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Framing Ghosting

The appearance of "ghosting" on interior drywall is a situation that could have been prevented by selecting the right building materials and following good installation techniques.

What Is "Ghosting"?
It's the appearance of shadows on interior drywall. These shadows can show the outline of framing members, areas around outlets, or other unexplained configurations.

How Does "Ghosting" Occur?
"Ghosting" is the result of a cooler material surface coming in contact with warm, humid air. The cooler surface allows microscopic condensation to occur from the warm, humid air. No ghosting would appear if you had no dust particles in the air however it is the accumulation of those dust particles on the microscopic condensation.

How Does A Cooler Surface Occur In An Insulated Wall?
There are several ways a cooler surface can occur. Gaps in the insulation will allow cold air to reach the backside of the drywall. These gaps can occur around pipe, wiring, or other obstacles in the wall. These gaps can occur between pieces of insulation batts or poorly fitting batts. Thermal bridging can also cause "ghosting". This is more of a problem with metal studs than with wood studs as the thermal conductivity resistance is better with a wood stud.

How Do I Orevent "Ghosting"?
A sprayed insulation material such as cellulose insulation will completely fill the wall cavity to provide a seamless blanket that prevents air infiltration. Avoid metal framing members. If metal framing is used, a foam insulating board should be applied to the framing surface to improve the thermal conductivity. Caulk and seal around doors, windows, framing members, wall penetrations, etc. to prevent air infiltration.

Remember if ghosting is occurring in the winter, that microscopic condensation is probably occurring inside the wall during the summer as air conditioning creates the source of cool air and the warm, humid air is located outside.