Q+A

YOUR QUESTIONS—PRO ANSWERS

Direct water into gutters

Q **I've noticed that the siding where the roof meets my house is rotted. The step flashing is installed properly, and the rest of the siding above that spot is in good condition. It's clear that water is getting behind the siding where the drip edge and the siding meet, and behind the gutter cap as well. How can I get the water to run into the gutters instead of down and behind the siding?**

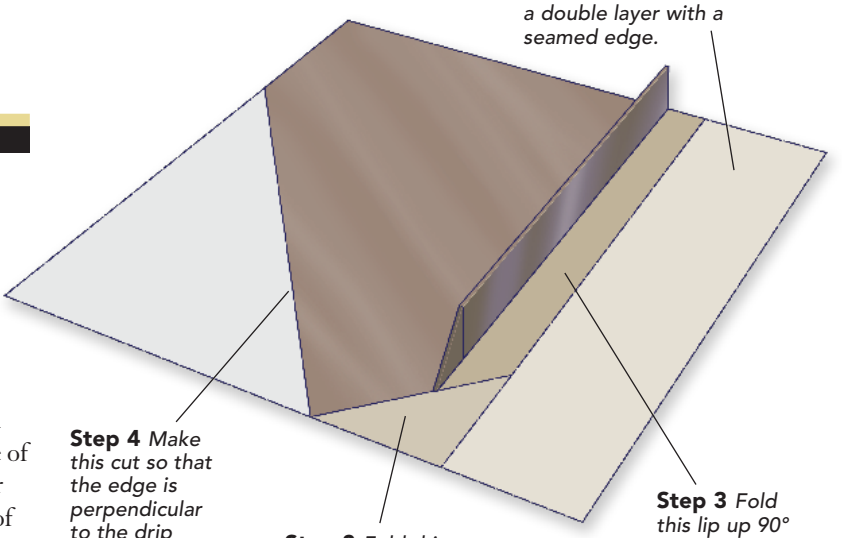
—JOSH MARTIN
Altamont, N.Y.

A *Michael Chandler, owner of Chandler Design-Build (www.chandlerdesignbuild.com) near Chapel Hill, N.C., replies:* This problem happens a lot where a lower-level roof and an upper-level wall meet. The capped end of the gutter is generally held about an inch off the wall, leaving the area where the siding is cut to fit around the fascia open to water intrusion. The water finds its way into the cut in the siding where the lower fascia intersects with the wall. The solution is to install a kick-out flashing, a piece of aluminum or copper that directs the water away from the wall before it reaches the last piece of step flashing so that the water flows into the gutter instead of behind the siding.

I make kick-out flashings from regular 14-in.-wide aluminum coil stock cut into a square 14-in. piece. I use the same color stock as the step flashings or the shingles when I want the kick-out to blend in to the roof. I fold the coil stock with a rubber hammer, some duck-billed seamers, and a length of framing lumber. You could use a sheet-metal brake if you have one, but most houses need only three or four of these flashings. In the time it would take to get out the brake, I can have all the flashings done with simpler tools.

The key is to make the flashings rugged and inconspicuous. Using a 45° dogear at the end makes that vulnerable area four layers thick. My roofer installs step flashing before the siding goes on the house. I could teach him to do the kick-outs, but it's easier to let the siding crew install them or to do them myself.

Bend the flashing by hand



Inexpensive hand tools take the place of a sheet-metal brake. *Shape the metal flashing on a solid surface that can take some abuse. Scrap 2x10 secured to a sawhorse makes do here. Bends are started as needed by hand, then further persuaded with a rubber mallet. A hand seamer (photo above) is useful for tuning the final bend, but isn't necessary.*

Ready to kick. *Slide the kick-out flashing beneath the second-course shingle and step flashing. Position the piece so that the cut end is perpendicular to the drip edge; then nail it down with two roofing nails under the upper shingle.*

Drawing: Dan Thornton. Photos this page: Chris Ermides.

Let inside drywall corners move

Q Three years ago, I built a house, and every year, the inside drywall corners crack in several rooms. Is there anything I can do to stop this problem from happening?

—ED WUERMSER
Dallas

A *Myron R. Ferguson (www.thatdrywallguy.com), author of* Drywall *(The Taunton Press, 2008), replies:* Cracks in inside corners often indicate structural movement. This movement might be caused by swelling or shrinking of framing lumber due to seasonal changes, or it might indicate a more significant structural problem. If you've eliminated the latter possibility, there are some things you can do to fix the cracks.

Vinyl or PVC tapes made for seams and inside corners are strong, but they often pop loose if there is structural movement. Don't use these products unless you're sure the corner is stable.

In situations like yours, you'll have the most success in making a joint resistant to cracking by letting it move. The only thing I have found that works is an expansion-joint type product. I have had great success with Magic Corner from Trim-Tex (www.trim-tex.com). It works on inside corners at any angle, and it also can be used to fix cracks.

To repair an inside corner, fully remove the existing tape, and replace it with Magic Corner. Tape the joint as you normally would, leaving the rubber center free of mud. Any movement will be absorbed by the rubber center, which flexes and stretches. The only bad thing is that you see the rubber center as a slight recess in the surface. This slightly indented line is much better than a crack.

A flexible center joint absorbs seasonal movement. *An expansion-joint-type product like Magic Corner (photo right) is the ideal fix for inside drywall corners that crack due to seasonal movement. Install the joint with spray adhesive (photo left) and staples. The joint can be painted per the manufacturer's instructions.*

Photos this page: Krysta S. Doerfler