Q&A

Weep Holes in Brick Veneer

Q. *Are weep holes in a typical wood-frame brick-veneer home required anywhere other than at the bottom? What about over and under windows? Also, is it required that a brick window sill be pitched? Are weep holes required in faux-stone installations?*

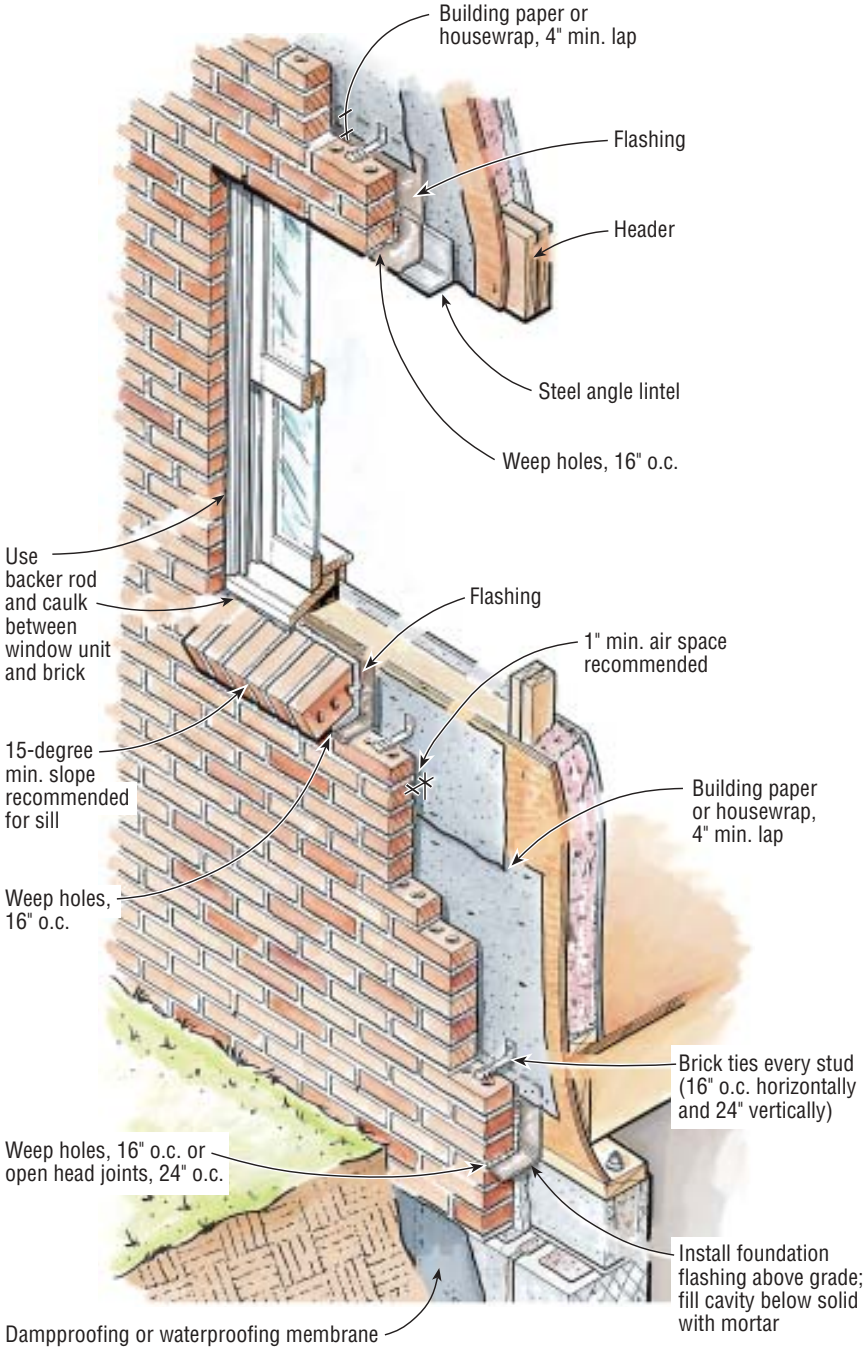
A. JLC *editor Don Jackson responds:* Yes to all questions: It's important to bring any water that might be running down the surface of the wood-framed wall back out on the surface of the brick anywhere it might enter the framing. The 2003 IRC requires minimum 3/16-inch-diameter weep holes every 33 inches, just above the flashing (R703.7.6). Flashing, in turn, is required under the first course of masonry at ground level, above windows and doors, below window sills, and at any lintels and shelf angles (R703.7.5, R703.8). Many of these details are included in Figure R703.7.

The Brick Industry Association (www.bia.org) is an excellent source of information on proper brick-veneer construction; the drawing at right is based primarily on BIA recommendations, which frequently go beyond code minimums.

Oddly, the IRC doesn't require building paper over the plywood or OSB sheathing as long as there's a 1-inch air space. However, both the BIA and the APA recommend paper, and it shouldn't be left out.

For more insight on weep holes in faux-stone veneers, see "Manufactured-Stone Nightmares" in this issue.

Flashing Brick Exteriors



Securing Dishwashers To Stone Counters

Q. *I've been unsuccessful in finding a permanent method of securing dishwashers to the underside of stone countertops. I've tried using construction adhesive and epoxy to secure the small metal tabs, but with no*

long-term success. One countertop installer said he uses a hammer drill to drill a hole about half the thickness of the countertop. He inserts a cut-off plastic anchor in the hole and secures the tab on the dishwasher with a screw. This seems extremely risky. Do you have any suggestions?

A. *Mike Barrett responds:* I do it the same way as that countertop installer, and have never had any problem. The metal tabs on top of the dishwashers are usually far enough back that there's no risk of creating a stress crack at the edge of the counter. I nearly always install 1 1/4-inch-thick counters. On thinner, 3/4-inch counters, we double the front edge thickness and carry it far enough back that we can safely drill into that.

If you're worried, you could try using a bead of silicone instead of drilling. Wedge the tab into place over the silicone until it sets up.

Some installers use epoxy anchors, which require a bigger hole. The problem with this is that the installed anchor protrudes down about 3/8 inch, which can get in the way of the top-mount controls on a lot of the new dishwashers.

Another way to avoid drilling the stone is to steer your customers toward one of the dishwashers that allow you to secure the unit to the cabinet sides, such as some of the Bosch units.

Mike Barrett *is the owner of Vermont Precision Stone in South Burlington, Vt.*

Compacting Stump Holes

Q. *I'm about to pour a slab on a site where several stumps were removed, leaving 2- and 3-foot-deep holes about 4 feet across. The backhoe operator went ahead and filled in the holes with dirt from the site (sandy loam, pretty good stuff), drove over them a few times, and leveled it up. Question: I have a small plate compactor. If I run that over these ex-stump holes for a good while, will that suitably compact the subbase? Or should I re-excavate and compact the soil in 6-inch lifts? I plan to put Mirafi and then a foot of clean stone under the slab.*

A. *Jay Meunier responds:* Don't bother re-excavating those areas to compact the fill in lifts. Instead, grab a hose and lightly saturate the areas with water. You want the soil to be damp but not full of water. Let the water percolate down through the soil to eliminate air pockets, then run the compactor over it. Do all of the areas once, then start over again. This should do a good job of providing a stable subgrade. When you're pouring the slab, lay a grid of 1/2-inch-by-6-foot rebar (two pieces in one direction, two perpendicular) across those areas as additional cheap insurance.

Jay Meunier *is an estimator for Pizzagalli Construction in Burlington, Vt., and the former owner of a residential concrete business.*