The background of NRCA's manual

by **Mark S. Graham**

During the past two decades, *The NRCA Roofing and Waterproofing Manual* has become one of the most widely recognized and accepted technical publications in the U.S. roofing industry.

NRCA develops and maintains its manual to provide technical information about the design and installation of quality roof systems. The information contained within the manual represents a consensus opinion of professional roofing contractors. By intent, the manual presents a conservative approach to roof system design and installation. Generally, only time-tested, sound roof system design criteria and application techniques are included in the manual.

However, all products, systems and manufacturers' recommended application techniques are not necessarily included in the manual. For example, the manual's fourth edition does not include references to Type VI ply sheets sometimes used in built-up roof systems. Similarly, the manual does not include aggregate-surfaced spray polyurethane foam- (SPF-) based roof systems without weatherproof coatings.

Roofing products, roof systems and application procedures included in the manual generally apply throughout the United States. A product, system or application technique that is recognized only regionally typically will not be included in the manual. However, NRCA does not mean to imply that regional practices, particularly those that are sound and time-proven, are unsatisfactory or unacceptable.

Roofing products, roof systems and application techniques that are new to the U.S. roofing market generally will not be included in the manual either.

Uses

NRCA suggests you consult roofing material manufacturers for specific manufacturers' requirements. In some instances, the recommendations contained within NRCA's manual will be more conservative than those offered by manufacturers.

The manual presents a conservative approach to roof system design and installation.

When evaluating existing roof systems, use the manual to help you identify roof system components and design and installation practices used at the time a roof system was designed and installed. Because roofing practices change, NRCA recommends you refer to the edition of the manual applicable at the time of roof system design and installation.

Editions

The manual's first edition, published in 1981, contains information regarding built-up membrane and steep-slope roof systems, waterproofing systems, a limited number of construction details, reprints of NRCA's then-current technical bulletins and NRCA's *Handbook of Accepted Roofing Practice*.

The manual's first edition was based, in part, on NRCA's *A Manual of Roofing Practice*, which originally was published in 1970 and revised in 1971, 1973 and 1976.

In 1985, a reformatted, updated, expanded second edition of the manual was published. This edition, about 200 pages longer than the first, provided new information about single-ply and polymer-modified bitumen sheet membrane roof systems, as well as low-slope roof system specifications.

In 1989, a third edition of the manual was published. And in 1996, the manual's fourth edition—the current edition—was made available. The fourth edition is a two-volume set and complete rewrite of the previous editions. In addition, it contains sections addressing metal panel and SPF-based roof systems. An updated edition of *The NRCA Energy Manual* also is included.

In early 2001, a fifth edition of the manual will be published. This edition will consist of an update of the fourth edition, including completely revised and reformatted sections about steep-slope roofing and architectural sheet-metal and metal roof systems. The manual also will include a new section addressing reroofing situations.

Although previous editions of the manual are no longer in print, they are available on CD-ROM by contacting NRCA's Marketing Services Department at (847) 299-9070; faxing (847) 299-1183; or accessing NRCA's Web site, www.nrca.net.

Mark S. Graham is NRCA's associate executive director of technical services.

