

REPORTER

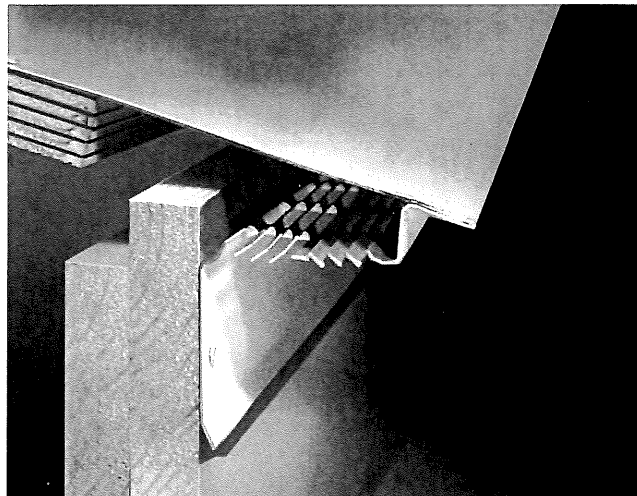
CHECK THE INTAKE VENTILATION

PAUL SCELSI, AIR VENT

If you're not convinced how important intake venting is to an attic ventilation system consider this: It's the single biggest reason for most of the attic ventilation call-backs we see and hear about. Not the exhaust vents. The intake vents.

That's because for an attic ventilation system to perform properly it needs a balance of both intake and exhaust. Unfortunately, too many houses have plenty of exhaust but not enough intake ventilation. This is confirmed by roofing contractors nationwide who attend our *Attic Ventilation: Ask the Expert™* seminars. The potential problems vary with the type of exhaust vent. With an externally baffled

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Soffit with intake ventilation

ASHI BRANDING UPDATE

ROB PATERKIEWICZ, CAE, ASHI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WHAT IS YOUR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE?

As we progress in our branding efforts, an overwhelming amount of research and input points to the area of exceptional customer service as the key to a home inspector's success, so long as it is partnered with a high level of technical knowledge about the inspection itself. I'm sure you can relate to these findings. I would hope that each of you has at least one company or service provider who exemplifies the best customer service in his or her work and knows his stuff, so to speak. It's the reason you keep working with the company or person, and why you tell others about your positive experiences. Last month, I unveiled the key elements of what we

are calling the "ASHI Experience", the blending of technical knowledge and expertise of the ASHI Inspector, along with exceptional customer service and delivery skills. The ASHI Board has now approved the ASHI Experience as the working model of our Brand to be further refined, solidified and presented at the July Board meeting for approval.

Often our focus is only on the technical aspects of performing the home inspection. Our research shows that all of our stakeholders (homebuyers, sellers, and real estate professionals) already expect a high level of technical expertise from the home inspector. The area of

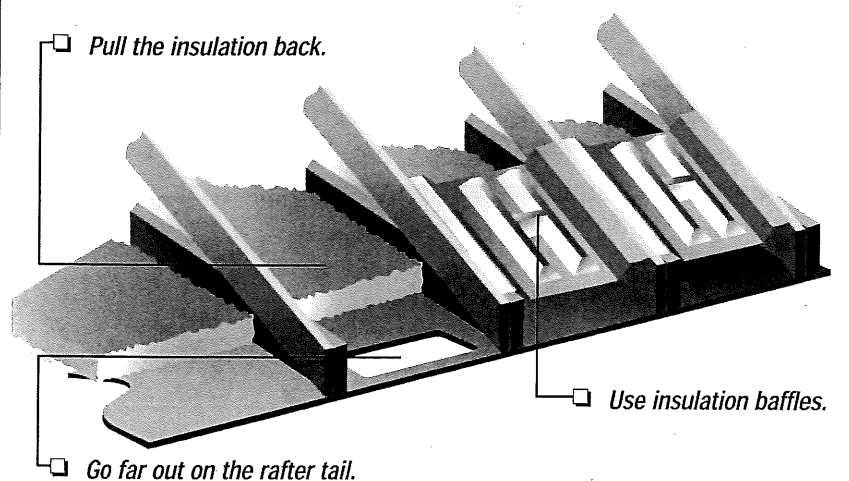
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Proper installation of attic insulation and air vents



ridge vent, insufficient intake can cause the ridge vent to pull intake air from itself. That means it could pull in weather. With a power attic ventilator, improper intake could cause premature motor burnout and could force the power vent to pull its source of intake air from the living space in the home.

TIPS FOR INSPECTING

Here are some tips for inspecting for intake ventilation.

Be sure the amount of intake matches or exceeds the amount of exhaust. At least half, if not more, of the total required net free area needed for proper ventilation should be in the intake area. If the house calls for a total of 1,500 square inches of net free area, half of that – or 750 square inches – must be intake ventilation.

When there's a soffit, it should have intake vents. If a house has a soffit, look there for the intake vents, either continuous soffit vents or rectangular under-eave vents. The soffit provides the most protection against possible weather infiltration. If the house doesn't have a soffit, intake ventilation can be provided by a vented drip edge. (See page 11.)

Check the position of attic insulation. To work properly, intake vents need an unobstructed air-flow path to feed the exhaust vents with cool, dry air. If the attic insulation is over the soffit, the intake vents can't work. Be sure the attic insulation is pulled back to create that clear airflow path.

Evaluate insulation baffles.

Insulation baffles can be installed in every rafter bay to ensure attic insulation doesn't block airflow in the soffit area. But if a baffle extends further out into the soffit than where the vent is located, the insulation will push up against the baffle and block the vent.

Intake vents belong far out on the rafter tail. Intake vents in this position provide an optimum air-flow path from intake to exhaust. Furthermore, intake vents in this position are not likely to be blocked by attic insulation.

Check for the right sized hole. The hole cut in the plywood should be properly sized for the intake vent to maximize the net free area specified for the particular intake vent. For example, two 4" round holes cut for a 16" x 8" under-eave vent reduces the vent's net free area from 56 square inches to 25.

Look for debris and other blockages. Over time intake vents can become clogged or blocked by dust, dirt and other debris. Or the homeowner may have painted them. Periodic inspection of the intake vents is important. ■

Paul Scelsi presents Air Vent's Attic Ventilation: Ask the Expert™ seminars to the industry nationwide January through April. For more information about the seminars or to request a copy of Air Vent's latest Ventilation Views covering intake ventilation, call 1-800-AIR-VENT.

EVIDENCE OF MOISTURE IN THE ATTIC? CHECK THE BASEMENT

When I find evidence of condensation or mold growth in an attic, I look for moisture in the crawl space or basement. A wet crawl space or basement can be an overwhelming source of moisture. Often drying this space can be as beneficial to the attic as adding ventilation. The crawl can generate gallons of water a day, while a family contributes a few quarts. The best approach may be to do both, increase ventilation and dry the space below to cut off the moisture at its source.

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