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**To:** [Kevin Crosby](#); [Jon Christopher Keiser](#)  
**Cc:** [Jonathan G Akins](#); [Maria Blair](#); [Suzanne Minear](#)  
**Subject:** UC8001046 Farrand Hall Variances - EQ Studs Follow-up  
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**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
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Hi Kevin,

Following up on our EQ stud variance request approval for Farrand Hall, please see below for some consolidated information on EQ studs in comparison to standard gauge studs, for non-load bearing interior metal stud framing. Most of this information was provided previously, but we have re-organized it for better legibility.

CU's team had previously inquired about the possible use of standard 25-gauge studs as a possible alternative to 20-EQ, which is why that is referenced below. We are not proposing the use of 25 Ga studs on Farrand Hall, and don't generally specify 25 Ga studs at AMD.

We hope this helps, and please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Thank you!  
Katie

### **Basics of EQ Studs**

"EQ" studs are non-load bearing metal stud framing intended to perform equivalently to the same number gauge of "traditional" metal studs for structural performance (strength, stiffness, deflection, etc.). They are made of thinner material and rely on the use of higher-strength steel and dimpling / knurling and creasing in the shape of the stud to help them perform equivalently to traditional studs. The result is that less metal is needed for EQ studs, and thus they are generally less costly than traditional metal studs. EQ studs currently have a majority share of the non-structural stud market (estimated at 90%), which also makes them easier to get.

### **Technical and Performance Aspects of EQ Studs**

As an "independent" opinion, this article from the CSI Construction Specifier offers a helpful discussion of traditional studs vs. EQ studs and discusses the various industry standards that studs must comply with. This is an older article (from 2013) but still covers the majority of issues. Page 2 discusses EQ studs in particular: <https://www.constructionspecifier.com/specifying-non-structural-steel-studs-for-interior-walls/2/>

The language used to describe EQ Studs keeps evolving. They have been called Knurled Studs, and Embossed Studs in the past. AMD's newest MasterSpec templates refer to them as "High-Strength Steel Studs and Track."

Early EQ studs had issues with screw retention (thinner metal meant less metal to hold a screw), but newer versions utilize creases and embossing at the side flanges that have improved screw retention. ViperStud (from Cemco and MarinoWare) and ProStud (from ClarkDietrich) both have embossing and creases at the stud flanges to improve screw pull out strength, and they indicate that they now have better screw retention than traditional studs due to their use of higher yield strength steel. EQ studs also must comply with code requirements and standards to make them comparable to traditional studs.

There are a few performance differences to be aware of:

1. Most importantly – not all EQ gauges are interchangeable with traditional studs in UL Wall assemblies. 25 EQ in particular may not be compliant with UL ratings, and for this reason, AMD requires a min of 20 EQ in our specifications. This is so that we don't have to be concerned about someone using the wrong stud in a rated wall assembly. 20 EQ is thick enough to comply with standard UL assemblies.
2. There can be some differences in the spanning abilities of EQ studs. Manufacturers must provide spanning tables, but generally speaking, an EQ stud doesn't span quite as far as a traditional stud, so there are times where height limits may require that the next heavier gauge be used. This isn't a reason to NOT use them – because everyone needs to reference manufacturer limiting tables anyway – but in rare occasions this could result in some differences in framing design. Since EQ studs are less expensive, a heavier gauge in some areas does not generally have a negative impact.
3. Different limiting height tables apply when studs are used in non-composite conditions (places where you do not have gypsum board attached to both sides). It isn't that EQ studs cannot be used at those locations – just that different design tables must be referenced.
4. When it comes to cabinets and smaller wall mounted items, we would expect there to be blocking or metal strapping in the wall that would assist with bracing studs, and this is (again) a reason we prefer to spec a min of 20 EQ. We understand CU prefers blocking in lieu of metal strapping, but our office has used both types for other clients. Heavier wall-mounted items (toilets, big TVs etc.) may still be better supported with traditional studs in those specific areas. Framing designs may call for heavier gauge cold-formed metal framing at higher load areas, even when traditional studs are used, so this is just something that gets factored into the framing design.

### **Constructability Issues Relating to EQ Studs**

Per Swinerton Builders, 20 EQ framing has been the industry standard for some years now. CU had inquired about the potential use of standard 25-gauge studs, however Swinerton relayed that they generally do not like to use 25-gauge. Per a member of their estimating team, 25-gauge is no longer the industry standard, and they find them to be too flimsy to work with and create a safety hazard. AMD's acoustical consultant still sometimes sees 25-gauge studs in use on non-AMD projects, but these are less common in the industry and may be more of a challenge to use in UL-listed assemblies.

### **Why Were EQ Studs Beneficial for the Farrand Hall Renovation Project, Specifically?**

For Farrand Hall, the main motivating factor to use EQ studs is that, while EQ studs perform equivalently from a *structural* perspective, they offer improved *acoustic* qualities compared to traditional studs. For our typical bedroom wall assembly which has a minimum code-required Sound Transmission Class of STC-50, the thinner metal of EQ studs means less metal material transmitting sound, such that a 20 EQ stud increases the STC rating of the wall compared to 33-mil / 20 gauge traditional stud. This behavior could be expected to apply to other metal-framed wall types too, however every wall is different so should be confirmed by an acoustician from one project to the next. The other benefit is that the use of EQ studs offers a cost savings to the project in both the framing itself and the number of layers of specialty acoustic gypsum board required to meet the STC rating of the wall. Instead of using a total of (2) layers of costlier acoustic gypsum board and (1) layer of typical Type X gypsum board with traditional 33-mil 20 gauge studs, a move to 20-EQ studs means improved acoustic qualities in the stud allows for only (1) layer of acoustic gypsum board with (2) traditional Type X layers. Type X is more affordable and will allow the project to use the same 'face' type of gyp board on each side of the wall with the (1) layer of acoustic gypsum board buried within. This should ease future repairs and replacements by allowing a more typical product to be used on the outside face of wall that is more subject to damage.

### **Cost Savings with EQ Studs and for Farrand Hall**

Swinerton Builders provided the following material cost estimates comparing 20 EQ stud framing, 20 Ga (33 mil) traditional metal stud framing, and 25 Ga traditional metal stud framing (18 mil and 15 mil). These prices date from January 2026 and are in dollars per 1,000 LF (\$/MLF). For example, the first one listed at \$850/MLF would be \$0.85/LF. EQ stud framing appears to cost about 60% - 65% of what traditional stud framing costs in the equivalent gauge number.

3 5/8" Stud Prices in \$/MLE:

True 20 Ga (33 Mil) w/ 1-1/4" Flange: \$850  
20 Ga EQ:\$510  
25 Ga (18mil):\$495  
25 Ga (15mil):\$450

6" Stud Prices in \$/MLE:

True 20 Ga (33 Mil) w/ 1-1/4" Flange: \$1175  
20 Ga EQ:\$730  
25 Ga (18mil):\$670  
25 Ga (15mil):\$610

On Farrand Hall specifically, the project should save about \$70k in utilizing 20 Ga EQ framing in lieu of the 20 Ga (33 mil) traditional framing. In addition, the savings from reducing by (1) layer of acoustic drywall in exchange for (1) layer of regular Type X was around \$80k. Utilizing both should result in about \$150k of savings. For reference, Farrand Hall is a 140,482 GSF building consisting primarily of hall-style residences - it is "partition-heavy," in other words - but also contains dining, educational, and assembly programs.

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