

Good vents protect from moisture

A hidden problem may be causing slow but certain damage to a part of your house that probably accounts for up to 40 percent of its visible exterior your roof.

When shingles crack, roof deck wood rots or gutters leak, your first impulse may be to blame the individual components. In fact, they have been fine when installed but couldn't stand the silent but steady pressure of the real culprit — attic heat and moisture caused by improper roof ventilation.

"Attic heat and moisture-rot wood reduce the effectiveness of attic insulation, damage underlayment and paint and cause cracked, buckled or leaking asphalt shingles," says Dick Lantz, Owens-Corning vice president. "The conditions also create ice dams, which can destroy gutters, damage shingles and cause leaks in walls."

How can you spot attic heat and moisture buildup before damage occurs? "Winter offers telltale signs," Lantz advises. "Toward the ridge or the roof, there will be no snow because attic heat has melted it, but snow still will be present near the eaves, with big icicles hanging from them."

You can prevent these problems, Lantz says, by asking your roofing contractor to include soffit (under-eave) vents and ridge vents in any new roof installation or even a partial shingle-replacement job. Lantz offers a simple three-point checklist to review with

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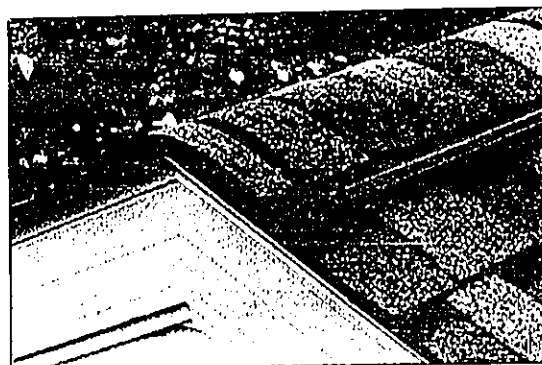
your contractor to ensure effective vent installation.

•Point 1 Strike a balanced, 50-50 ratio in soffit and ridge vents to ensure continuous airflow along the underside of the roof ridge, thereby removing excess heat and moisture.

"When you do this, you allow a free flow of fresh air in winter and summer," Lantz said. "Air enters the attic through a low continuous intake — the soffit vent — and then moves up and out through a high continuous exhaust — the ridge vent. The continuous airflow also helps balance inside and outside temperatures for greater home comfort."

He adds, "With a balanced ventilation system, even when there's no wind, the natural convection action of rising warm air maintains a continuous airflow along the underside of the roof."

•Point 2 "Pay close attention to the quality of ridge vents. Some do a better job than others. Owens-Corning is confident enough about the quality of its new line of VentSure Ridge Vents



VENTING HELPS: Proper ventilation increases the comfort and energy efficiency of your house and it preserves the look and performance of your roof.

to give each a limited 20-year warranty," Lantz said. The vents are specially designed with no moving parts and no need for energy, in both embossed aluminum and injection-molded high-impact polypropylene shingle-over versions.

•Point 3 "Check your shingle warranty to make sure your ventilation meets the shingle manufacturer's specification," Lantz advises. "Otherwise, the warranty may be void. Get-

ting shingles and vents from the same manufacturer can help avoid this problem."

Just how much ventilation is enough? "The Federal Housing Administration Minimum Property Standards call for 1 square foot of net free ventilation for each 150 to 300 square feet of attic space, depending on certain circumstances. Your roofing contractor should be able to advise you on what's required."

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