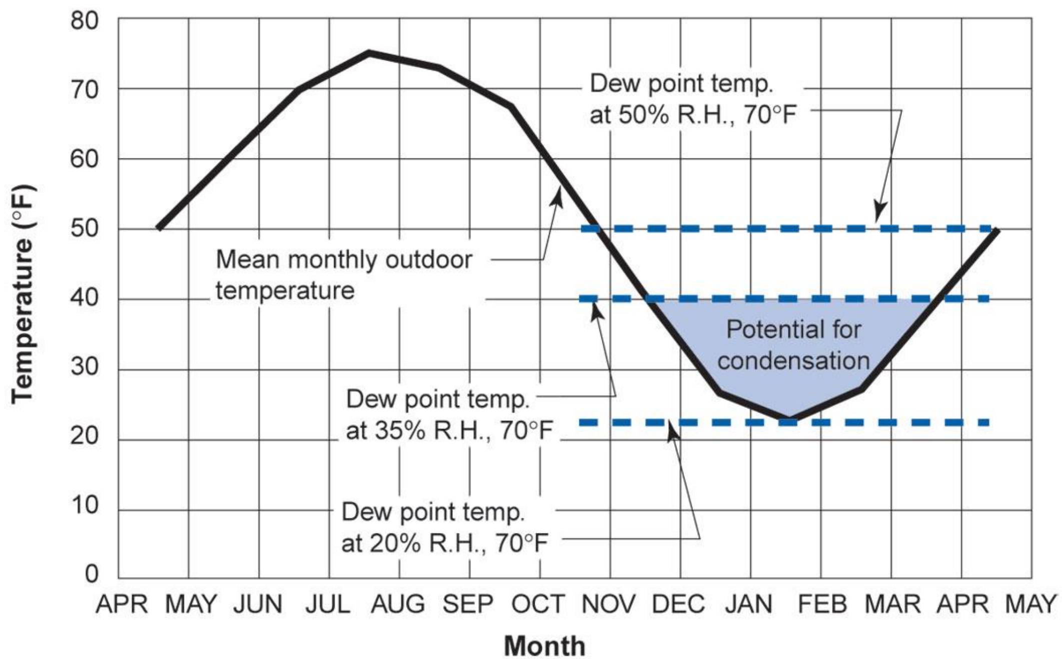
Outside
Inside
70°F
0°F
Dewpoint
(50% RH, 70°F)
Location of
condensation
and frost
Exterior
sheathing

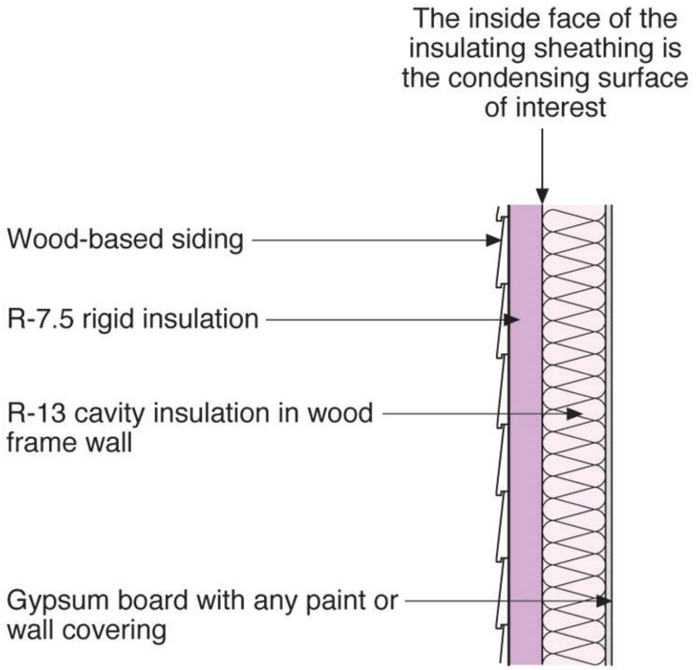


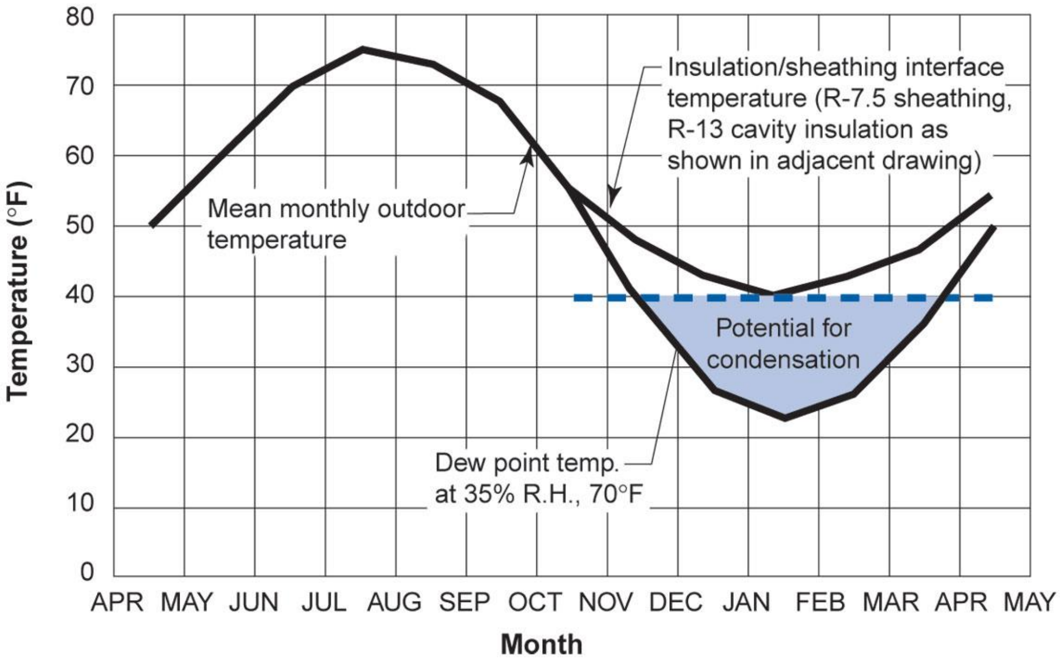
Simple linearized energy-temperature relation for water

From Straube & Burnett, 2005


The inside face of the exterior sheathing is the condensing surface of interest
Wood-based siding
Building paper
Exterior sheathing
R-19 cavity insulation in wood frame wall
Gypsum board with any paint or wall covering


Temperature (°F)
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY
Month
Dew point temp. at 50% R.H., 70°F
Mean monthly outdoor temperature
Potential for condensation
Dew point temp. at 35% R.H., 70°F
Dew point temp. at 20% R.H., 70°F


The inside face of the insulating sheathing is the condensing surface of interest
Wood-based siding
R-7.5 rigid insulation
R-13 cavity insulation in wood frame wall
Gypsum board with any paint or wall covering


Temperature (°F)
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Insulation/sheathing interface temperature (R-7.5 sheathing, R-13 cavity insulation as shown in adjacent drawing)
Mean monthly outdoor temperature
Potential for condensation
Dew point temp. at 35% R.H., 70°F
APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY
Month

