

Corrosion Information

Understanding the Corrosion Issue

Metal connectors, fasteners and anchors can corrode and lose carrying capacity when installed in corrosive environments or when installed in contact with corrosive materials. The many variables present in a building environment make it impossible to predict accurately whether, or when, corrosion will begin to reach a critical level. This relative uncertainty makes it crucial that specifiers and users be knowledgeable about the potential risks and select a product suitable for the intended use. When there is any uncertainty about the possible corrosion risks of any installation, a qualified professional should be consulted. Because of the risks posed by corrosion, periodic inspections should be performed by a qualified engineer or qualified inspector and maintenance performed accordingly.

It's common to see some corrosion in outdoor applications. Even stainless steel can corrode. The presence of some corrosion does not mean that load capacity has been affected or that failure is imminent. If significant

corrosion is apparent or suspected, then the wood, fasteners, anchors, and connectors should be inspected by a qualified engineer or qualified inspector. Replacement of affected components may be appropriate.

Because of the many variables involved, Simpson Strong-Tie cannot provide estimates of the service life of connectors, anchors, and fasteners. We suggest that all users and specifiers obtain recommendations on corrosion from the suppliers of the materials that will be used with Simpson Strong-Tie products, in particular, treated wood or concrete. We have attempted to provide basic knowledge on the subject here, and have additional information in our technical bulletins on the topic (strongtie.com/info). The Simpson Strong-Tie website should always be consulted for the latest information.

Corrosion Conditions

Corrosion can result from many combinations of environmental conditions, materials, construction design, and other factors, and no single guideline addresses all corrosion possibilities. Nevertheless, important corrosion information can be obtained from the American Wood Protection Association (AWPA), the International Building Code (IBC), International Residential Code (IRC), and local building codes. The following discussion provides general guidelines and approaches for the selection of Simpson Strong-Tie products for various construction conditions, but is not intended to supersede the guidelines of the AWPA, IBC, IRC, or local building codes.

Corrosion issues for Simpson Strong-Tie products generally fall into four categories:

1. Environmental and Construction Factors

Many environments and materials can cause corrosion, including ocean salt air, condensation, duration of wetness, fire retardants, fumes, fertilizers, chlorides, sulfates, preservative-treated wood, de-icing salts, dissimilar metals, soils, and more. Designers must take all of these factors into account when deciding which Simpson Strong-Tie products to use with which corrosion-resistant coatings or materials.

The design, quality of construction, and misinstallation can directly affect the corrosion resistance of products. A product intended and installed for use in dry-service environment may corrode if the structure design or building materials allow moisture intrusion, or expose the product to corrosive conditions, such as moisture or chemicals contained in the construction materials, soils, or atmospheres.

2. Chemically Treated Lumber

Some wood-preservative or fire-retardant chemicals or chemical retention levels create increased risk of corrosion and are corrosive to steel connectors and fasteners. For example, testing by Simpson Strong-Tie has shown that ACQ-Type D is more corrosive than Copper Azole, Micronized Copper Azole, or CCA-C. At the same time, other tests have shown that inorganic boron treatment chemicals, specifically SBX-DOT, are less corrosive than CCA-C.

Because different chemical treatments of wood have different corrosion effects, it's important to understand the relationship between the wood treatment chemicals and the coatings and base metals of Simpson Strong-Tie products.

The preservative-treated wood supplier should provide all of the pertinent information about the treated wood product. The information should include the AWPA Use Category Designation, wood species group, wood treatment chemical, and chemical retention. See building code requirements and appropriate evaluation reports for corrosion effects of wood treatment chemicals and for fastener corrosion resistance recommendations.

With Fire-Retardant-Treated (FRT) Wood, the 2015 and 2018 IBC Section 2304.10.5.4 and 2015 and 2018 IRC Section R317.3.4 refer to the manufacturers' recommendations for fastener corrosion

requirements. In the absence of recommendations from the FRT manufacturer, the building codes require fasteners to be hot-dip galvanized, stainless steel, silicon bronze or copper. Simpson Strong-Tie further requires that the fastener is compatible with the metal connector hardware. Fastener shear and withdrawal allowable loads may be reduced in FRT lumber. Refer to the FRT manufacturer's evaluation report for potential reduction factors.

