



Universal Blocking Systems

In 2006, after failing multiple electrical inspections, Danny Mellen and Russ Harding, two award-winning general contractors based in Colorado Springs, Colorado realized a need. Neither of them are engineers or mathematicians but both have basic common sense and knew there had to be a better way....

Everyday in the construction industry thousands of feet of blocking is installed for some situation or another. Blocking is an essential part of the construction process and without it what would we do?

THE PROBLEM – The current N.E.C code states that in an area that wiring may remain exposed such as a garage, basement, storage room or utility area the wiring must be protected from damage with a solid metal, wood or PVC product. In today's diverse range of unique electrical products there is nothing specifically manufactured for electricians to use to block their own work during the initial rough-in. The contractor must then pay the carpenters to return to the project and spend, in some cases hours measuring each wall cavity, cutting and installing blocking as required to pass the electricians inspection. Danny and Russ felt this

was a huge waste of time and resources when work schedules and job costs are so important to a successful project.

THE IDEA – To create an adjustable blocking system which could be used any many different applications, was available in multiple sizes and required no measuring and no cutting.

THE SOLUTION – Danny and Russ developed the Universal Wire Block. The first few prototypes were very heavy and came with mixed reviews from their local building officials who offered some ideas for a better design. The final design was lightweight, galvanized steel with two pieces that slide in conjunction with each other. The securing tabs at each end are design with a starter tab, which can be hit with a hammer to set and hold the mechanism in place while the unit is fastened. The holes on the securing tabs were designed for the shape and size of both a sheet metal screw and a standard wire staple allowing for use on standard wood studs or steel commercial studs.

THE TEST RESULTS – To determine its value along with its time saving features the Universal Wire Block was handed out to multiple electricians throughout the Colorado Springs area. After careful tests were done using the Universal Wire Block on many different type of projects it was verified that compared to conventional wood blocking the Universal Wire Block created a savings on materials and labor of approx. 45 – 50%.

THE ADJUSTABLE BOX ATTACHEMENT – After electricians started to use the Universal Wire Block, Danny and Russ received information that the electricians in the field were using it for many different purposes. One project imparticular was an extremely high-end interior renovation, which required that multiple outlets and switches had to placed in very specific location. The Architect had specified a very abstract and detailed tile pattern that would create the kitchen backsplash and the placement of devices within that design was critical. After seeing multiple projects with standard outlet boxes screwed directly to the Universal Wire Block, Danny and Russ felt they needed to design a line or commercial, residential and specialty boxes that included a bracket that would allow for a box to be snapped directly onto the standard Universal Wire Block and have the ability to slide along the mechanism to very specific location and be set with a standard #6 self tapping screw. From a need came a product that allows for a wide range of uses.

We understand that there are many different mounting systems currently on the market. Many of the mounting brackets limit your ability for total customization and placement of a switch or an outlet. We have yet to see anything that is as fully versatile as the Universal Blocking Systems. □