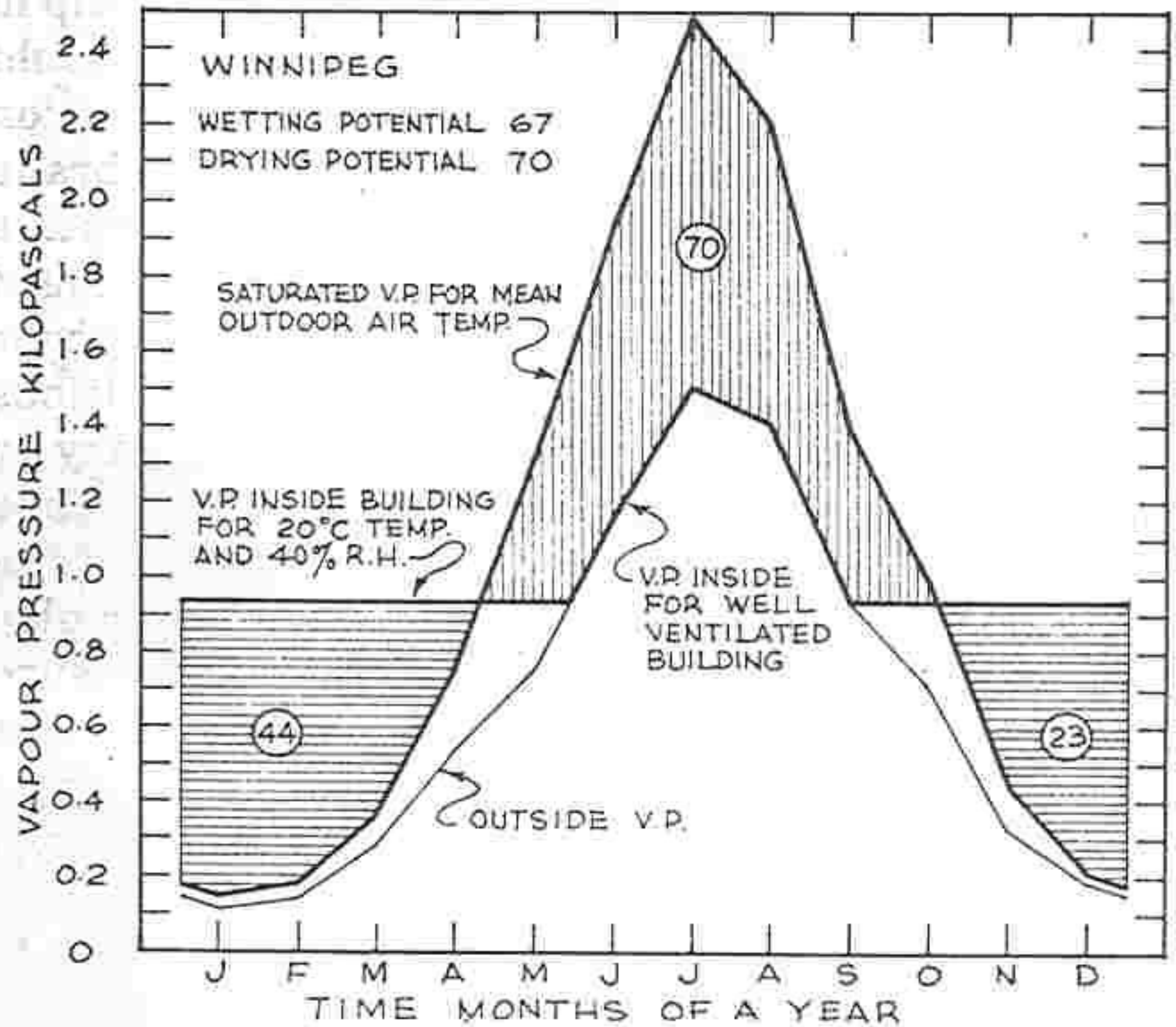
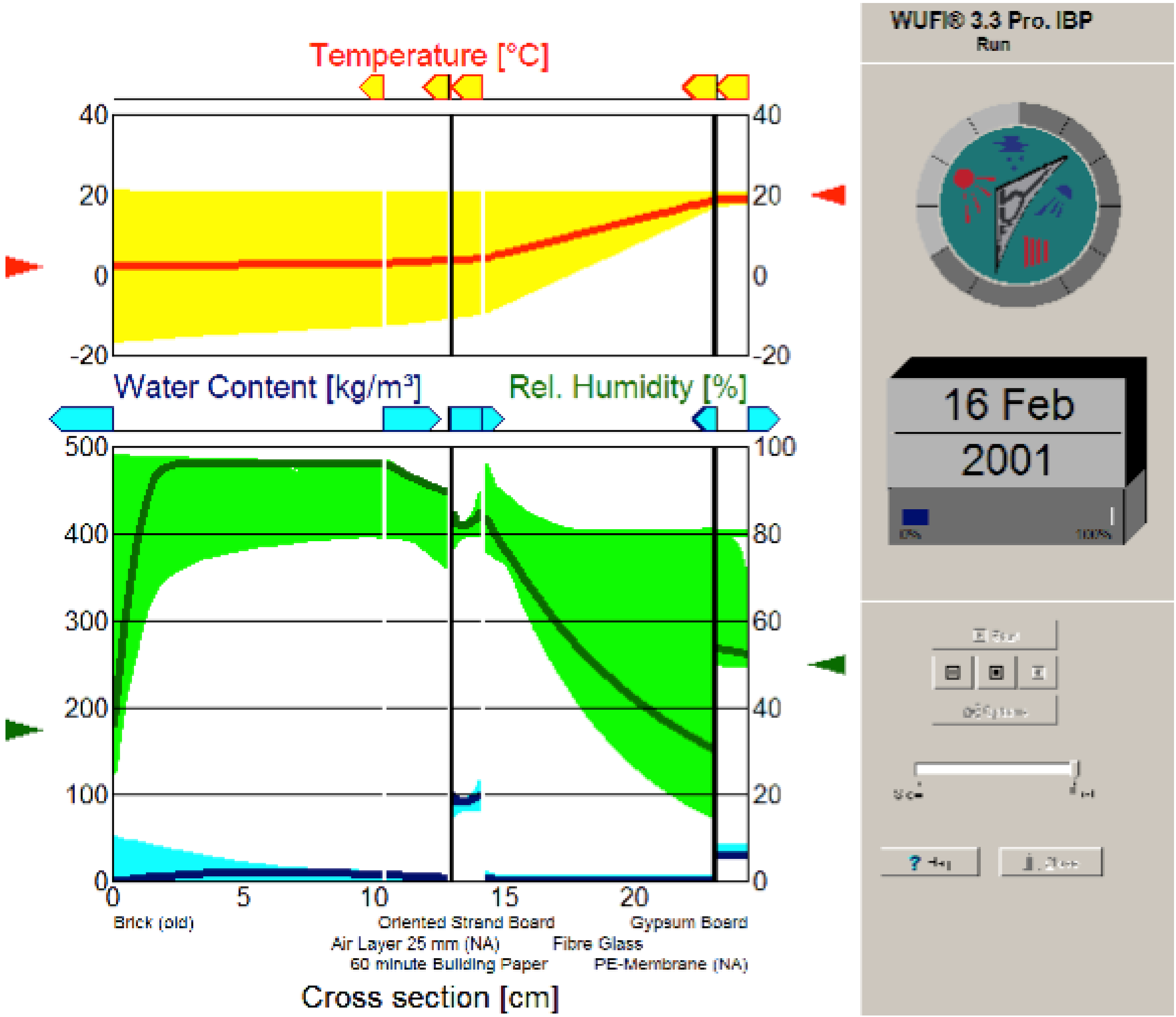
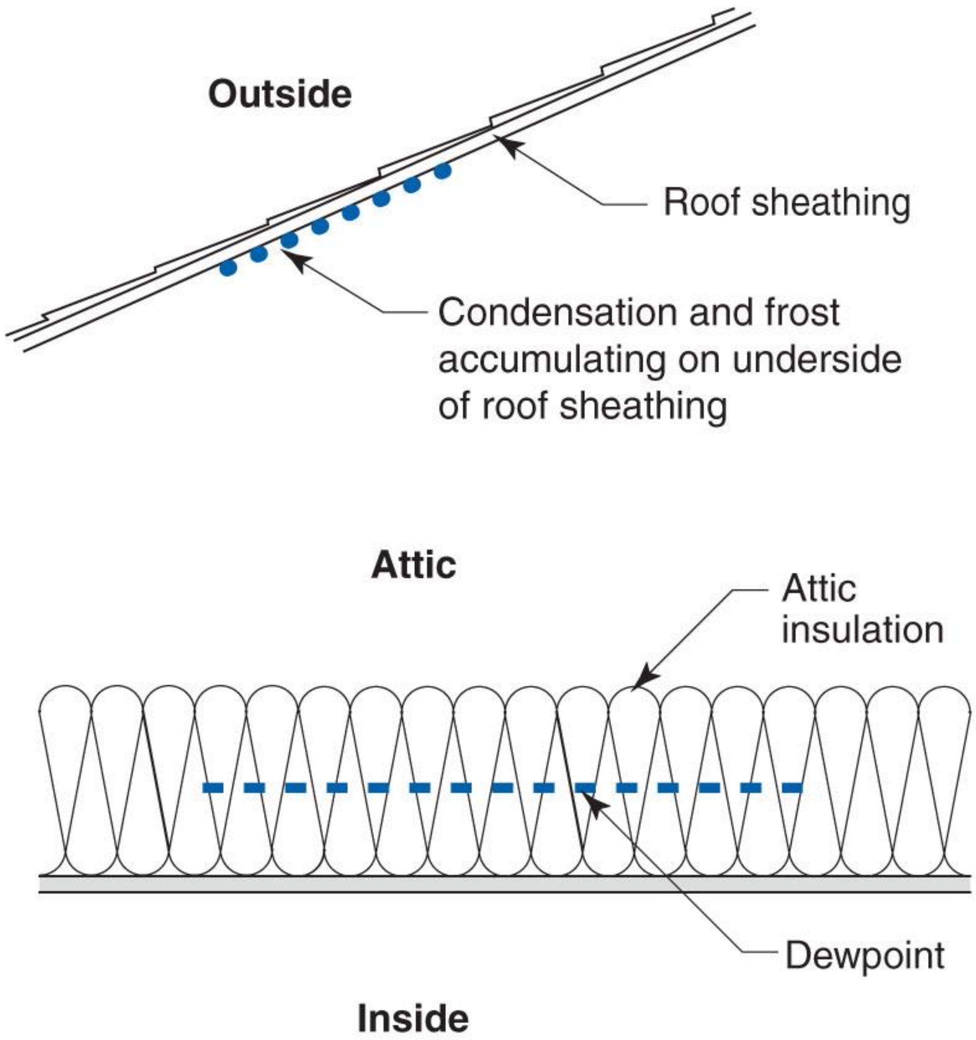
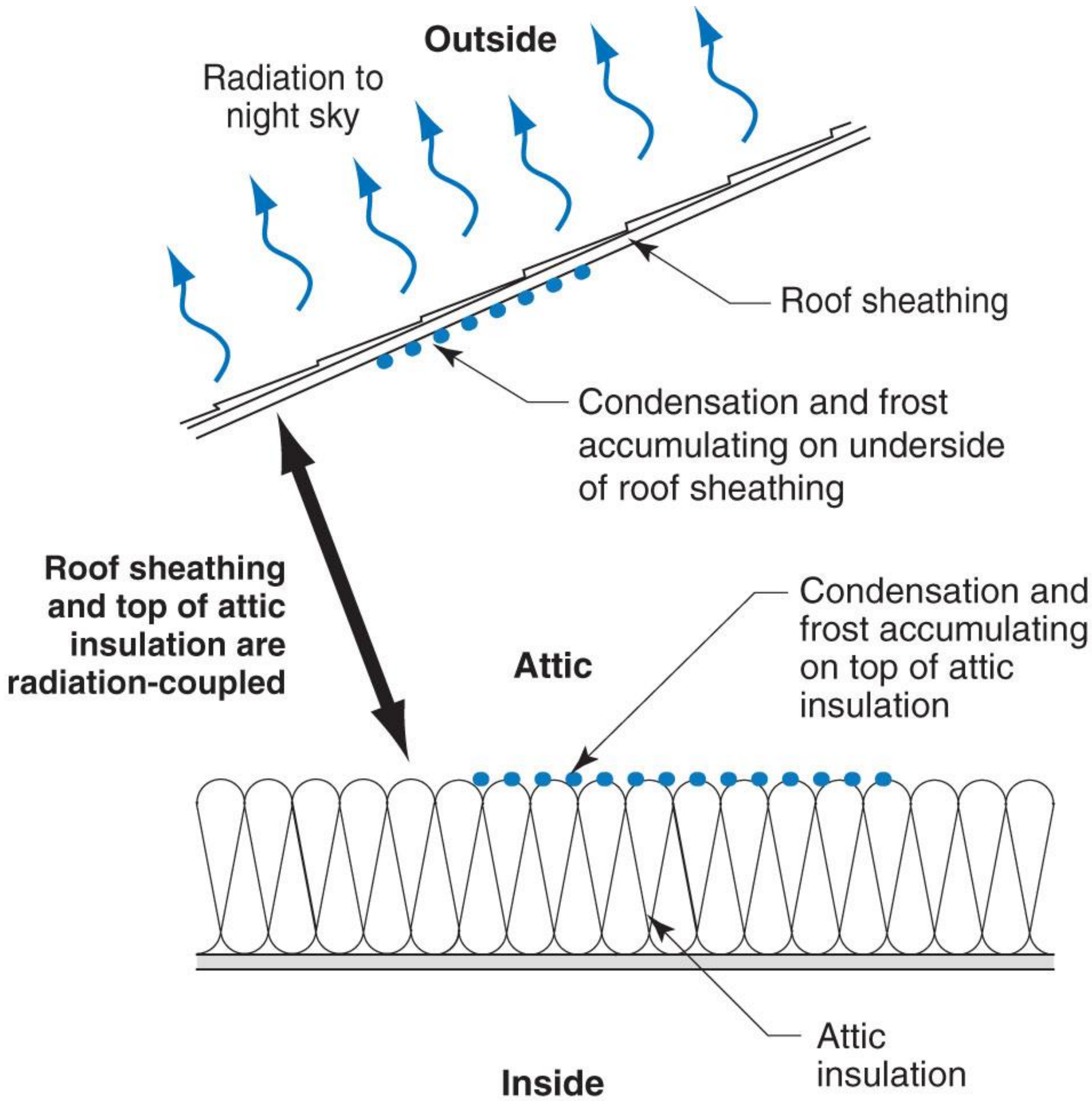


