

LETTERS



The Importance of Baffles

To the Editor:

Concerning the letter titled "Leaky Ridge Vents" (7/90) and the subsequent response, you were correct in stating that "vertical baffles below vent openings...deflect wind-blown snow and rain upward past the vent." However, most in the building industry are not aware that this beneficial action has been documented through independent research and testing.

As early as 1960, Herb Hinrichs, one of the country's leading ventilation experts, was conducting infiltration research for HC Products Co., a ridge vent manufacturer in Princeville, Ill. At about the same time, the Small Homes Council at the University of Illinois conducted tests on a full-size home. Both studies drew the same conclusions: an external wind baffle is needed to prevent infiltration.

In 1987, Construction Research Laboratories Inc., in Miami, Fla., performed weather infiltration tests using Air Vent's Shinglevent and two other shingle-over ridge vents. All three vents were subject to a 50-mph wind, and rain at a rate of eight inches per hour. The most important difference between the three products was that the Shinglevent had an external wind baffle, and the others did not. No measurable amount of rain infiltration was detected with the baffled vents, while the other vents ingested as much as one gallon per hour per foot of coverage.

Photographs of the tests show conclusively that the external baffle kicks windblown rain up and over the vent, preventing rain from

entering through the louvers. The vents without baffles had a tendency to lift and allow entry of the elements, because air flowing over the roof created pressure under the overhang of the vents.

We always recommend that ridge vents be balanced with soffit intake venting offering an equal amount of net free vent area. Without this intake, a ridge vent can become self-feeding, allowing large amounts of rain and snow to enter the attic.

In summary, I would like to offer the following advice to building professionals concerning ridge ventilation:

- Always install balanced intake vents at the soffit, and take steps to assure that the vents do not become plugged by insulation or other obstructions.
- Always install a ridge vent with an external wind baffle. As mentioned above, the baffle deflects windblown rain and snow away from the vent. This action also increases vent performance by "pumping" air from the attic along the entire roof from soffit to ridge.

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Warning to Non-Licensed Designers

To the Editor:

Our crew at the Office of Facilities at the University of Maine System reads every issue of *The Journal* with great interest, for both project and personal insights.

The recent article on "Design Fees for Remodelers" (9/90) raises some interesting issues regarding the definition of and the payment for design

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Smaller is Beautiful

If you think this issue of *The Journal* looks a bit smaller than usual, you're right. We've reduced the height of each page by 2 1/2 inches, making the magazine conform to a standard tabloid format. We've done this in response to a steady stream of requests for a smaller size — one that's easier to store, copy, and fit on your breakfast table.

Other than the size, however, little will change at *The Journal*. What we hear most from you, our readers, is "Keep up the good work!" "Keep it practical!" and "Don't change a thing." We appreciate such praise and encouragement, and intend to follow your advice. We even appreciate the occasional criticism. Your feedback keeps us on track and keeps us on our toes.

We hope you like our new look. I'm sure you'll let us know. And good luck with your businesses in the year ahead. Keep up your good work.

Steve Bliss

services. Because of the present tightness of the architectural market, the Maine Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Maine State Board for the Registration of Architects have been unusually vigilant in pursuing the question of architectural work done by non-licensed designers, even those not specifically calling themselves architects.

One important reason is that non-licensed designers have no liability insurance, which not only doesn't protect them, but leaves no financial recourse for victims of design errors.

The Maine architectural licensing statute states: "No person may practice architecture...unless he shall be duly licensed by the board...The practice of architecture shall consist of rendering...services to clients by consultations, investigations, preliminary studies, plans, specifications, contract documents

and a coordination of structural factors concerning the aesthetic or structural design...or any other service in connection with the designing of construction of buildings..."

The Maine Attorney General's office has been involved in several investigations recently to assure that unlicensed designers are not in violation of these requirements.

Many of the services described in the article as provided by "remodeler" John Cargill would seem to cross the line into the practice of architecture, as defined by Maine law.

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Keep'em coming...We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to JLC, RR#2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.