DuPont™ Tyvek® building wraps give you the job-site durability, performance and ease of use needed to build more comfortable, longer-lasting and energy-efficient structures. Trusted by building professionals everywhere, DuPont™ Tyvek® building wraps, part of the complete DuPont™ Weatherization Systems portfolio, provide superior overall performance compared to ZIP System® wall sheathing (wood-based sheathing with a water-resistive overlay) as further described in this document.

Despite higher material costs, perhaps encouraged by the opportunity to earn a rebate, builders are starting to consider the ZIP System® wall sheathing because it appears to offer a one-step alternative to conventional sheathing and house wrap. The higher cost, it’s assumed, will be offset by reduced labor costs from what the manufacturer claims to be a faster installation time. But in reality, there really is no advantage and in many areas the ZIP System® just can’t compete with the proven performance of DuPont™ Tyvek® building wraps and weatherization products.

DON’T BELIEVE THE HYPE - THE ZIP SYSTEM® DOES NOT SAVE TIME
A key selling point for the ZIP System®, in its published sales literature, is the manufacturer’s claim that its system can be installed 40% faster than the leading house wrap. Unfortunately, that’s just not true.

In testing conducted by the Home Innovation Research Lab at the request of DuPont, five installation crews participated in a series of experiments designed to test the ZIP System® manufacturer’s claims of easier, faster installation. Each crew was timed while installing the ZIP System® and the complete DuPont Tyvek® Weatherization System and sheathing, following manufacturers’ installation instructions, on a framed two-story structure that included three standard double-hung and three round top windows. Test results showed no significant installation time advantage for the ZIP Systems® wall sheathing and tape over the DuPont™ Weatherization System. The ZIP System® does not install 40% faster.

EVERY SEAM, AND ALL INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CORNERS MUST BE TAPED
The performance of ZIP System® Wall Sheathing as an air and water barrier is dependent on the performance of the taped seams. Proper tape installation is time-consuming, complicated and crucial to the water and air resistance of the system.

Published ZIP System® installation guidelines require that all ZIP System® seam tape edges must be sealed and the tape must be centered within plus or minus 1/2” of all panel edge seam centers—with no wrinkles in the applied tape. For best results, the substrate must be clean and dry. Also, installation crews participating in the NAHB Research Center test reported that the seam tape doesn’t stretch which can make it difficult to get full adhesion when taping corner joints. Inside corners were especially difficult to tape properly.

Failure to properly tape the seams and corners creates the opportunity for water to enter the wall system which can lead to callbacks and costly repairs.
PRECISE SPACING IS TIME-CONSUMING AND CRITICAL
The ZIP System® installation manual requires a 1/8” gap between ZIP System® panels to allow for expansion and contraction. Not maintaining this precise gap can stress the bond between the tape and the ZIP System® panel creating more opportunities for air infiltration, water intrusion and possible tape failure.

LESS FLEXIBILITY TO WORK AROUND THE WEATHER
As directed in the ZIP System® Installation Manual the sheathing panels and tape can only be installed in dry conditions and on dry surfaces. This can lead to scheduling delays and added costs if the weather doesn’t cooperate.

ZIP SYSTEM® PANELS MUST BE STORED IN A PROTECTED AREA AND HANDLED WITH CARE
ZIP System® wall sheathing consists of an oriented strand board (OSB) structural panel with a resin-impregnated Kraft paper overlay. As a result, care must be taken to protect the ZIP System® wall sheathing from moisture prior to installation which takes time to protect when stored outside and can take up valuable space on the jobsite or in a warehouse.

When high moisture conditions exist, the manufacturer also recommends cutting the stack binding to prevent further damage to the swollen panels. Failure to take these precautions could result in damage to the panel.

THE ZIP SYSTEM® DOES NOT SAVE MONEY
Like the price of the ZIP System® sheathing, the price of the WRB overlay is also tied to the price of OSB. As a result, when the price of OSB increases, the price of the WRB overlay rises with it. By comparison, the price of Tyvek® building wraps has remained relatively stable regardless of the price of sheathing.

Also, the manufacturer of the ZIP System® sometime offers generous rebates to get folks to switch to its system. These rebates help to offset the premium price of the system for the first few jobs. But, when the rebates run out the purported time savings don’t make up the difference.

CONCLUSION
DuPont™ Tyvek® building wraps are tear- and UV-resistant products that can be installed easier than the ZIP System®. DuPont™ Tyvek® weatherization products provide property owners and management groups with a system that is highly resistant to bulk water intrusion and air infiltration while allowing excellent wall system drying. The use of DuPont™ Tyvek® building wraps with today’s wide array of cladding and sheathing options results in a more durable and forgiving wall system when compared to current WRB-laminated wood sheathing products.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more information, please call 1-800-44-Tyvek or visit www.weatherization.tyvek.com