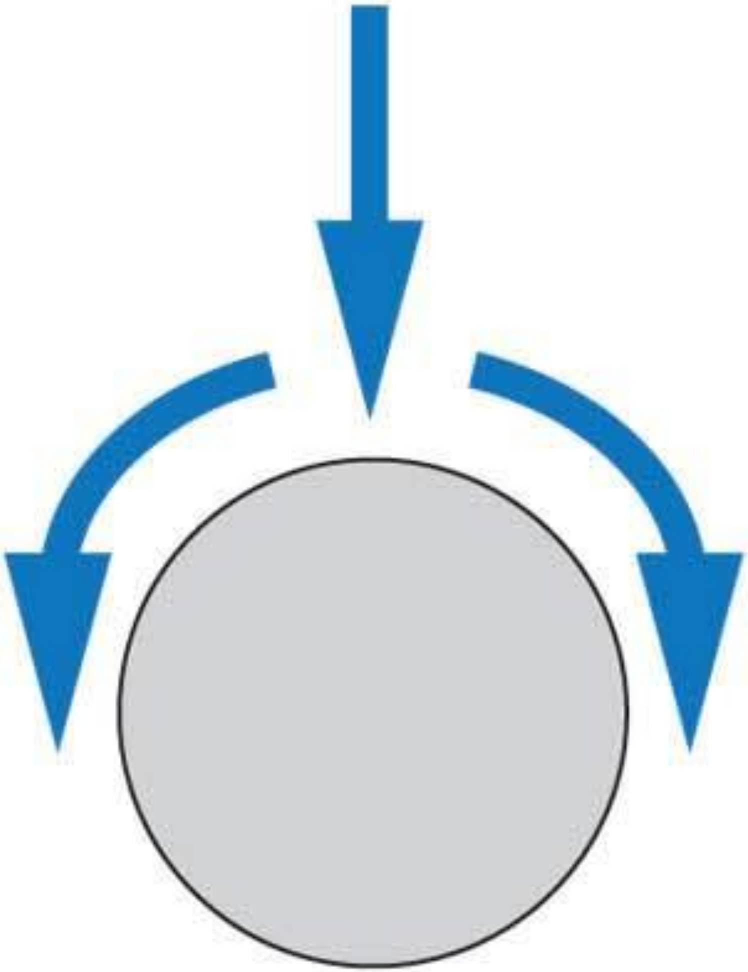
Figure 8-7. Outside vapour pressure, saturated vapour pressure and inside vapour pressure for Winnipeg.

