

# ask the experts

YOUR QUESTIONS—PRO ANSWERS



## experts

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### Need help?

Get answers you can trust from the experienced pros at *FHB*. Email your question to [Experts@FineHomebuilding.com](mailto:Experts@FineHomebuilding.com).

## Adequate roof venting

I am having the shingles replaced on the roof of my ranch-style house. The roofer is concerned about attic ventilation and recommends installing a ridge vent and closing off the existing gable vents. He also says that the rectangular metal soffit vents may not be adequate and recommends installing more to eliminate the risk of the roof sheathing rotting. There are five vents in each soffit, and they measure about 4 in. by 16 in. each. Is it necessary to close off the gable vents? If so, how can I do that? Do I have to remove them and fill in the void with siding?

And how do I know how many soffit vents to install?

—MARK VILLAR  
Middletown, Conn.

*Mike Guertin:* If the roof sheathing hasn't begun to rot already, it's unlikely that replacing the roof shingles will cause it to occur. Still, it's a good idea to address ventilation to reduce attic heat in the summer and to reduce the chance for ice dams in the winter.

Most likely, the roofer is recommending closing off the gable vents when adding a ridge vent to prevent short-circuiting of the air. When gable vents are left open, air can enter through the gables and bypass the soffit

vents. If air flows in through the gables and out the ridge vents, the entire roof doesn't receive the full effect. The air isn't entering through the soffit vents, traveling up the underside of the roof, and exiting through the ridge vent. You don't have to remove the gable vents, though. Just screw a piece of rigid foam or plywood over the vent from the inside. When the siding is replaced, the old gable vents can be removed and the openings filled.

The standard equation for older homes that don't

