



Alaska Lumber Grading Program



Alaska Lumber Grading Program



Matt Labrenz
Forest Products Specialist
UAF Cooperative Extension

The Alaska Lumber Grading Program

- Objective: To allow Alaskans to build homes with locally sawn lumber
- The ALG program provides an infrastructure to allow locally produced lumber to substitute for grade stamp lumber to satisfy building code requirements for structural lumber in 1-3 family dwellings in Alaska.



The Alaska Lumber Grading Program

- **Background**

- Wisconsin established a local-use lumber program in 2008,
- Many factors contribute to the rationale for the establishment of a local-use lumber program in Alaska:
 - Housing shortages statewide, costs and logistics of shipping grade stamp lumber, desire to use local products and support local economy
- In 2005 The Ketchikan Wood Technology Center partnered with the Western Wood Products Association to perform stress testing on Alaska
- In late 2023, AS 41.17.610 - 41.17.630. “Lumber Grading,” was signed into law

The Alaska Lumber Grading Program

The ALG program provides an infrastructure to allow locally produced lumber to substitute for grade stamp lumber to satisfy building code requirements for structural lumber in residential construction in Alaska.

Definitions:

- In Alaska
- Residential Construction
- Structural Lumber
- Building Code Requirements
- Grade Stamped Lumber
- Locally Produced Lumber

The Alaska Lumber Grading Program

- **The Components of the ALG Infrastructure:**
 1. Substitute equivalent lumber grades
 2. A Lumber grading training and certification program for sawyers
 3. Rules and regulations for transactions of ALG lumber

The Alaska Lumber Grading Program

Substitute equivalent Alaska lumber grades

- Derived from the Grade stamp infrastructure
- Grade characteristics are nearly identical except in cases where they are more restrictive
- Making certain rules more restrictive also makes the system easier to learn and apply accurately
- Covers a comparatively narrow scope of 3 grades relevant to residential construction

The Alaska Lumber Grading Program



The Training

- 1-day training offered annually in Interior, Southeast, and Southcentral
- Wood science and material characteristics of wood as a framing material
- How lumber's response to stress is impacted by defects
- Overview of limiting characteristics of each of the 3 Alaska grades
- Documentation of lumber including: grade, quantity, moisture condition, surface condition, etc.

Certification

- Must attend training and pass exam which includes written test and applied grading test
- Valid for 5 years, then re-certification is required
- Revocable

The Alaska Lumber Grading Program

Additional Program Rules:

- Lumber sold under the program must be accompanied by a copy of certification and paperwork containing specific information
- Building inspectors have final say



The Alaska Lumber Grading Program

Current update on program

- Training handbook undergoing final review
- Training preparations currently underway.
- First live grading training to be offered in June. Additional 2024 dates being finalized.



Contact:

Matt Labrenz

(907) 474 – 7192

mtlabrenz@alaska.edu



Matt Labrenz
(907) 474 - 7192
mtlabrenz@alaska.edu

