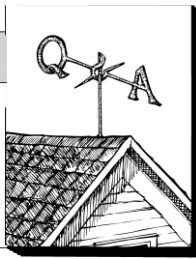


Flashing a Stucco Chimney

by Henry Spies



Q. What is the best way to flash around a wood-frame-and-stucco chimney for asphalt shingle roofs?

A. The best way is to build and sheathe the chimney, then flash to the sheathing with the same step flashing that's recommended for a brick chimney. Next, install waterproof building paper over the sheathing and flashing as a counter-flashing (see illustration at right). Attach the metal lath or welded wire lath with furring nails, which keep the metal spaced away from the waterproof building paper.

Apply the three coats of stucco, and finish the bottom with a stop screed, or weep screed, about 1/2 inch above the shingles. The step flashing should show enough to allow the application of a second layer of asphalt shingles in the future without touching the screed.

Squeakless Floors

Q. How can I avoid floor squeaks with a wood joist system?

A. The best way to avoid floor squeaks is to follow these four steps:

- Use dry lumber for the joists.
- Use a tongue-and-groove subfloor.

- Use a mastic-type construction adhesive, such as PL-200, between the joists and the subfloor, and on the tongued edges of the subfloor.
- Nail any underlayment tightly with ring-shank nails, but space the underlayment nails so they do not hit the joists.

Dehumidifying the Air

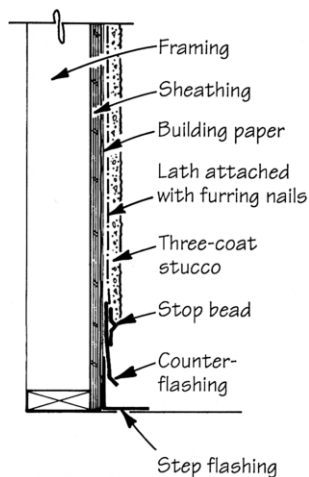
Q. Can a dehumidifier be added to a forced-air system? If so, what should a contractor know about specifying this?

A. It is possible to add a dehumidifier to a forced-air system, but there is really no good reason to do so. Moisture vapor moves freely throughout the house, so humidity control in one place will work for the entire house. This means that a portable dehumidifier is usually enough to control humidity when you can't do so by eliminating the moisture source or by using an exhaust fan. (These should always be your first choices for controlling moisture.) A dehumidifier with a 40-pint capacity can handle most houses.

A dehumidifier is essentially an air conditioner that discharges the warm air back into the house rather than exhausting it outside. Therefore, an air conditioner can also be used to dehumidify a house. But since an air conditioner only dehumidifies when it is running, most systems usually cool the house before the humidity is brought under control. If little cooling is desired, but you want to dehumidify the house, it's possible to size a central air conditioner to a quarter or half the size needed for normal cooling and run the system continuously without over-cooling the house.

In superinsulated houses with very low cooling loads, we often recommend installing a small (5,000 Btu) window air conditioner somewhere in the house to control humidity, and a central cooling system to control temperature. The window unit can be removed during the winter when dehumidification is not needed. ■

Stucco Chimney Flashing



Flash a stucco chimney with step flashing, just as you would a masonry chimney. Install a stop screed to finish off the stucco edge, and place it high enough to allow for a second layer of roofing in the future.

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