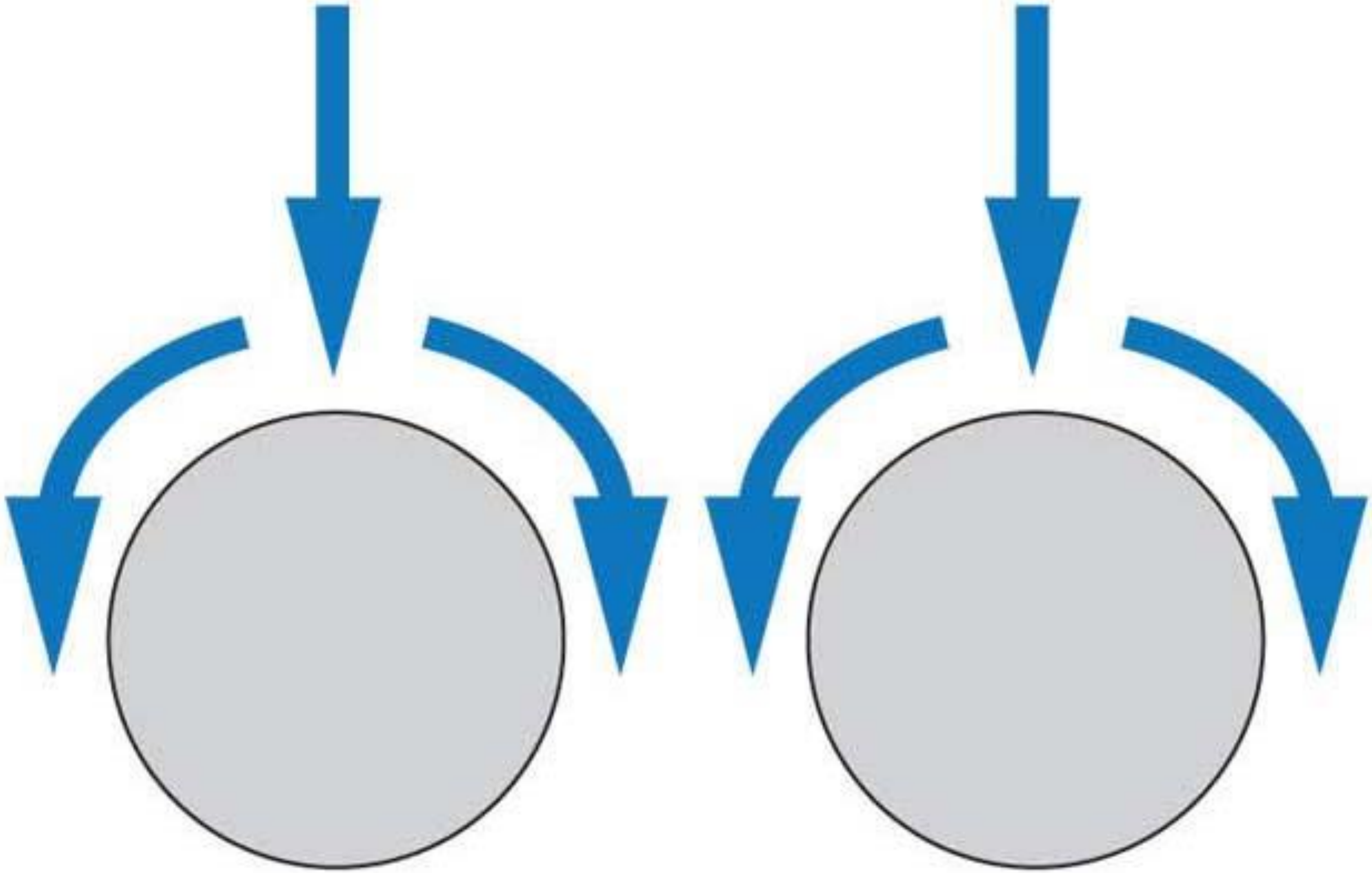

Temperature [°C]
40
20
0
-20
Water Content [kg/m³]
Rel. Humidity [%]
500
400
300
200
100
0
100
80
60
40
20
0
0
5
10
15
20
Brick (old)
Oriented Strand Board
Gypsum Board
Air Layer 25 mm (NA)
Fibre Glass
60 minute Building Paper
PE-Membrane (NA)
Cross section [cm]
WUFI® 3.3 Pro. IBP
Run
16 Feb
2001

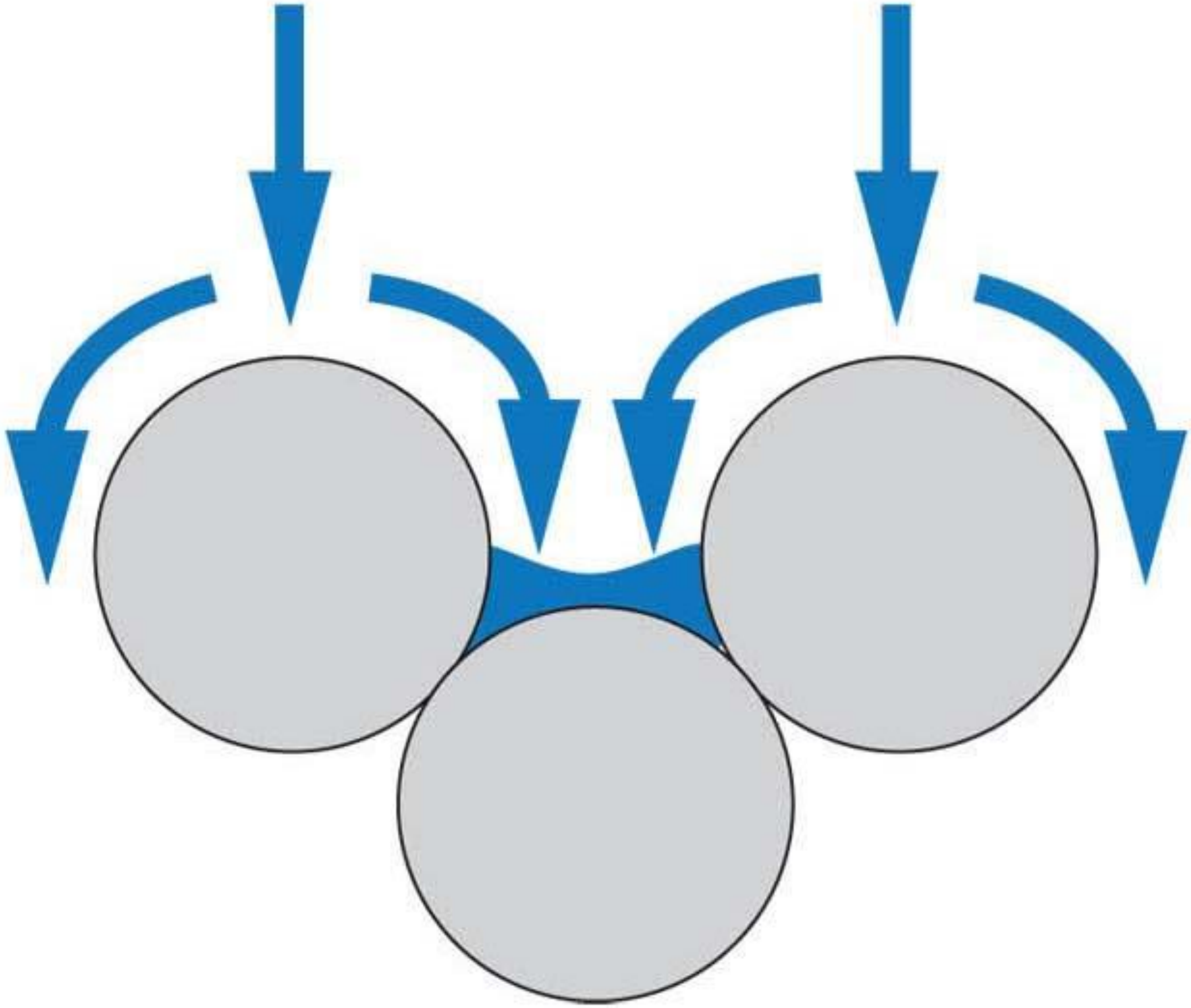

Outside
Roof sheathing
Condensation and frost accumulating on underside of roof sheathing
Attic
Attic insulation
Dewpoint
Inside

