

# AROUND THE HOUSE

## ***DID YOU KNOW? General Information***

A sinking column post may be caused from lack of a footing or because it is not sized correctly.

To determine the size of a column footing look to see how thick your foundation is. If it is 8" thick then the size of your footing should be 8" thick. If it is 10" or 12" then the same applies. A footing is always 24" x 24" wide, so the size would be 8" x 24" x 24". It only changes if the foundation size is thicker.

The exception to the above is if you have a stone foundation. Because stone can vary in size it is best to make the column footing 10" or 12" thick and also 24" x 24" wide.

A column that is removed or mechanically damaged can cause structural damage and possible movement of the structure.

Fire will damage wood or steel posts. A steel post will fail much earlier when a fire reaches 1,000° F. So don't discount a properly sized wood post in older homes.

It should be understood that all building codes are intended to be a minimum standard.

When a builder or remodelling person suggests upgrading your plans to a higher quality size or product, he is talking from experience.

a. While it may cost more the life expectancy may be two or three times longer.

- b. The fire protection may save a persons life or serious injury.
- c. The resale of the work can bring in a higher appraisal value to your home.
- d. Always check it out before you sign a contract.

Even an older house has need for improvement for insulation, ventilation and caulking and all three should be considered when additional insulation is installed in the attic.

Insulation R-30 which is 10" or R-38 which is 12" should be installed in any climate around the country either for heat or air conditioning.

If you add insulation in an older home it should never have a vapor barrier, which is the craft paper on the insulation. One vapor barrier on top of another will trap condensation between each layer of insulation. Install insulation which has no vapor barrier (craft paper) on top of another layer of insulation.

Humidity in the air can be deposited in the insulation which will reduce its effectiveness because humidity becomes water. Water is a good conductor of heat. Wet insulation should be replaced because it reduces the R value of the insulation.

Water in the insulation can lead to rot, peeling paint and insects.

If the vapor barrier was improperly installed, a coat of oil based paint will do as a vapor barrier on your ceiling or walls.

The cold size of the insulation should be vented outside of the building.

Attic ventilation should be a minimum of one square foot of vents to every 300 sq. ft. of attic space.

A cathedral roof should be increased to one square foot of ventilation for every 150 sq. ft. of roof area.

Caulking and weather stripping prevents air leakage into and out of the house. When it moves out of the house it carries some of the heat from inside the home.

The biggest problem areas are windows, outside doors, garage doors and outside wall electrical plugs for loss of heat inside the home.

An unused attic space should have a temperature in the attic the same as the outdoor temperature with the proper ventilation.

If you don't have the proper ventilation in the attic, frost will form on the rafter sheathing and on any nails that come through the sheathing which will cause damage.

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If you have a ridge vent on your home you should have soffit vents. Half of the vents should be down low (soffit vents) and the other half should be up high, ridge or gable vents.

If you don't have ridge or soffit vents but only gable vents at opposite ends of the attic that should be alright as long as it meets the minimum requirement of one sq. ft. of vents to every 300 sq. ft. of attic area. Anything additional is good.

You never vent bathroom or kitchen fans into the attic. This causes moisture, rot and mold growth on the framing and sheathing, also condensation in the attic insulation.

If you have rain or snow coming into the attic through your gable vents you need to install a baffle approximately 3-4" away from the gable vents and a little bigger than the gable vent on the inside of the attic. This builds up eddies in front of the baffle which causes the rain, snow or wind to drop to the siding or ground before it can enter the attic.

When insulating a house, new or old, always do only the heated areas—walls, ceilings and basement. Never insulate the roof rafters to make it as warm as the house. Unheated areas of a home can cause moisture and mold damage over a period of time. Consider your attic as the outdoors and the sloped roof as a large umbrella.

An older home does not have conventional framing as we know it today. So when you are going to remove, repair or replace walls, beams, columns or roof framing it is best to call in a structural engineer or a good framing contractor. The money you save will be far more than the cost of a mistake.

Compliments of:

Paris Home Inspections, LLC  
Mark J. Paris

169 Roosevelt Avenue  
Torrington, CT 06790

860-489-1357

1-800-369-9262