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CHAPTER 23

PANEL HEATING

Application Methods: Embedded Piping for Ceilings, Walls, or Floors; Warm Air and Electrically Heated Ceilings, Walls, or Floors; Output from Panel Surfaces: Radiation, Convection and Combined Heat Transfer, Panel Heat Losses; Design of Panel Heating Systems: Warm Water Panels for Plaster, Metal, and Concrete Ceilings; Wall Panels and Concrete Floor Panels, Warm Air and Electric Panels; Snow Melting: Design and Installation

IN this chapter the term, Panel Heating, is used to describe a method of space heating which employs large heated areas of interior room surfaces operating at relatively low surface temperatures (80 to 125 F). The heating elements usually consist of warm water piping, warm air ducts, or low temperature electrical resistance elements embedded in, or located behind, ceiling, wall, or floor surfaces.

Panel heating may be considered as another method of convenient and effective space heating. The heat loss requirements may be calculated in the conventional manner except that the heat loss through the area occupied by the heated panel need not be included. An assumed or computed reverse heat loss from the panel, however, should be included in determining heating main size and the boiler load. The heat release from the panel is expressed in terms of hourly heat output per square foot of surface. The room air temperatures to be maintained are approximately the same as those maintained by heating systems employing cast-iron radiators, convectors, or warm air ducts.

This chapter does not include a separate discussion of such topics as the influence of radiation on human comfort, the mechanisms by which human beings release heat, and other similar topics that apply to all methods of heating interior spaces for human comfort. The reader is referred to Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of these subjects.

APPLICATION METHODS

The great majority of panel installations of the past 50 years (which is the period of the modern utilization of this method of heating) have used warm water as the heating medium which is circulated in embedded piping. More recently, the use of warm air ducts, and embedded electrical heating elements, has come into favor, especially where specific local factors have influenced such use. Steam has been used only occasionally because of the problems which result from its higher temperature.

When the heating medium is warm water, both ferrous (steel or wrought iron) or non-ferrous (generally copper or aluminum) pipe or tube are used widely in ceiling, wall, or floor panel construction. Tube sizes used are $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{5}{8}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$ in. O.D., while piping is generally $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ or 1 in. IPS. Where coils are embedded in concrete or plaster, no threaded joints should be used for either pipe coils or mains. The construction should be of all-welded type. Changes in direction should be made by bending the pipe itself, rather than by use of fittings. Solder-joint fittings are used for