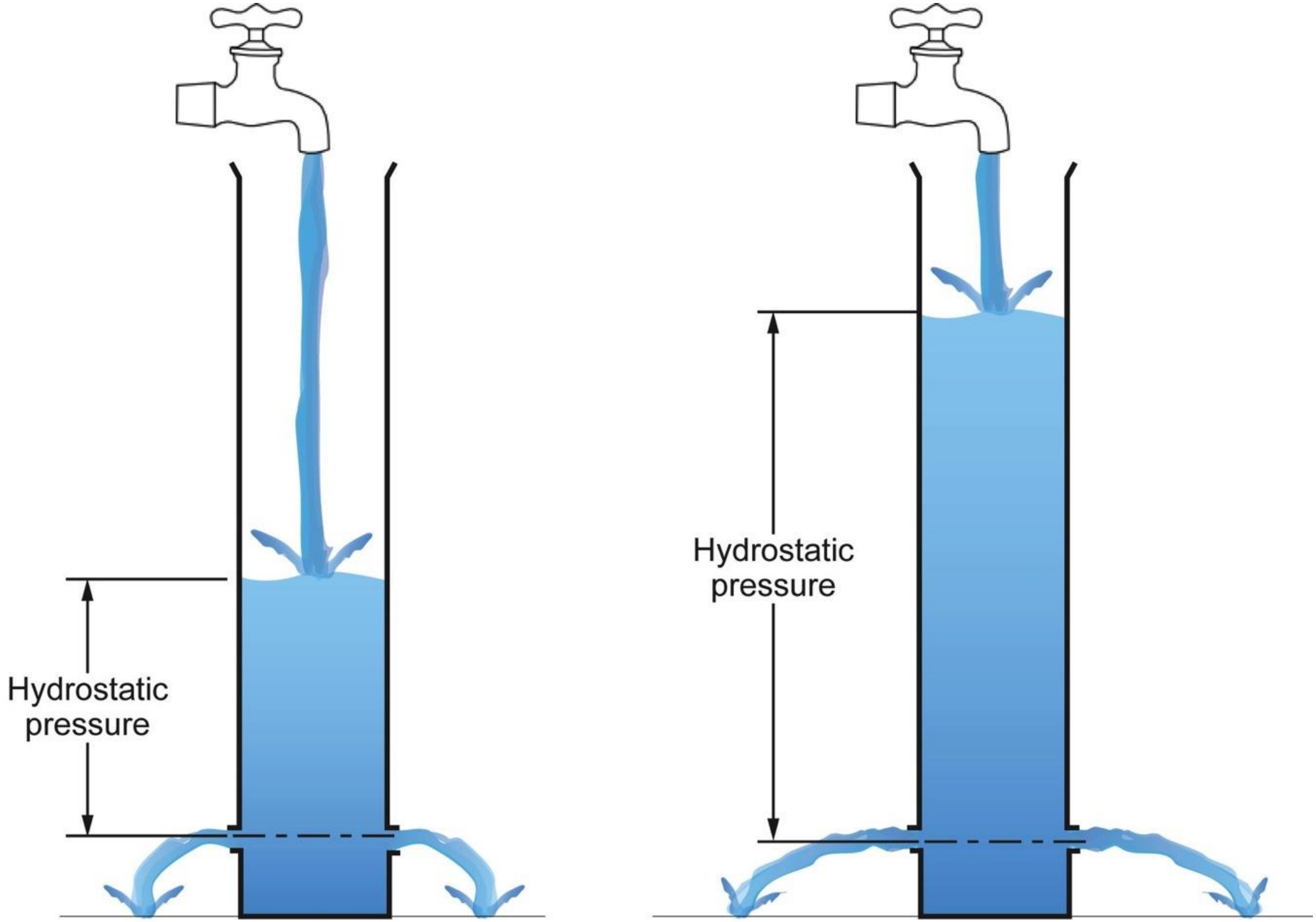


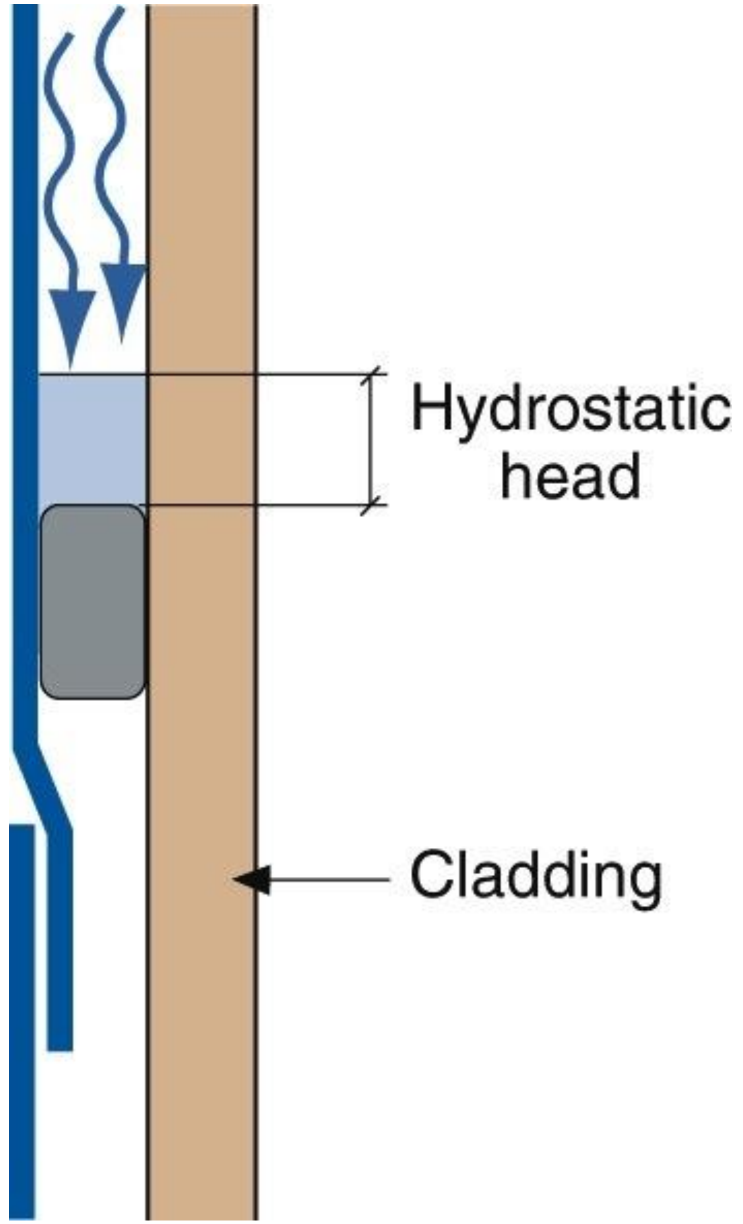
Outside
Radiation to night sky
Roof sheathing
Condensation and frost accumulating on underside of roof sheathing
Roof sheathing and top of attic insulation are radiation-coupled
Attic
Condensation and frost accumulating on top of attic insulation
Attic insulation
Inside