3. Dissimilar Metals and Galvanic Corrosion

Galvanic corrosion occurs when two electrochemically dissimilar metals contact each other in the presence of an electrolyte (such as water) that acts as a conductive path for metal ions to move from the more anodic to the more cathodic metal. Good detailing practice, including the following, can help reduce the possibility of galvanic corrosion of fasteners and connectors:

- Use fasteners or anchors and connectors with similar electrochemical properties
- Use insulating materials to separate dissimilar metals
- Ensure that the fastener or anchor is the cathode when dissimilar connector metals are present
- Prevent exposure to and pooling of electrolytes

Galvanic Series of Metals

Corroded End (Anode)
Magnesium, Magnesium alloys, Zinc
Aluminum 1100, Cadmium, Aluminum 2024-T4, Iron and Steel
Lead, Tin, Nickel (active), Inconel Ni-Cr alloy (active), Hastelloy alloy C (active)
Brasses, Copper, Cu-Ni alloys, Monel
Nickel (passive)
304 stainless steel (passive), 316 stainless steel (passive), Hastelloy alloy C (passive)
Silver, Titanium, Graphite, Gold, Platinum
Protected End (Cathode)

If you are uncertain about the galvanic corrosion potential of any installation, always consult with a corrosion expert. See the product pages for particular parts for more information regarding what coating systems are recommended or required for use with the parts in question.

4. Hydrogen-Assisted Stress Corrosion Cracking

Some hardened fasteners may experience premature failure from hydrogen-assisted stress-corrosion cracking if exposed to moisture. These fasteners are recommended for use only in dry-service conditions.

Corrosion Information

Guidelines for Selecting Materials and Coatings

In the discussion and charts of this section, Simpson Strong-Tie presents a system to determine which product coatings and base metals to use in a range of corrosion conditions. These are general guidelines that may not consider all relevant application criteria. Refer to product-specific information for additional guidance.

Simpson Strong-Tie evaluated the AWWA Use Categories (See AWWA U1-16) and ICC-ES AC257 Exposure Conditions and developed a set of corrosion resistance recommendations. These recommendations

address the coating systems and materials used by Simpson Strong-Tie for fastener, connector, and anchor products. Although the AWWA Use Categories and ICC-ES AC257 Exposure Conditions specifically address treated-wood applications and some common corrosion agents, Simpson Strong-Tie believes that its recommendations may be applied more generally to other application conditions, insofar as the service environments discussed are similar. You should consult with a corrosion engineer concerning the application where advisable.

Step 1 — Evaluate The Corrosion Conditions

- **Dry Service:** Generally INTERIOR applications including wall and ceiling cavities, raised floor applications in enclosed buildings that have been designed to prevent condensation and exposure to other sources of moisture. Prolonged periods of wetness during construction should also be considered, as this may constitute a Wet Service or Elevated Service condition. Dry Service is typical of AWWA UC1 and UC2 for wood treatment and AC257 Exposure Condition 1. Keep in mind that dry-service environment may contain airborne salts. AC257 Exposure Condition 2 reflects the presence of airborne salt in a dry-service environment and corrosion hazard to exposed metal surfaces. It does not include effects of treatment chemicals. This condition is generally considered in Elevated and Uncertain assessments.
- **Wet Service:** Generally EXTERIOR construction in conditions other than elevated service. These include Exterior Protected and Exposed and General Use Ground Contact as described by AWWA UC4A. The AWWA U1 standard classifies exterior above-ground

treatments as Use Categories UC3 (A and B) depending on moisture run-off; and for exterior ground-contact levels of protection, it has Use Categories UC4 (A-C). ICC-ES AC257 considers the exterior exposure to be limited by the presence of treatment chemicals, and corrosion accelerators. In general, the AC257 Exposure Condition 1 includes AWWA Use Categories UC1 (interior/dry) and UC2 (interior/damp), while Exposure Condition 3 is a surrogate to UC3A, 3B, and 4A (exterior, above-ground and ground-contact, general use). The ICC-ES AC257 Exposure Conditions 2 and 4 are exposures that are salt environments.

