

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT GLULAM BEAMS

GLULAM BEAMS ARE IDEAL FOR A RANGE OF FRAMING APPLICATIONS— HERE'S HOW TO DISPEL COMMON INSTALLATION MYTHS.

Glued laminated timber, or glulam, is a highly innovative and versatile construction material engineered for a host of residential and commercial construction applications. High design values and proven product performance make the cost-competitive material a natural choice for projects from simple beams and headers in residential construction to soaring glulam arches for domed stadium roofs spanning more than 500 feet.

Glulam beams are one of the original engineered wood products, yet their perceived status as a commodity has led to many misconceptions over time. Here's a look at common myths—and how to dispel them—that can help dealers sell glulam more effectively and help builders specify glulam in their designs.

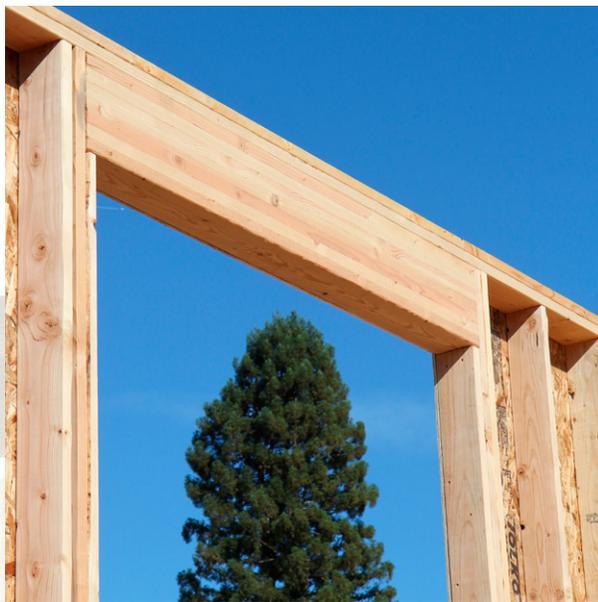


MYTH: Glulam is only for custom, exposed applications.

REALITY: Glulam beams are often chosen for their beauty in exposed designs such as rafters in vaulted ceilings or long clear-span ridge beams, but they're also ideal for hidden, in-the-wall structural applications. Common residential uses for stock glulam beams include garage door headers, floor edge and center girder beams, and headers for window and door openings, as well as headers for large openings such as patio doors.

MYTH: Glulam beams don't have the same span capabilities as some engineered wood products.

REALITY: Glulam is inherently strong and dimensionally stable, making it suitable for a range of applications, including long-span roof beams and heavily loaded floor beams. Stock beams come in 60-foot lengths and are commonly used to create spans upward of 20, 24, and 28 feet and greater. Stock glulam is an ideal option for framing large window openings and for creating great rooms without column supports that interrupt flow.



Glulam beams make strong, stable headers for framing window and door openings.



Although recognized for exposed designs, glulam is a workhorse in hidden framing, as well.

MYTH: Glulam beams are only available cambered.

REALITY: While glulam beams are available with camber to negate the possible adverse effects of long-term deflection, uncambered beams are readily available. Because most residential applications require very little or no camber, uncambered stock glulam is an ideal choice. Stock beams are typically supplied with a relatively flat camber radius of 3,500 feet, or zero camber. Thus, they have just the right camber for most residential construction applications. If, however, more camber is required, such as for long-span roof beams, custom beams are available through local lumber dealers to meet the most exacting specifications.

MYTH: Glulam beams are expensive.

REALITY: Stock glulam beam prices are competitive with comparable engineered wood products in similar applications.



MYTH: Glulam beams are hard to get and are limited in size availability.

REALITY: Glulam beams are readily available in stock and custom sizes. Stock glulam beams are available in all major market areas. They're available in widths that match standard 2x4 and 2x6 wall construction, so there's no need for furring when connecting headers to walls.

Stock beams are manufactured in commonly used dimensions and cut to length when the beam is ordered. Typical stock beam widths used in residential construction include 3-1/8, 3-1/2, 5-1/8, 5-1/2, and 6-3/4 inches. Stock glulam beams are also available in I-joist-compatible depths. For nonresidential applications, where long spans, unusually heavy loads, or other circumstances control design, custom members are typically specified.

Glulam is available in a range of appearance classifications, but the appearance grades do not relate to structural characteristics. "Framing" quality beams, for example, are used in concealed applications and provided in widths designed to fit flush with 2x4 and 2x6 wall framing where appearance is of no importance. "Architectural" beams are typically used for applications where members are exposed to view.



The ability of glulam beams to span long distances and their dimensional stability makes them an ideal option for garage door headers.

In addition, pressure-treated glulam beams are available for exterior applications such as for deck beams, allowing for longer deck spans with fewer columns.

For more information on the properties of glulam beams, visit www.glulambeams.org.

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