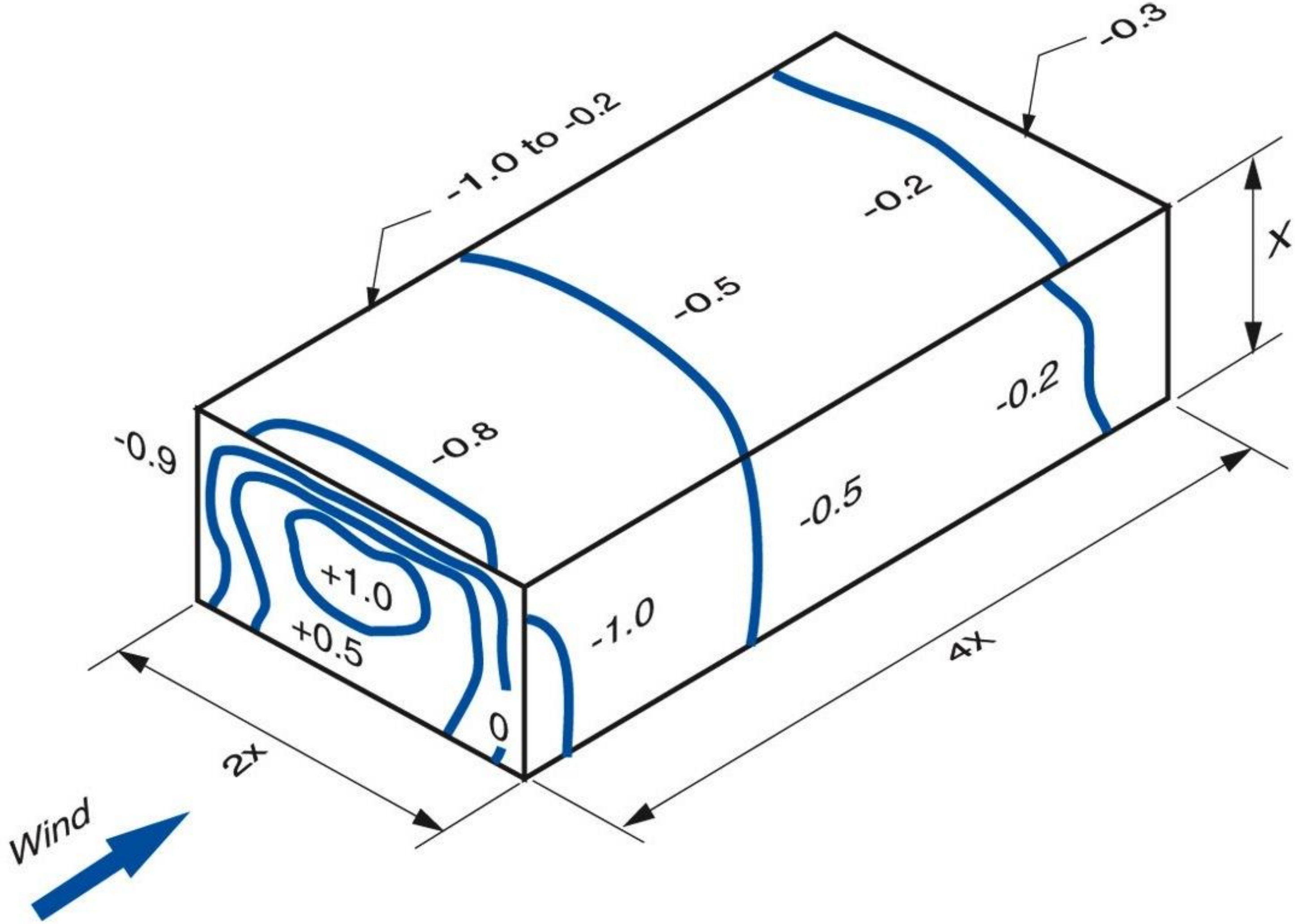




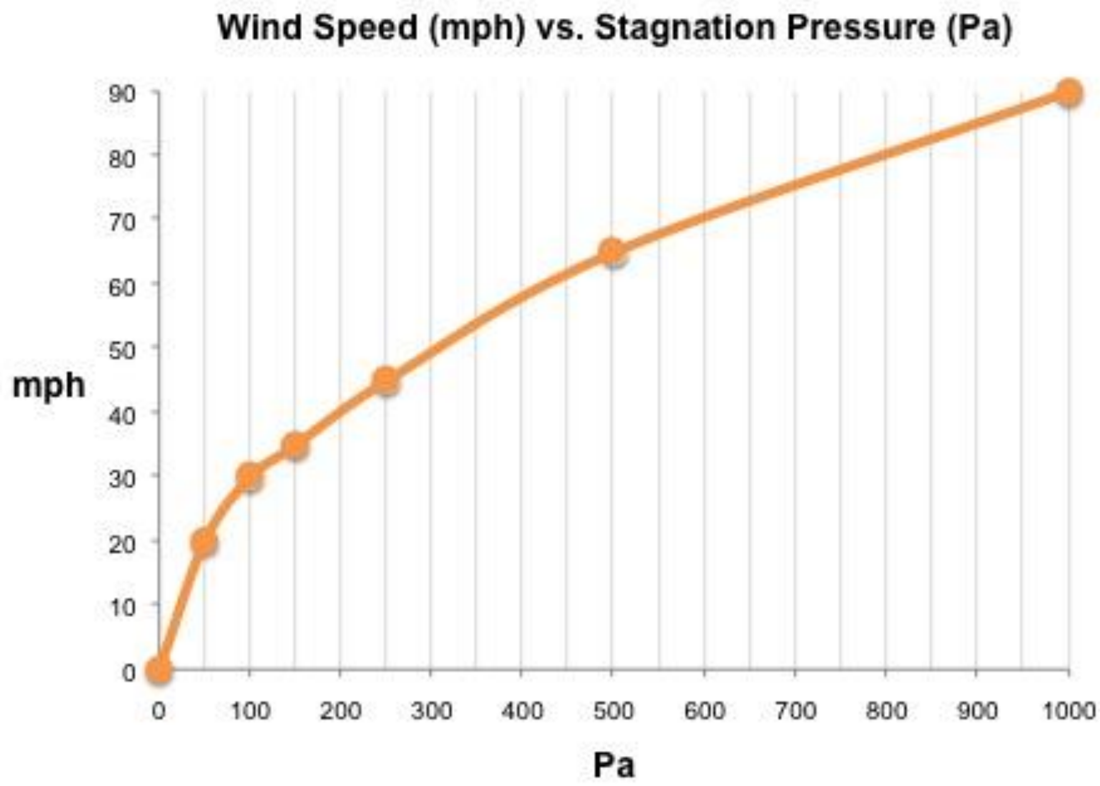



Hydrostatic pressure
Hydrostatic pressure


Hydrostatic
head
Cladding


-0.3
-1.0 to -0.2
-0.2
X
-0.5
-0.2
-0.9
-0.8
-0.5
+1.0
+0.5
-1.0
4X
0
2X
Wind

Pascals		mph	
50	Pa =	20	mph
100	Pa =	30	mph
150	Pa =	35	mph
250	Pa =	45	mph
500	Pa =	65	mph
1,000	Pa =	90	mph