- **Elevated Service:** Includes fumes, fertilizers, soil, some preservative-treated wood (AWPA UC4B and UC4C), industrial-zone atmospheres, acid rain, salt air, and other corrosive elements.
- **Uncertain:** Unknown exposure, materials, or treatment chemicals.
- **Ocean/Water Front Service:** Marine environments that include airborne chlorides, salt air, and some salt splash. Environments with de-icing salts are included.

Step 2 — Determine Your Corrosion Resistance Classification

Corrosion Resistance Classifications

Environment	Material to Be Fastened						
	Untreated Wood or Other Material	Preservative-Treated Wood					FRT Wood
		SBX-DOT Zinc Borate	Chemical Retention ≤ AWWA, UC4A	Chemical Retention > AWWA, UC4A	ACZA	Other or Uncertain	
Dry Service	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	High	Medium
Wet Service	Medium	N/A	Medium	High	High	High	High
Elevated Service	High	N/A	Severe	Severe	High	Severe	N/A
Uncertain	High	High	High	Severe	High	Severe	Severe
Ocean/Water Front	Severe	N/A	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	N/A

Additional Considerations

1. Always consider the importance of the connection as well as the cost of maintenance and replacement.
2. If the information about treatment chemicals in an application is incomplete, or if there is any uncertainty as to the service environment of any application, Simpson Strong-Tie recommends the use of a Type 300 Series stainless steel. Simpson Strong-Tie has evaluated the corrosion effects of various formulations of wood treatment chemicals ACZA, ACQ, CCA, MCA, CA, and salt as corrosion accelerators. Simpson Strong-Tie has not evaluated all formulations and retentions of the named wood treatment chemicals other than to use coatings and materials in the severe category. Manufacturers may independently provide test results or other product information. Simpson Strong-Tie expresses no opinion regarding such information.
3. Type 316/305/304 stainless-steel products are recommended where preservative-treated wood used in ground contact has a chemical retention level greater than those for AWWA UC4A; CA-C, 0.15 pcf; CA-B, 0.21 pcf; micronized CA-C, 0.14 pcf; micronized CA-B, 0.15 pcf; ACQ-Type D (or C), 0.40 pcf. When wood treated with micronized CA-C and micronized CA-B with treatment retentions up to UC4B is in dry service, hot-dip galvanized fasteners and connectors may be suitable.

4. Mechanical galvanizations C3 and N2000 should not be used in conditions that would be more corrosive than AWWA UC3A (exterior, above ground, rapid water run off).
5. Some chemically treated wood may have chemical retentions greater than specification, particularly near the surface, making it potentially more corrosive than chemically treated wood with lower retentions. If this condition is suspected, use Type 316/305/304 stainless-steel, silicon bronze, or copper fasteners.
6. Some woods, such as cedars, redwood, and oak, contain water-soluble tannins and are susceptible to staining when in contact with metal connectors and fasteners. According to the California Redwood Association (calredwood.org), applying a quality finish to all surfaces of the wood prior to installation can help reduce staining.
7. Anchors, fasteners and connectors in contact with FRT lumber shall be hot-dip galvanized or stainless steel, unless recommended otherwise by the FRT manufacturer. Many FRT manufacturers permit low-corrosion-resistant connector and fastener coatings for dry-service conditions.
8. Simpson Strong-Tie does not recommend painting stainless-steel anchors, fasteners or connectors. Imperfections or damage to the paint can facilitate collection of dirt and water that can degrade or block the passive formation of the protective chromium oxide film. When this happens, crevice corrosion can initiate and eventually become visible as a brown stain or red rust. Painting usually does not improve the corrosion resistance of stainless steel.

Corrosion Information

Step 3 — Match Your Corrosion Resistance Classification to the Coatings and Materials Available

Not all products are available in all finishes. Contact Simpson Strong-Tie for product availability, ordering information and lead times.

