

Proper Attic Venting by Finn Home Inspectors

Proper attic venting is critical to avoid mold growth, moisture problems and roof ice dam induced water leakage. Ideally the attic temperature will be the same as outside, thus snow will not melt on the roof. If snow melts on the roof it may flow down and create an ice dam at the bottom of the roof, possibly causing a water leak.

To allow air flow from the soffit area and to allow the maximum insulation over the outside wall, proper vents are used. They are installed against the roof sheathing (the wood that shingles are nailed to) and provide an air gap just under the sheathing for air flow.

The first figure is artwork showing a cross-section showing an ice dam at the bottom of the roof. A proper roofing contractor will install a membrane below the shingles up 36+ inches to avoid leakage, as shown in the diagram (often called "ice & water shield"). (art from Carson/Dunlop).

The photograph, taken from the attic, shows a proper vent installed.

When loose insulation is blown in, the proper vent is typically run much higher along the roof sheathing to avoid insulation being blown into and blocking the vent during installation.