Tyvek
HomeWrap
Tyvek
HomeWrap
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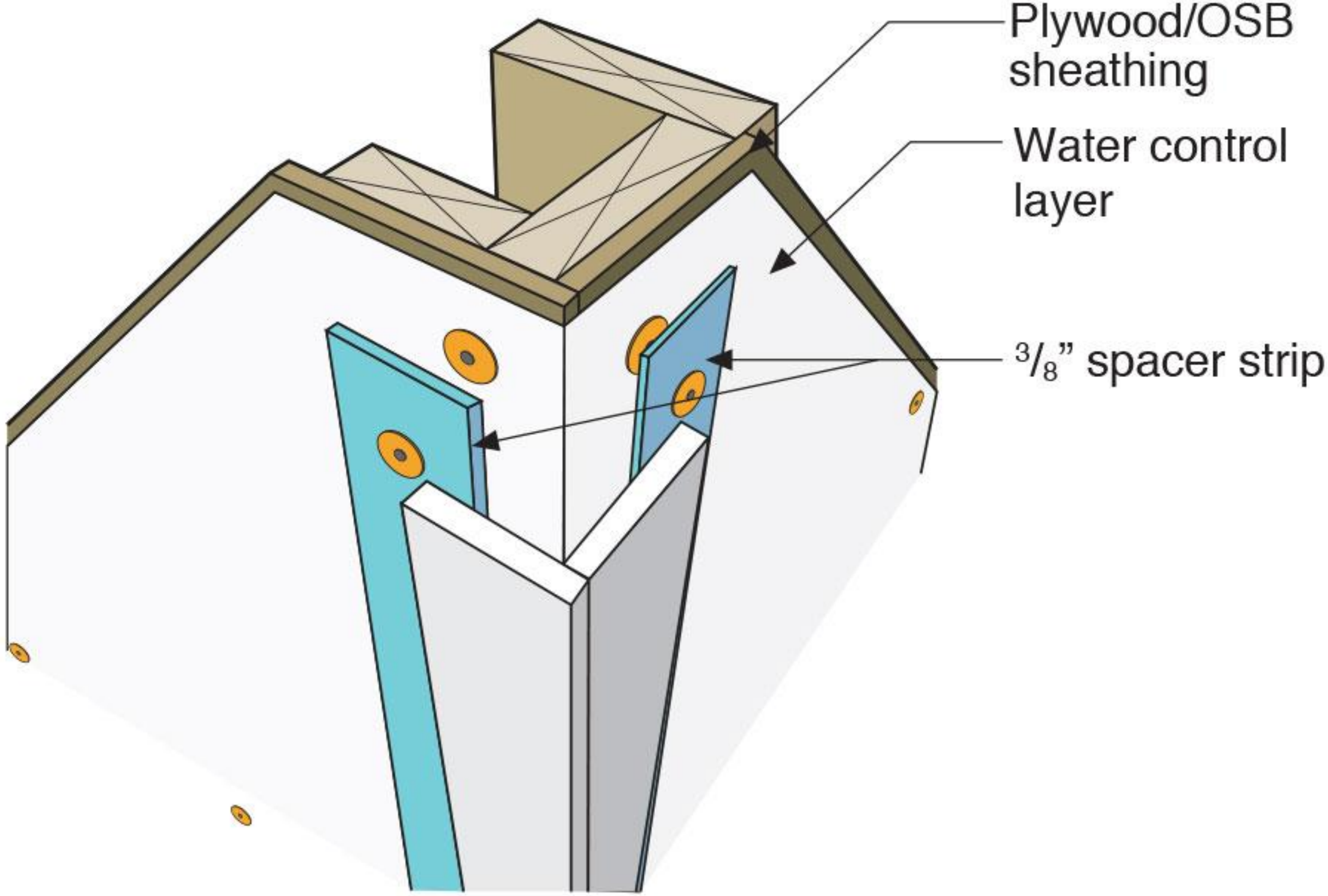
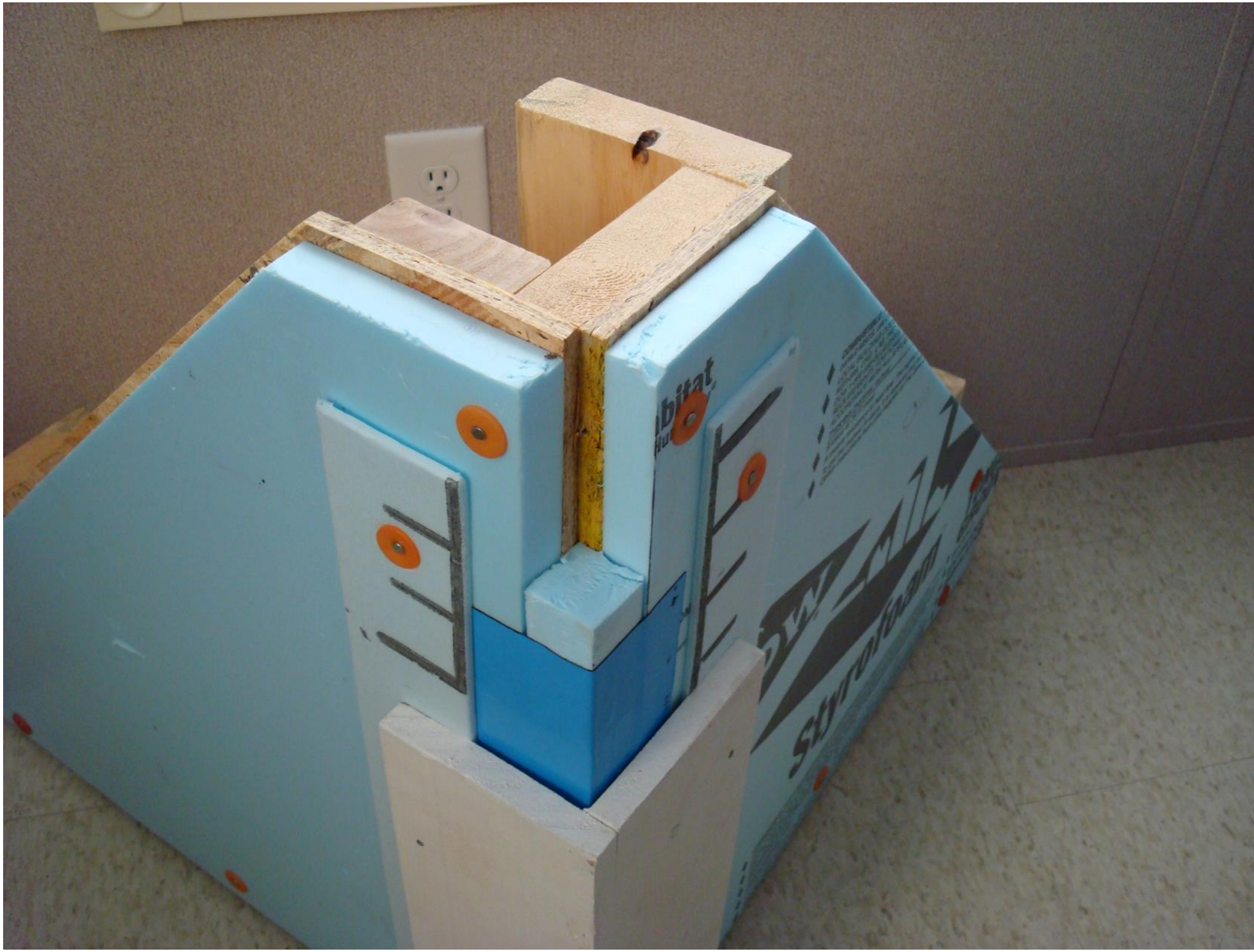
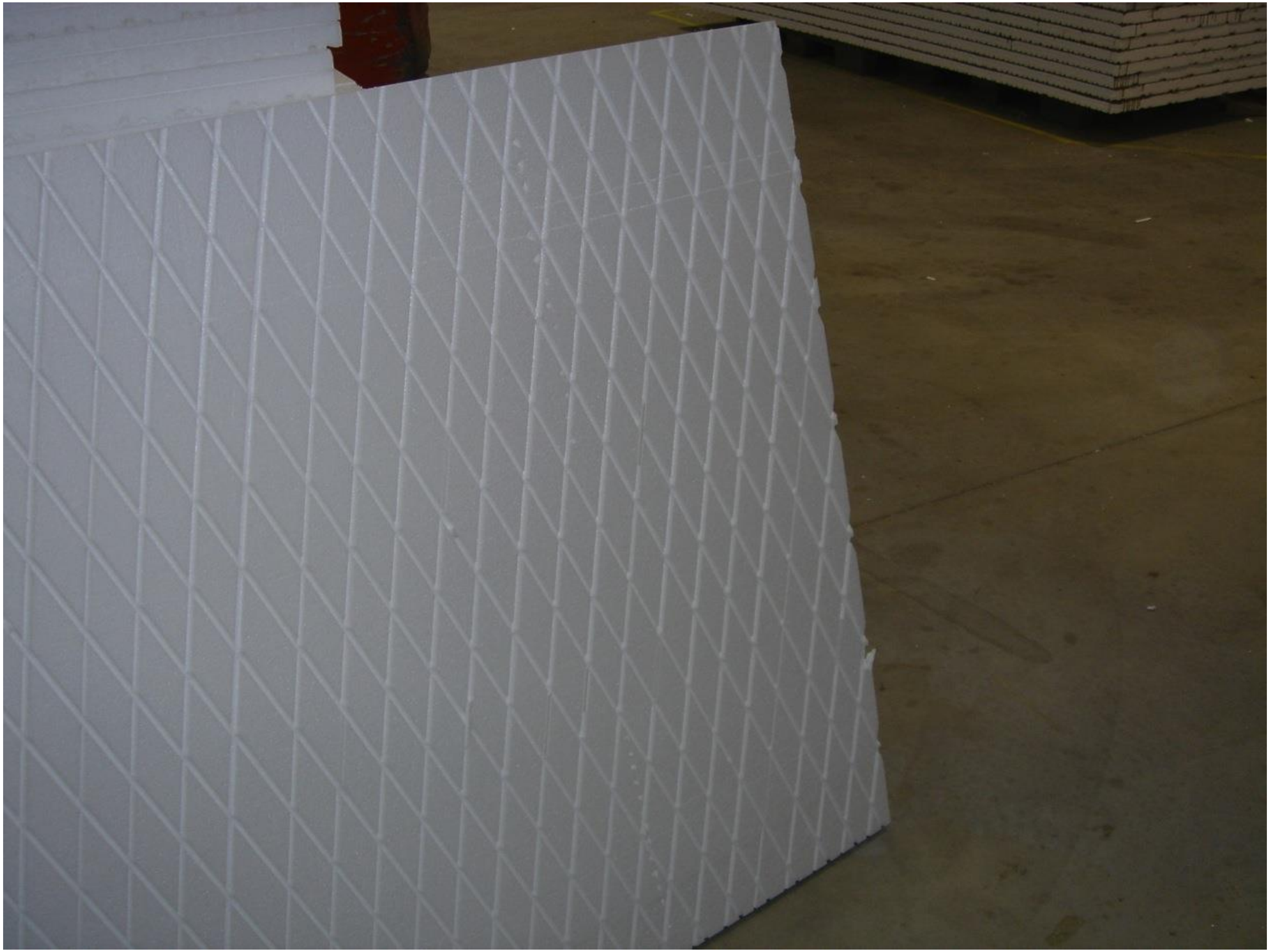
Call 1-800-44TYVEK

