



DHF FIREPROOFING *blog*

Considerations for Using a Single-Focused Specialized Spray Fireproofer vs. Combining Multiple Scopes into One

A single-focused spray fireproofing subcontractor almost always delivers tighter quality control, cleaner coordination, and fewer downstream headaches — but there can be situations where bundling scopes under one multi-trade sub can make sense. The real decision hinges on risk tolerance, schedule complexity, inspection pressure, and how much control you want over the fireproofing outcome.

Core Takeaway

A specialized spray fireproofing subcontractor is generally the better choice for accuracy, accountability, and inspection success. A multi-scope subcontractor can work when the project is simple, but it introduces more risk.

Why a Single-Focused Fireproofing Subcontractor Is Typically Better

- **Mastery of the craft:** Spray fireproofing is not a commodity. Thickness control, adhesion, substrate prep, curing conditions, and inspection documentation all require expertise. Specialists live and breathe this...
- **Cleaner QA/QC:** One trade, one scope, one responsibility. No ambiguity about who caused a failure, who owns patching, or who missed an inspection.
- **Better inspection outcomes:** Fireproofing is one of the most frequently failed inspections on structural jobs. Specialists know the inspectors, the common pitfalls, and how to avoid rejections.
- **Less rework:** Multi-trade subs often rush fireproofing to get to their “real” scopes. Specialists don’t.
- **More predictable scheduling:** Fireproofing sequencing is delicate. Specialists understand how to work around steel delivery, decking, MEP rough-ins, and weather.
- **Stronger documentation:** Daily reports, thickness logs, UL design references, substrate conditions, and patch logs are standard for specialists, but not for general multi-trade subs.

Risks of Combining Fireproofing With Other Scopes

- **Fireproofing becomes the “secondary” priority:** Crews focus on drywall, framing, or paint, and fireproofing gets rushed.
- **Inconsistent crew quality:** Multi-trade subs often rotate laborers between scopes. Fireproofing should never be done by “whomever is free.”
- **Higher inspection failure rates:** The #1 issue with bundled scopes.
- **Coordination conflicts:** If the same sub is doing framing, they may install steel or blocking in ways that complicate fireproofing thickness requirements.
- **Accountability gets muddy:** If fireproofing fails, was it the fireproofing crew, the framing crew, or the steel installer? Multi-trade subs often point fingers internally.
- **Warranty and patching disputes:** Specialists patch their own work. Multi-trade subs often try to push patching onto other trades.

Recommendation (based on how GCs actually get burned)

If the project has any meaningful amount of spray fireproofing, a single-focused specialist is the safer, cleaner, and ultimately cheaper choice. Inspection failures, rework, and schedule delays cost far more than the small premium of hiring a dedicated fireproofing subcontractor. *If the project is tiny, or if the multi-trade sub has a true fireproofing division, bundling can work — but only with tight oversight.*