

EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT EWP TERMS

1. **Live Load, Dead Load & Total Load:** Most people would feel very uncomfortable in buildings if there were no consideration to deflection or sag even though they were designed to safely support their total design load. That's because all structures (buildings, bridges, floors, etc.) can safely deflect well beyond the limits that make us feel uncomfortable. Limiting deflection is considered a "serviceability" requirement because it is independent of strength. In floor design, limiting sag is also necessary to prevent cracking in the sheet rock (on the bottom of the joists) due to load being applied and removed during the day.

To do this, it is necessary to define that portion of the load that varies and that portion of the load that is always present. By definition, Live Load is people, furniture and pets etc. that can be moved on and off the floor. Dead Load is defined as the weight of the floor system itself or any other load that is permanently attached to the floor. Together, the dead load and the live load make up the total load.

2. **L/360, L/480:** A method used to limit the maximum allowable deflection (or sag) when designing joists and beams. Specifically, the term L is the span of the joist or beam expressed in inches and the ratio L/480 would be the maximum allowable deflection the joist would be expected to deflect. It does not represent what the actual deflection of the joist is in the field, just the maximum value it would be allowed to deflect under full design load.

The "L over" ratio is always associated with either live load or total load. The most common values are:

Floors:	Live Load – L/480 (or L/360)	Total Load – L/240
Roofs:	Live Load – L/240	Total Load – L/180

For example, a typical residential floor (40 psf LL / 10 psf DL) with RFPI-Joists would be designed to an L/480 Live Load limit and an L/240 Total Load limit. For an 18' span, this would be equivalent to:

$$\frac{L}{480} = \frac{18' \times 12}{480} = \frac{216}{480} = 0.45'' \text{ Allowable Live Load Deflection} \quad \text{And} \quad \frac{L}{240} = \frac{18' \times 12}{240} = \frac{216}{240} = 0.90'' \text{ Allowable Total Load Deflection}$$

The actual Live Load deflection of the floor system would be determined with a surveyor's transit taking readings before and after a true 40 psf load (i.e., cinder blocks) was applied. The deflection reading obtained in the field must be less than (or equal to) the 0.45". The same applies to the 0.9" under a true 50 psf load.

3. **PSF Load:** This is the design load, in pounds per square foot that is "applied" to the entire floor or roof area. By code, most residential floors must be designed to support a live load of 40 psf. The live load for roofs is determined by local code and depends on the amount of annual snow expected for that region where the house is.

The design dead load psf is determined by the weight of each component of the floor or roof. A typical residential floor will have a dead load of 10 psf but depending on the components used, it can be as high as 20 – 24 psf. Dead load psf is based on standard material weights found in any of the National Model Building Codes. A typical method for calculating dead load is shown below:

FIGURE 1

DEAD LOAD CALCULATION FOR TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL FLOOR

