



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

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Bettie Sleeth  
Consultant, Regulatory Affairs  
Home Builders Assn of Georgia  
3015 Camp Creek Pkwy  
Atlanta, GA 30344

**Header spans that became effective Jan. 1, 2016**

Dear Bettie:

Recent changes to design values for southern pine dimension lumber resulted in the spans set forth in the Georgia State Minimum Standard Codes girder and header span tables to be applicable only to #1 grade southern pine. Footnote "b" in tables 2308.9.5 (IBC), 2308.9.6 (IBC), R502.5(1) (IRC), and R502.5(2) (IRC) states:

"Spans are based on minimum design properties for No. 2 Grade lumber of Douglas fir-larch, hem-fir and spruce-pine-fir. No. 1 or better grade lumber shall be used for southern pine."

The change to Footnote "b" in the model codes was intended to be a temporary fix to the span tables since determination of the final design values for southern pine was at one time delayed; however, this change has proven to be problematic in Georgia, since many lumber suppliers do not carry #1 grade southern pine.

The American Wood Council would like to offer three suggestions that designers/builders may use as an alternative and which building code officials may rely on as acceptable:

1. In the current Georgia codes, Section 301.1.1 (IRC) and 2308.1 (IBC) list the 2012 AWC Wood Frame Construction Manual (WFCM) as an alternative design option. A 2013 Addendum to this document which is posted on the AWC website provides a method of using the 2012 WFCM span tables with #2 grade southern pine that would also apply to the Georgia girder and header span tables.
2. **The header tables in the Georgia codes, are applicable to #1 grade southern pine. To use #2 grade southern pine with the girder and header span tables listed in the Georgia codes, multiply the tabulated spans by 0.93.**
3. Header and girder span tables in the 2015 edition of the WFCM are based on current minimum design values for # 2 grade lumber of Douglas fir-larch, hem-fir, southern pine, and spruce-pine-fir. It is referenced in the 2015 IBC and IRC and, therefore, use of the header and girder spans from the 2015 WFCM could be considered as an acceptable alternate method. This alternative would provide the most efficient spans, since they have been specifically designed for the lowest properties.

I hope this is helpful.

Paul Coats, PE, CBO  
SE Regional Manager  
American Wood Council