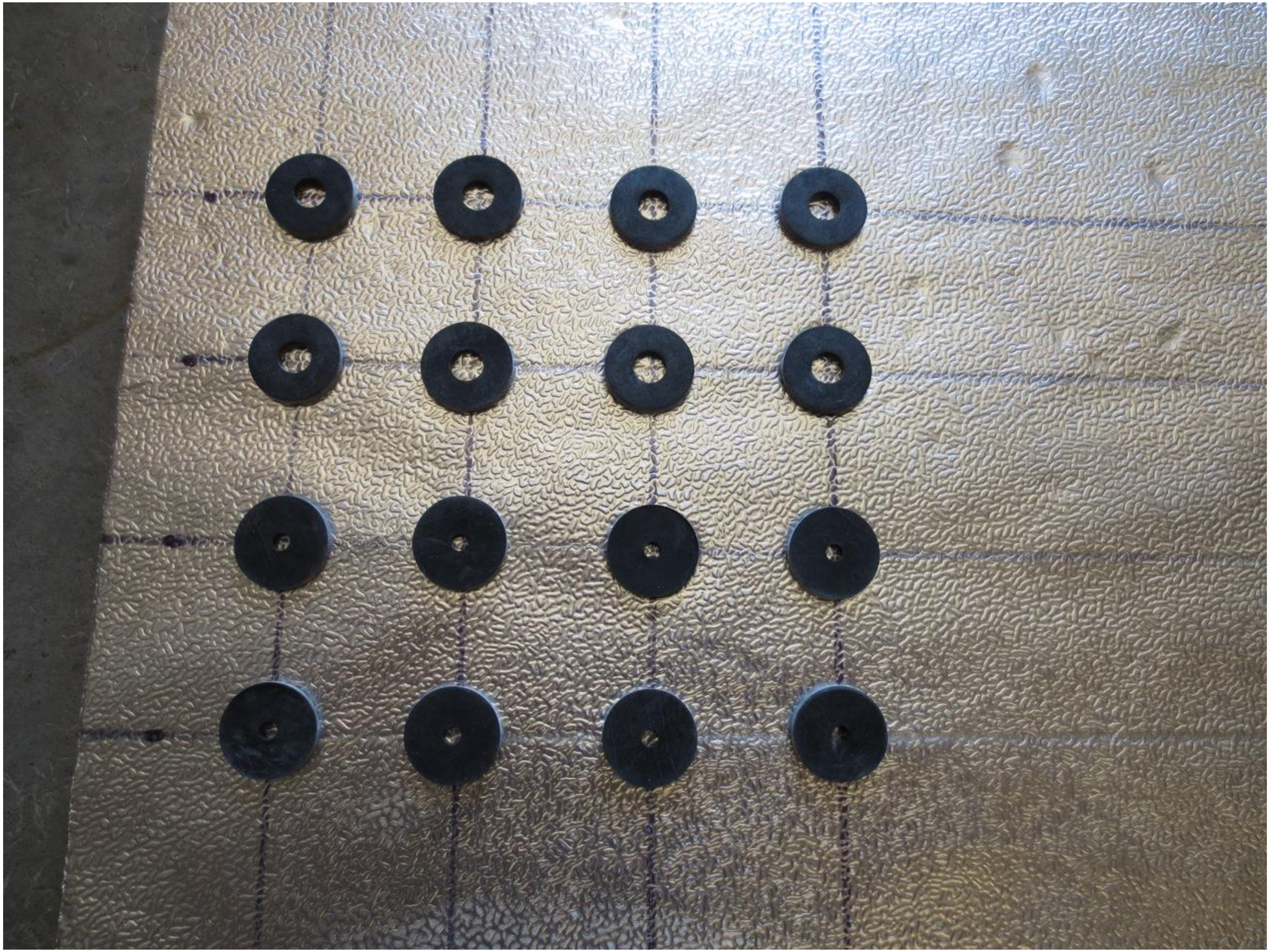

Plywood/OSB sheathing
Water control layer
$^3/_8$" spacer strip


Styrofoam

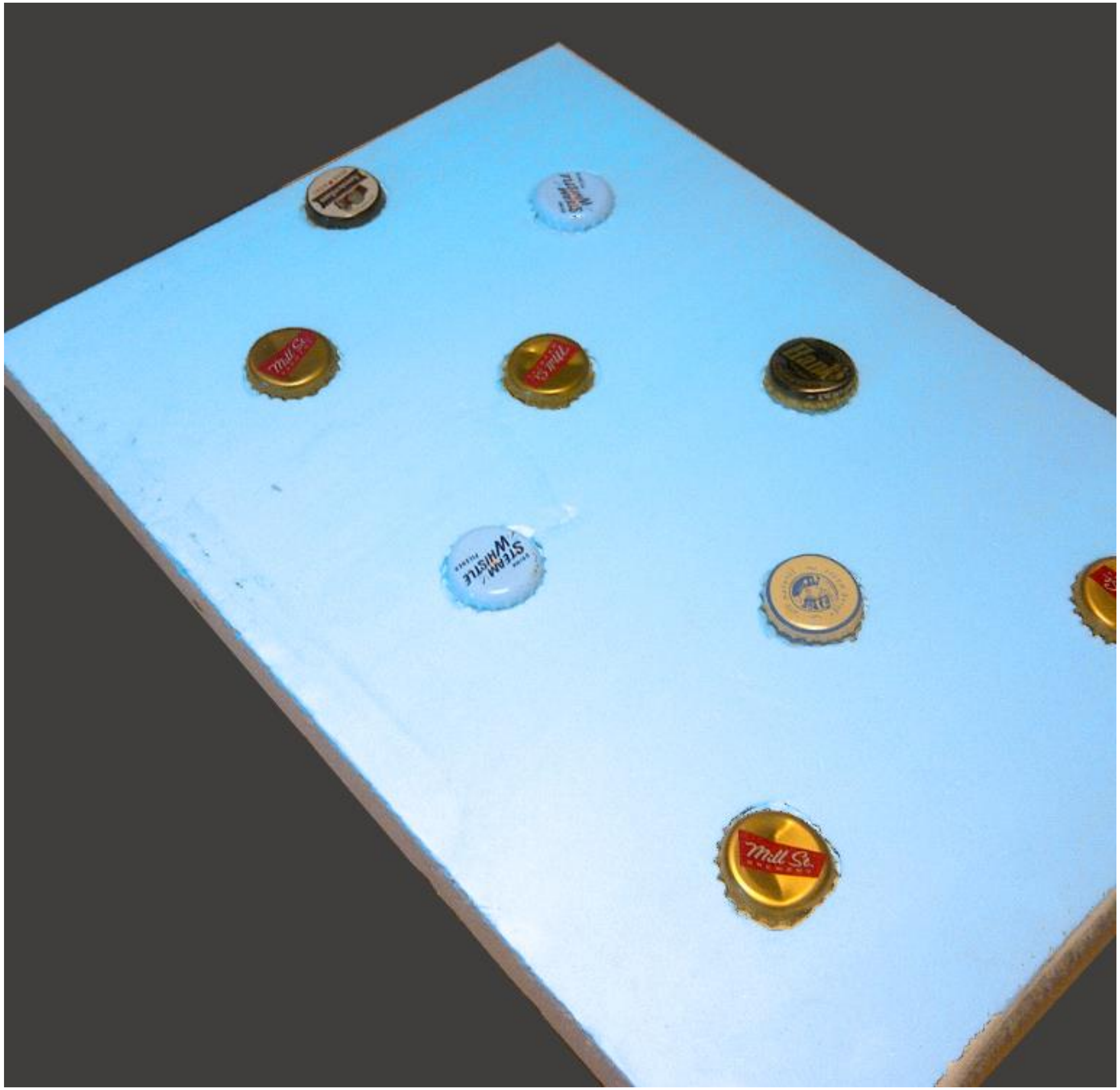

DuPont Tyvek Tape
DuPont Tyvek Tape
PONT



Rain Screen



Beer Screen?


Mill St.