

Job Story:

PROBLEM:

Hurricane Katrina had utterly devastated New Orleans, and the Super Dome was but one of her casualties. Insulation contractors needed a duct liner material that could withstand the humid environment.

SOLUTION:

Closed-cell, mold-resistant and moisture resistant elastomeric foam duct liner was the perfect, worry-free solution for a challenging renovation.

Project:
New Orleans Superdome

Location:
New Orleans, Louisiana

Lead Engineer:
Associated Design Group, Inc.

Contractor:
Mechanical Insulation of Baton Rouge



AP Armaflex® Duct Liner Obvious Choice for New Orleans Superdome Following Katrina

The New Orleans Superdome sustained \$193 million in damage in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The duct liner is but one “small” story in this massive renovation, completed just in time for the New Orleans Saints opening season in 2006. It is, however, a very important story since perhaps no other component impacts indoor air quality as much as the interior ductwork of a facility.

In Louisiana, where humid conditions are year round, mold is always concern. The mold remediation that took place after Katrina — not just in the Superdome but all over the city — was on an unimaginable scale. So when Associated Design Group, Inc, the lead mechanical and electrical engineer for the Superdome project had to select duct liner for the large replacement duct, they weren't taking any chances.

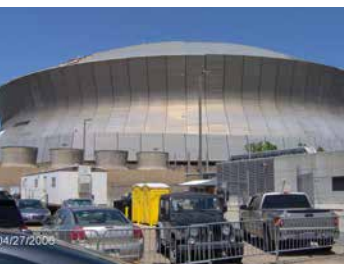
“We wanted a material the would not wick moisture,” explained Larry Blanchette, PE, of Associated Design Group, who recommended AP Armaflex closed-cell duct liner for the project. According to Blanchette, using closed-cell insulation meant they didn't have to take any extra precaution to protect the ductwork during re-construction of the Superdome. Even if the duct liner was exposed, its closed-cell nature made it resistant to moisture penetration, so humidity was not a factor. Furthermore, he knew that the smooth surface of the Armaflex material could be completely cleaned and sanitized before start-up.

As it also turns out, AP Armaflex is made with Microban® antimicrobial product protection for further defense against mold.



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When the hurricane hit New Orleans it tore off part of the roof of the Superdome, leaving the large ductwork in what is known as the “gladiator ring” exposed. This original ductwork, which was large enough for a man to stand inside, was made of sheetrock. Needless to say, nothing could be salvaged. The duct, along with the fibrous insulation inside, was infiltrated with mold. Remediation teams removed all of the contaminated materials and Associated Design Group and Mechanical Insulation of Baton Rouge set to work to replace the old ductwork with new sheet metal and AP Armaflex Duct Liner.



All of the contractors were under extreme pressure to get the Superdome completed in time for opening season. To help facilitate the installation of the duct liner, Armacell representatives showed Mechanical Insulation how to thoroughly clean the sheet metal duct and use Armaflex Spray Contact Adhesive to speed up installations. It was a team effort, but Mechanical Insulation and Associated Design completed the project in just 3 months. In fact, the project was completed ahead of schedule — an amazing feat considering the extremely large, odd shaped duct and the 80,000 sq. ft. of AP Armaflex Duct Liner.

“Mechanical Insulation did a first class job,” said Blanchette. “They made sure this was a job we could all be proud of.”

The sheet metal ductwork inside the “gladiator ring” of the Superdome is an imposing size — approximately 10 ft. x 10 ft. with a catwalk inside for total accessibility. Blanchette knew that with this kind of accessibility, routine cleaning of the interior duct would never be a problem. AP Armaflex has a smooth, firm, non-porous surface which can be treated and cleaned like any other hard surface. Fibrous insulation, on the other hand, which must be jacketed, is much more challenging to clean. That’s a little extra peace of mind for everyone involved in the massive project. The roof of this structure has now been refortified and the duct is a much more substantial material. Still, everyone in New Orleans has learned to respect Mother Nature’s wrath. If there is a better choice to be made in terms of moisture and mold prevention, it’s no longer a difficult decision, even if there is a little extra cost up front.

“I like the fact that [AP Armaflex] has a smooth, cleanable surface and that it doesn’t release any fibers into the airstream,” commented Blanchette, who as been specifying AP Armaflex Duct Liner for 8 years or more. He typically recommends it to all his clients, whether it is a small office building, or a 300 million project like the Superdome.

Armacell AP products are the only closed cell foam insulations made with the proven Microban additive. The technology is EPA registered for use in air duct insulation. Because it’s built in during the manufacturing process, it won’t wear off during duct cleaning.

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