Coatings and Materials Available

Level of Corrosion Resistance	Coating or Material	Description	Fastener Material or Finish
Connectors			Fastener Material or Finish
Low	Gray Paint	Organic paint intended to protect the product while it is warehoused and in transit to the jobsite.	Bright, Hot-Dip Galvanized, Mechanically Galvanized, or Double-Barrier Coating
	Powder Coating	Baked-on paint finish that is more durable than standard paint.	
	Galvanized	Standard (G90) zinc-galvanized coating containing 0.90 oz. of zinc per square foot of surface area (total both sides).	
Medium	ZMAX G185	Galvanized (G185) 1.85 oz. of zinc per square foot of surface area (hot-dip galvanized per ASTM A653) total for both sides. Products with a powder-coat finish over a ZMAX® base have the same level of corrosion resistance.	Hot-Dip Galvanized, Mechanically Galvanized, or Double-Barrier Coating <i>* Bright fasteners may be used with ZMAX or HDG connectors where low corrosion resistance is allowed.</i>
	HOT DIP HDG GALVANIZED	Products are hot-dip galvanized after fabrication (14 ga. and thicker). The coating weight increases with material thickness. The minimum average coating weight is 2.0 oz./ft. ² (per ASTM A123) total for both sides. Anchor bolts are hot-dip galvanized per ASTM F2329.	
High/ Severe	Type 316 Stainless Steel	Type 316 stainless steel is a nickel-chromium austenitic grade of stainless steel with 2-3% molybdenum. Type 316 stainless steel is not hardened by heat treatment and is inherently nonmagnetic. It provides a level of corrosion protection suitable for severe environments, especially environments with chlorides.	Type 316 Stainless Steel
Fasteners			Applicable Products
Low	Bright	No surface coating.	Nails
	Electrocoating (E-Coat™)	Electrocoating utilizes electrical current to deposit the coating material on the fastener. After application, the coating is cured in an oven. Electrocoating provides a minimum amount of corrosion protection and is recommended for dry, low-corrosive applications.	Strong-Drive® SDWF, SDW and SDWV screws
	Clear and Bright Zinc, ASTM F1941	Zinc coatings applied by electrogalvanizing processes to fasteners that are used in dry service and with no environmental or material corrosion hazard.	SD8 Wafer Head Screw
Medium	HOT DIP HDG GALVANIZED ASTM A153, Class D	Hot-dip galvanized fasteners 3/8" and smaller in diameter in accordance with ASTM A153, Class D. Hot-dip galvanized fasteners are compliant with the 2015 and 2018 IRC and IBC.	Strong-Drive SCN Nail
	Type 410 Stainless Steel with Protective Top Coat	Carbon martensitic grade of stainless steel that is inherently magnetic, with an added protective top coat. This material can be used in mild atmospheres and many mild chemical environments.	Titen® Stainless-Steel Concrete and Masonry Screw
	Mechanically Galvanized Coating, ASTM B695, Class 55	Simpson Strong-Tie® Strong-Drive SD Connector screws are manufactured with a mechanically applied zinc coating in accordance with ASTM B695, Class 55, with a supplemental overcoat. These fasteners are compatible with painted and zinc-coated (G90 and ZMAX) connectors and are recognized in evaluation reports that can be found on strongtie.com .	Strong-Drive SD CONNECTOR Screw
	Double-Barrier Coating	Simpson Strong-Tie Strong-Drive SDS Heavy-Duty Connector screws and Outdoor Accents® structural wood screws are manufactured with double-barrier coating that provides a level of corrosion protection equaling that provided by HDG coating and are recognized in evaluation reports that can be found on strongtie.com .	Strong-Drive SDS CONNECTOR Screw Outdoor Accents Connector Screw and Structural Wood Screw
High/ Severe	HOT DIP HDG GALVANIZED ASTM A153, Class C	Simpson Strong-Tie Strong-Drive Timber-Hex screws are hot-dip galvanized in accordance with ASTM A153, Class C. These hot-dip galvanized fasteners have a minimum average of 1.25 oz./ft. ² of zinc coating and are compliant with the 2015 and 2018 IRC (R317.3) and IBC.	Strong-Drive TIMBER-HEX HDG Screw
	Type 316 Stainless Steel	Type 316 stainless steel is a nickel-chromium austenitic grade of stainless steel with 2-3% molybdenum. It provides a level of corrosion protection suitable for severe environments, especially environments with chlorides. Type 316 stainless-steel fasteners are compliant with the 2015 and 2018 IBC and IRC.	Strong-Drive SCNR Nail Strong-Drive SDS CONNECTOR Screw

Dry Service



Wet Service



Elevated Service / Severe

